

Gen Z's Capacity for Leadership

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Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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Abstract

Generational categories can provide perspective on current themes and trends. Generation Z, or "Gen Z", comprises over 30% of the global population, and as they are coming into the professional world has caught the attention of current organizational leadership. As with every generation, Gen Z can be better understood through the themes and trends visible at a macro-level of analysis. Which upon identification and analysis can be leveraged to facilitate a better integration as they start to occupy the majority of professional positions. Of these professional positions, leadership is arguably the most important to understand. Leaders shape both their organizations and consequently the world at large. By understanding the ability for leadership Gen Z is set to possess, current leaders and professionals can better prepare themselves for what is to come. This research specifically aims to determine Gen Z's capacity for effective leadership. This is done by challenging the hypothesis that Gen Z does have a large capacity for leadership as a direct result of what makes their generation unique. To test the hypothesis, a qualitative study was conducted that collected responses from qualified, public sector leadership professionals. Their perspectives were then analyzed to identify what they recognized as effective leadership and their observations of Gen Z as they relate to it. The results suggest the hypothesis to be false and posit that Gen Z has a diminished capacity for leadership precisely because of what makes their generation unique. This implies that should Gen Z enter into leadership roles, they would be doing so without the elements required for succeeding in them.

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1. Introduction

All generalizations are wrong. Hence, to categorize the breadth of unique experiences had by millions of individuals, within an arbitrarily set range of dates, is without a doubt simplistic. However, much like the dichotomy of how models can be wrong yet remain useful, the generational labels assigned to people based on their date of birth contribute to obtaining a base level of insight on a very large scale. These labels serve not to stereotype but to help recognize and appreciate the distinctive aspects unique to these ranges of time. A generation born in a time of abundance will inherently have a different perspective than one born in a time of scarcity. Generations are also marked by major events which create macro-level shifts in thinking and culture which can embody the individuals born into or after them. Through the understanding that this type of oversimplification can provide utility, an examination of the trends and behavioral patterns for large-scale demographics can be conducted. Generation Z "Gen Z" is one such generational label, and describes individuals born from the year 1995 — 2010 (Baldonado, 2018). Immediately precedent to Gen Z is the millennial generation "Gen Y" which describes individuals born between 1982 — 1994 (Bencsik et al., 2016). As with every previous generation, Gen Z has grown up in an unprecedented environment. However, there have been marked fundamental shifts in both technological capability and egalitarian access that separate them from generations prior. These shifts are primarily related to Gen Z's novel integration with the digital world but also encompass the change in relational dynamics within and across generations. Access to the internet is seen as a new frontier for knowledge and provides a medium for Gen Z to interact with the world on a scale larger than preceding generations could. However, with constant exposure to the problems of the world, their perspectives could become proportionally distorted to their knowledge of it. The recent global Covid-19 pandemic also marks a move towards unprecedented levels of uncertainty and anxiety in Gen Z which further amplified the existing importance they place on things like mental health (Deloitte, 2021). Since Gen Z is next in line chronologically for leadership roles it begs the question of how ready they are to undertake that responsibility. According to most accounts, Gen Z has a unique set of talents and tendencies which allow them to navigate the modern world differently than other generations (Diz, 2021). However, just how conducive are those to the specific requirements of effective leadership? This thesis will examine Gen Z through the

context of what effective leadership means and evaluate their aptitude for it. Specifically, answering the question of; what capacity does Gen Z have for effective leadership? To accomplish this, an experiment was derived to collect responses from qualified leadership professionals. Their responses were then used to evaluate the research question within the confines of the context provided by a review of the current literature on leadership and Gen Z. The hypothesis is that Gen Z's will have a large capacity for effective leadership. This is due to their unprecedented access to the lessons of prior generations using digital platforms. And their likely ability to navigate that digital space better than those same generations.

2. Literature Review

Leadership parameters change constantly, which consequently increases the necessity for current leaders to remain adaptable (Hameed & Sharma, 2020). Certain qualities that would have made for a good leader a century ago could neither be helpful nor practical in a modern setting (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). As leadership exists as neither a specific nor limited concept, a focus on the relevant literature is crucial in avoiding discussion solely surrounding its broader concepts. From the review, three main distinctive topics emerged as imperative to the changing leadership environment. Specifically, the challenges the coming generations of leaders will face. The concept of transformational leadership was abundant in its presence across the relevant literature. Of the various forms of traditional leadership, the consensus lands with transformational leadership as the style most likely to resonate with Gen Z. The next theme is that of digital leadership, which was identified as being both an unprecedented and inevitable outcome for both current and future leaders. Finally, the topic of leadership and development content, specifically digital leadership content, was referenced across the relevant literature as being uniquely advantageous for Gen Z.

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Gen Z is next in line chronologically for major professional roles and responsibilities. However, the information and empirical experience necessary for

current professionals to evaluate their future capacity for leadership in these environments is lacking (Lai et al., 2020). Although Gen Z comprises over 30% of the world's population, they make up only a small fraction of the working population (Deloitte, 2021). Without the required time in which to prove otherwise, speculative ideas from older generations have prematurely categorized Gen Z as overprotected, emotionally inhibited, and otherwise unable to navigate the coming challenges they will face (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). This notion was substantiated by Lukianoff & Haidt (2017), who attributes this lacking to the unprecedentedly safe environment in which Gen Z has been brought up. While this claim presents a logical series of events some disagree stating that Gen Z, while potentially at a disadvantage in certain aspects, is primed for exponential growth and merely requires a different approach to their development (Aguas, 2019). Rather than a resignation to a life of immaturity, Gen Z has the potential to leverage its technological capabilities to springboard its entrepreneurial ability (Lai et al., 2020; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). However, this requires a shift on the part of the current leadership in terms of style and approach. According to Gabrielova & Buchko (2021), and Engelbrecht et al. (2017), Gen Z needs a different style of leadership, and type of leader. Specifically, the transformational leadership style, and a leader that maintains an awareness for them, as much as for the shared objective (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Engelbrecht et al., 2017).

2.2 Engagement

The literature around the coming influx of Gen Z into the workplace is varied in terms of what could best foster a successful intergenerational integration. Research conducted by Baldonado (2018), found that Gen Z places a significant amount of value on their motivational needs. With the search for growth being chief among them (Baldonado, 2018). Baldonado (2018), further identified achievement, responsibility, and the work itself as likely fundamental pillars in workplace motivation for Gen Z. Whereas variables traditionally associated with motivation such as status, recognition, and working conditions were less likely to increase motivation (Baldonado, 2018). Conversely, similar research by Gabrielova & Buchko (2021), found that self-esteem, autonomy, and stress management were the variables most likely to be effective for Gen Z. Their research further mentions, "Overall, listening, understanding, sharing

stories, and then setting some developmental goals together can make a big difference not only in the quality of the leader-member relationship but in effort, attitude, and quality of work performed" (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021, p. 497). While both Baldonado (2018), and Gabrielova & Buchko (2021), identify different contributing factors as potential motivations for Gen Z, there exists a common theme across them. Essentially, Gen Z demands engagement in their work as a prerequisite for their participation in it. Baldonado (2018), characterizes this engagement as a catalyst for growth as it entails a considerable allocation of time and effort towards the achievement of a goal regardless of an individual's capacity. And according to Gabrielova & Buchko (2021), growth can be made less difficult when an individual pursues it of their own accord. They also allude to self-esteem, autonomy, and stress management which when deconstructed are all contributing factors to one's engagement in a task (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Baldonado (2018), and Gabrielova & Buchko (2021), contain an additional overlap between them concerning their methodologies. Specifically, both were conducted on a population that currently finds themselves in secondary and university level education (Baldonado, 2018; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). The Baldonado study admits its main limitation was in its sample population. Namely, the study was limited to students on the east coast of the United States. Therefore, the findings for each must be understood to have the limitations present at that level of analysis. Additionally, both studies use terms that remain undefined or ambiguous concerning their specific definitions to their populations. These terms include concepts such as autonomy, stress management, and growth. All of which have the potential to represent a wide range of concepts to different individuals.

2.3 Ability

In studies by Baldonado (2018), and Gabrielova & Buchko (2021), there are various implications to the potential shortcomings and challenges of Gen Z. However, both studies also speak to the capabilities of Gen Z. Specifically their inherent ability to adapt quickly and effectively to any changes in the digital environment (Baldonado, 2018). Gen Z is the first generation to grow up in a connected world where access to the internet is commonplace. Which makes Gen Z the first generation of true digital

natives (Diz, 2021). The term digital native is defined by Diz (2021), as the free ability to move about the digital world. In the study, Gen Z was found to have inadvertently learned a new type of language. According to Diz (2021), that language is one of technology. Without any training or assistance, the majority of Gen Z have little difficulty adapting to new programs, websites, applications, or any number of different technological interfaces (Diz, 2021). Furthermore, Gen Z has an unprecedented ability to navigate the digital world to the same degree as the physical world (Diz, 2021; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). However, while the ability is novel in nature, its benefits are not yet obvious. In a study done on the potential negative outcomes due of modern overprotective parenting, Lukianoff & Haidt (2017), outline some of the drawbacks associated with growing up in an increasingly connected world. Specifically, how it may have unintentionally removed Gen Z's ability to learn legacy physical world skills in favor of increasing their exposure to the digital world. Lukianoff & Haidt (2017), further postulate that Gen Z has an addiction to technology which is directly responsible for stunting their general development. This comes in stark contrast with the findings of Ozkan & Solmaz (2015), who conducted a study on the mobile addiction of Gen Z and its effect on their social lives and concluded the exact opposite of Lukianoff & Haidt (2017). Specifically stating, "According to this research generation Z is not an addict, as it is known in the literature" (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015, p.96). Their research concluded that Gen Z simply operates faster, and on a frequency, foreign to non-digital natives (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). They use the term frequency to describe their natural ability to absorb information from the digital medium. This is further supported by Diz (2021), who concluded "Having short attention spans does not mean that one has the inability to focus. These are mutually exclusive. These cohorts have an uncanny ability to focus" (Diz, 2021, p.66). The study conducted by Lukianoff & Haidt also mentions once again their main limitation as being the sample population. Like Baldonado (2018), the study by Lukianoff & Haidt (2017), leveraged a population limited to the United States. Whereas Diz (2021), and Ozkan & Solmaz (2015), used international population samplings.

2.4 Self-awareness

The concept of well-being closely correlates to self-awareness when considering Gen Z. According to the literature and for this review, well-being is to be understood as a personal and emotional sense of comfort and happiness (Diz, 2021; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). Gen Z holds well-being as a particularly important aspect of their lives (Pichler et al., 2021). Currently, Gen Z remains mostly absent from the professional working environment. Which has researchers trying to understand what personality aspects, present in their current lives, are likely to remain throughout their professional careers. Moreover, the exact implications of these personality aspects entail regarding their future leadership capacity. A proposal by Pichler et al. (2021), suggests the implementation of the DITTO framework (Diversity, Individualism & Teamwork, Technology, Organizational support) for employers as a preemptive strategy for optimizing their future Gen Z employees. Pichler et al. (2021), found that Gen Z if incentivized through well-being, can provide a higher-than-average competence. Which is a sentiment echoed by other Gen Z researchers (Diz, 2021; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017; Pichler et al., 2021). Their proposal further submits that "Understanding Gen Zers is critical to business success and gaining competitive advantage" (Pichler et al., 2021, p.600). This is supported by the studies from Diz (2021), and Lukianoff & Haidt (2017), who both acknowledged the potential for higher levels of competence in Gen Z should the setting be appropriate. However, Lukianoff & Haidt (2017) details a specific drawback to this potential. They state concerning Gen Z's collegiate-level educational environment that "The current movement is largely about emotional well-being. More than the last, it presumes an extraordinary fragility of the collegiate psyche and therefore elevates the goal of protecting students from psychological harm" (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017, para. 5). Additionally, in a study conducted by Hartung (2020), a connection was found between self-awareness and effective leadership. The study defines effective leadership as a leader's ability to navigate their people to the successful completion of their organizational goals (Hartung, 2020). The study concluded specifically that "Applying the survey to a diverse, albeit small, group yielded rather unequivocal support for all hypotheses, showing a broad measurable connection between self-awareness and leadership effectivity" (Hartung, 2020, p. 14). However, the main limitation of the study is that only 24.3% of the sample population were candidates for being in Gen Z (Hartung, 2020). Furthermore, despite the participant ages being left

ambiguous in the study, it's unlikely all fit within the specific generational constraint of Gen Z.

2.5 Digital Leadership

As technology continues to edge further into the workplace, a fundamental change in how human beings interact with organizations has occurred (Mihai & Crețu, 2017). This change is representative of the direction humanity is heading both in an evolutionary sense and an informational one (Araujo et al., 2021; Mihai & Crețu, 2017). As the workplace changes, so do its structures, dynamics, and operational systems change. The Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the rapid adoption of digital workplaces serve as a current example of this change (Chu et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2020). A study by Xiao et al. (2020), conducted to test the impacts of working from home "WFH", concluded that many workforces were simply not ready for the rapid changes in their working environment. Their study included 988 participants with a mean age of 40.9 and took place in the middle of 2020. It found that the main reason the participants struggled with work was due to the new distractions present from working at home (Xiao et al., 2020). The study further states that these distractions also caused a physical reaction in most of the participants. Specifically, "These workers reported a decline in overall physical and mental health status and an increased number of new physical and mental health issues" (Xiao et al., 2020, p.189). However, this is contradicted by Chu et al. (2022), who found only a weak correlation between work productivity and an employee's psychological well-being. However, their 2022 study concerning the problems arising from WFH identified the main productivity-related problem for employees as the distractions they faced during the working day just like Xiao et al. (2020). Interestingly, the study also concluded that individuals who effectively managed these distractions were more likely to have their productivity increase (Chu et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2020). Despite their opposing conclusions on productivity and well-being, both Chu et al. (2022), and Xiao et al. (2020), mention change as a further barrier to digital leadership. The shared concept is that a workforce accustomed to a non-digital work-life will often struggle to achieve a similar level of productivity when switching to a digital one (Chu et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2020). An exception was made in both studies for a minority of individuals who considered themselves willing and capable of adapting quickly to new methods. According to Chu et al. (2022), these individuals primarily occupied the younger side of their population's

age demographic. This coincides with the studies done by Diz (2021), and Ozkan & Solmaz (2015), who both reference the ability of young professionals to interact organically with technology as discussed in section 2.1.2 section of this review. These notions are corroborated as well by Bencsik et al. (2016). Their study on Gen Z in the workplace found that the younger employees had a higher aptitude for performance in technological, innovative, and creative duties (Bencsik et al., 2016). Notably, their research also stipulated that these talents are likely to have come at the expense of interpersonal skills and their relationships with other generations (Bencsik et al., 2016). Further elaborating that the loss of cross-generational interpersonal ability is the largest risk to Gen Y. Stating, "these two generations which are closest to each other can least work together" (Bencsik et al., 2016, p.104). Notably, Bencsik et al. (2016), use the 1981 – 1996 birth range when discussing Gen Y, as opposed to the 1982 – 1995 range used in this review. Additionally, it is important to note the main limitation of the studies on WFH. Namely, all the positions held by the participants in the research had types of employment that could be conducted from home (Chu et al., 2022; Xiao et al., 2020). This could be interpreted as a vast caveat to the practical application of their findings. However, an argument can also be made that it lends additional credibility to their research. Primarily because current predictions from researchers postulate that much of Gen Z's professional life will take place in some variation of a digital workplace (Mihai & Crețu, 2017; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015).

2.6 VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity)

VUCA is the designated acronym for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity originating from the United States military (Whiteman, 1998). Despite its origin, VUCA has been adopted by several agencies and businesses as a term to describe the implicit change present in a variety of endeavors (Hameed & Sharma, 2020). According to Schaffer & Zalewski (2011), Volatility refers to the fluctuations and deviations from an original plan or idea. Uncertainty is understood as the unforeseen influences of external forces. Complexity represents the intricacy of the decisions an entity may make. And finally, ambiguity is categorized as unforeseen influences that may appear because of those decisions (Schaffer & Zalewski, 2011). Concerning digital leadership, VUCA is used as a conceptual context to navigate the

rapidly changing landscape that is the digital world (Hameed & Sharma, 2020). Additionally, in the case of digital leadership, a further conceptualization would be that VUCA is consummately representative of the digital world. As digital natives, Gen Z can therefore be thought of as the first generation to be raised in a native VUCA environment (Diz, 2021; Hameed & Sharma, 2020; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017; Machová et al., 2020). In the study done by Goh & Lee (2018), it was found that the key motivating factor for Gen Z is the inherent uncertainty present in new workplace environments. This is seconded by Hameed & Sharma (2020), who concluded that Gen Z is undeniably capable of effectively dealing with VUCA in a workplace environment. In their study of the VUCA environments' roles in soft skill development, Horstmeyer (2020), found that Gen Z's professional capacity comes as a direct result of their curiosity. Specifically, the study suggests that curiosity results from VUCA, and is the catalyst of "exploration, openness to experience, creative problem-solving, ambiguity tolerance, collaboration and learning" (Horstmeyer, 2020, p. 746). Each of these attributes lends itself to dealing with VUCA, and those individuals in possession of such attributes are perhaps those best suited for dealing with a digital VUCA world (Goh & Lee, 2018; Hameed & Sharma, 2020; Horstmeyer, 2020).

2.7 Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Emotional intelligence, or "EQ", is defined as the underlying social intelligence that allows an individual to interact with both their own emotions and those of others (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). EQ has been at the forefront of psychological debate in recent years as its practical application grows in relevancy for new generations of employers and employees (Machová et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Aguas (2019), it was found that Gen Z responds well to emotionally intelligent leaders. This is supported by the findings of Machová et al. (2020), who found that EQ was considered the most important factor for Gen Z when it comes to the workplace environment. While EQ deals with the emotional component of intelligence, it does not inherently imply greater intelligence across other domains. Neither does it posit to remain at a constant level over time. Rather, EQ remains vulnerable to external influences, with the main factor being the environment (Aguas, 2019; Machová et al.,

2020). According to Machová et al. (2020), the environment is defined as that which surrounds an individual both physically and psychologically. The example given in the study is that of a workplace environment, which encompasses both the actual space as well as the culture associated with it. According to Machová et al. (2020), these environmental factors directly impact workplace dynamics such as company morale and emotional well-being. Specifically, "the mood in the workplace significantly determines the emotional intelligence of the manager or subordinates" (Machová et al., 2020, p.231). Whereas, according to Aguas (2019), leaders must communicate with their subordinates in a language that they both understand and respond to. Specifically, they recommend "intergenerational leaders communicate in a language that exemplifies purpose and significance" (Aguas, 2019, p. 19). However, EQ is thought by some to potentially present more of a drawback than an advantage. In a report conducted on the part of Universum (2019), it was found that "58% of Gen Z cited stress as the factor that makes leadership roles unappealing" (Universum, 2019, para. 8). This presents the opposite side of the EQ idea for Gen Z. Namely, that when someone is more emotionally receptive, they also become more susceptible to negative emotions like stress and anxiety (Aguas, 2019; Machová et al., 2020; Universum, 2019). The main limitation of all the referenced studies is once again population. Despite the inclusion of a few international participants in their research, Aguas (2019), Machová et al. (2020), and Universum (2019), all used populations primarily composed of US participants. This makes the findings pertinent mainly to US members of Gen Z.

2.8 Leadership Development Content

For context, the term content is meant to represent the medium, be it physical or digital, used to convey information relevant to a specific topic. Whereas leadership and development are the concepts discussed in the information made available to an individual through said mediums. According to Boerma et al. (2017), leadership can be both a natural-born talent as well as an acquired skill. However, far fewer individuals are born with such abilities, leaving the remaining majority to acquire the skill for themselves (Boerma et al., 2017). Currently, there are only a handful of ways in which leadership is taught in the modern environment. The most referenced amongst

them are traditional leadership training programs consisting primarily of person-to-person contact in a seminar-style setting. According to Harvard Business School (2018), when an organization puts a focus on leadership development "L&D", either through traditional or non-traditional means, they achieve a level of success higher than that of those who do not. Specifically, they found that "66% of those organizations that see L&D as critical to success had a stronger market position than their competitors" (Harvard Business School, 2018, p. 6). This is of critical importance as organizations pursue a focus on L&D through their leadership training programs. They further postulate a direct correlation between L&D training and an organization's success (Harvard Business School, 2018). However, myriad issues have been taken with the viability of these training programs and their long-term effectiveness. According to Beer et al. (2016), these issues revolve around the idea that organizational-level training is unable to facilitate any significant change. Specifically, their study concluded the success of traditional seminar training lacked any correlation to the medium in which it was conducted (Beer et al., 2016). Their study specifically observed a multitude of individuals from different organizations at varying levels within the professional hierarchy (Beer et al., 2016). These included positions ranging from entry-level occupations to top-level management. According to Beer et al. (2016), only a minority of individuals were successfully able to implement what they learned in organizational training. Interestingly, this minority was also found to consist of individuals pursuing, or likely to pursue, further leadership-related training of their own accord (Beer et al., 2016). Essentially, the individuals who were intrinsically motivated to learn were likely to benefit from the mandatory external training. These ideas are seconded by Harvard Business School (2018), which further elaborates on best practices for encouraging these individuals. Specifically, they identify the usage of virtual learning resources as the most effective method in which to do so (Harvard Business School, 2018). According to Seemiller & Grace (2017), Gen Z is poised to benefit from these types of virtual learning resources as a direct result of their upbringing. In their 2017 study on the development of Gen Z in education, it was concluded that most individuals tend to have a specific effective learning style. The study observed the patterns in Gen Z behavior on a variety of different mediums and found that they preferred to first observe and subsequently apply those same skills and techniques in a variation of the observational learning style (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). The study attributes this to the changes in educational medium, namely the increase in

remote learning. Specifically, "the individual nature of technology has helped Generation Z become comfortable and accustomed to learning independently" (Seemiller & Grace, 2017, p. 23). This aligns with research conducted by Burbank et al. (2015), who further attributes this to the reflective nature of new generations of students. Burbank et al. (2015) also observed that high-impact practices are also an effective tool for leveraging development in younger generations. Their research defines high-impact practices as "instructional strategies that connect students with community partners to combine formal classroom learning to informal learning outside the classroom" (Burbank et al., 2015, p. 184).

2.9 Algorithmic-based Targeting

User-based interactions with digital platforms can be seen primarily as an exchange of information. Within most current digital infrastructure systems, any desired and relevant information sought after by the user is traded for their digital information or "data". This data is leveraged to create better search results and smoother experiences for the user. In an attempt to entice their continued usage of the platform (Meghisan-Toma et al., 2021). Gen Z's technological affinity has led to a novel integration between them and these digital platforms. While this type of integration allows for certain distinct advantages, it also presents a distinct vulnerability (Benasso & Cuzzocrea, 2019). Specifically, this vulnerability is manipulation by any external parties attempting to change their behavior through algorithmic-based targeting (Benasso & Cuzzocrea, 2019; DuckDuckGo, 2022; Meghisan-Toma et al., 2021). Algorithmic-based targeting is defined as the usage of past digital behavioral data to modify future digital behavior (DuckDuckGo, 2022). According to research conducted by Meghisan-Toma et al. (2021), there are multiple factors that affect the behavior of all individuals currently using the internet both in personal and professional settings. These include "but are not limited to online advertising, social influence, and usage motivation" (Meghisan-Toma et al., 2021, p. 1458). Of these factors, usage motivation is considered by many researchers to be the most influential (Benasso & Cuzzocrea, 2019; DuckDuckGo, 2022; Haim et al., 2017; Meghisan-Toma et al., 2021). Usage motivation is conceptualized as the bias a digital platform has towards specific types of information (DuckDuckGo, 2022). Invariably

across the literature, explicit mention is made of Google. It is currently the most widely used search engine in the world, and reference is made to its large contributions toward shifting usage motivation. The three included reports all point to Google's use of complex algorithms to monitor and adjust what appears in the search results of their products including YouTube, Search, and Google News (Benasso & Cuzzocrea, 2019; DuckDuckGo, 2022; Haim et al., 2017). Specifically, the algorithms developed by Google modify the content an individual sees by providing alternatives deemed more appropriately matched based on the previously collected data points on that individual (Benasso & Cuzzocrea, 2019; DuckDuckGo, 2022; Haim et al., 2017). Gen Z is particularly vulnerable to this kind of manipulation as they comprise a subset of individuals with the highest amount of time spent online (Diz, 2021; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017; Pichler et al., 2021). Therefore, the more time Gen Z spends online, the more data points are collected about them. Which increasing narrows the type of result they get exposed to. In a report by ProPublica (2020), It was found that simply through social media usage, the average Gen Z individual has over 52,000 unique data points and attributes corresponding to their digital identity. Specifically, the study focused on the social media platform Facebook, presently known as Meta (ProPublica, 2020). Their report also found they used, and continue to use, similar algorithms to those of Google to modify the content displayed on their platform (ProPublica, 2020). Facebook was also a central part of the 2018 investigation into Cambridge Analytica, a data consulting company that assembled digital profiles on over a hundred million social media users around the world (Boldyreva et al., 2018). With at least 50 million of those Facebook users located in the United States (Confessore, 2018). These profiles were assembled using unique data points and attributes linked to a user's digital identity as mentioned prior. Cambridge Analytica then sold these assembled digital user profiles to various organizations, including companies like Facebook who provided them the raw data points (Confessore, 2018). Other organizations also included US political parties, and foreign governments (Confessore, 2018). This information specifically categorized and collated users into microcosms that both echoed and amplified their online behaviors (Boldyreva et al., 2018). Cambridge Analytica has been directly linked to having changed the election outcomes in various countries around the world after social media companies leveraged their online profile data (Boldyreva et al., 2018). It is relevant to acknowledge that many of these user profiles were not comprised of Gen Z individuals. However, this is set to change as

time progresses and Gen Z becomes a more financially relevant demographic from which to harvest data (Diz, 2021; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017; Pichler et al., 2021). Notably, DuckDuckGo (2020), is an alternative search platform to Google, and could therefore be seen as a conflict of interest. However, the researcher who conducted the report did so externally from the company. Additionally, DuckDuckGo is a free and open-source search engine that does not collect, distribute, or sell user data and therefore cannot profit traditionally from the findings of the study.¹

2.10 Purpose

Each new generation brings with it a novel set of challenges (Deloitte, 2021). This remains true for Gen Z. However, their main challenge appears rather counterintuitive in nature. Gen Z is the generation most connected within itself (Csobanka, 2016). Yet, their main challenge has become a search for connection, and by extension a search for their purpose (American Psychological Association, 2020). Purpose in this sense is to be represented by belonging to something greater and or the fulfillment experienced by contributing to it (By, 2021). This is evidenced in part by the purchasing patterns of Gen Z consumers. Namely that they frequently demand both engagement and activism from the goods and services they consume (Jiang, 2018). Furthermore, reference was made to certain marketing firms and their strategies for leveraging activism to increase their brand recognition within Gen Z (Jiang, 2018). However, the concept of purpose extends past the superficial nature of purchasing, and into data gathered by the American Psychological Association. Specifically, this is represented in their research conducted on stress. In their 2020 study, they found that Gen Z had disproportionately low levels of overall personal satisfaction (American Psychological Association, 2020). About recent world events, their study also found that "Half of Gen Z teens (51%) report that the coronavirus pandemic makes planning for their future feel impossible, and more than 2 in 3 Gen Z adults in college (67%) say the coronavirus pandemic makes planning for their future feel impossible" (American

¹ When researching this section of the review, only a non-google-based search engine rendered any valid and relevant sources on Google's algorithmic-based targeting. Two of those sources are referenced in this section.

Psychological Association, 2020, p. 4). Although the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are expected to disappear as time goes on, the emotional toll on Gen Z has been significant (Deloitte, 2021). This is compounded by the nature of Gen Z's finances, as they are set to become the most indebted generation on record (Deloitte, 2021). Despite these concerns, research also points to the presence of an unexpected attitude in Gen Z. Namely, they value compensation as less important than fulfillment and satisfaction when it comes to professional employment (Baldonado, 2018; Deloitte, 2021; Diz, 2021). Although this initially appears a counterintuitive notion, research conducted on this perspective suggests it is likely true for many Gen Z individuals. Specifically, "Gen Z is driven by purpose and world change. An impressive 65% wants to personally create something world-changing" (Girls With Impact, 2019, p. 2). When combined with the findings of Deloitte (2021), that Gen Z is already the most educated generation in history, the Gen Z desire for a purposeful life is clear in its conception. Notably, the study conducted by Girls With Impact (2019), included an entirely female demographic. Through the rise of social media and the online world, Gen Z is exposed to broader and more complex systems at an increasingly younger age (Csobanka, 2016; Goh & Lee, 2018; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017). This means they are experiencing many of the world's problems without the ability to impact them directly. This is also seen as a cause of the increased stress and anxiety levels as seen in the studies from the American Psychological Association (2020) and Deloitte (2021). Furthermore, the longing for purpose can also be conceptualized as the want to enact meaningful change. Which makes purpose a driving force behind the current actions of Gen Z and will likely impact their decisions in the future (American Psychological Association, 2020).

3. Methodology

The literature review revealed that leadership is a complex and multifaceted topic requiring specific context when evaluating any of its components. Therefore, the most appropriate choice for a research design in this thesis was a qualitative approach. The purpose of which is to evaluate the themes present when examining Gen Z's capacity for leadership. While the literature review contextualized the different

elements of current leaders and leadership practices. A better understanding of their overlapping beliefs, tendencies, and characteristics can only be achieved through research leveraging the current perspectives of leadership professionals.

3.1 Procedure Overview

A total of 10 main themes were identified as especially relevant in the literature review. Each represents an important contextual element for answering the research question. Hence, each of the elements was used to structure the 10 questions and prompts for the research questionnaire. The questionnaire was created and administered digitally using Google Forms. Once the timeframe for participation in the research had closed, any participants who submitted were assigned a number to keep their identities anonymous. The number was based on the chronological order they submitted their response and was used to code the data. Each question was then analyzed based on its corresponding responses. This was done in a manner like that of a literature review, using the participants as sources. The textual analysis of each question is comprised of direct quotes from participants and is structured to show the discrepancies, overlaps, and outliers in the responses. Every participant quote is referenced through a variation on an in-text citation. Which indicates the specific participant as a source using the abbreviation "part." and their corresponding number assignment. For example, when using a quote from the participant no. "0", the in-text citation would appear as "(part. 0)". This was done to mirror the citation style of APA 7th Ed used in the literature review. Following the textual analysis is a discussion of identified discrepancies, overlaps, and outliers in respect to answering the research question. Proceeded by the limitations of the research and its conclusion.

3.2 Topic selection

The inception of the research topic came from unique access to qualified individuals, in formal leadership positions. That access stems from the professional network of a direct family member. The family member works at an institution called the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies where they serve as the

Director of Alumni Relations. The Marshall Center is in the German town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen and is one of five regional centers for the U.S. Department of Defense. The Marshall Center maintains relationships with individuals all around the world, recently passing 15,000 alumni "whose numbers include "senior policymakers and military officers, as well as career civil servants from dozens of ministries in 157 partner nations" (George C. Marshall Center, 2022, para. 1). In addition to being an internationally acclaimed center for security studies, their programs include leadership development training for an international audience of security professionals.

3.3 Population and sample

At its core, this research is about what is required for effective leadership. The Marshall Center represented an opportunity to gather responses from genuine current leaders with practical experience and insight. Therefore, the decision was made to select public sector professionals, exclusively from within the Marshall Center's alumni network, as participants in this research. After correspondence with the direct family member, they contacted several potential participants that best fit the target population. This preemptive communication was done for two reasons. First, to inquire about the participant's willingness and availability to participate in the research. And second, so their initial confrontation with the idea came from a familiar and reputable party. This proved an effective strategy and resulted in a preliminary list of 22 amenable participants who matched the target group.

3.4 Data collection

The participants were contacted by way of an email describing the details, parameters, and requirements of the research. The email included a link to the Google Forms questionnaire and a consent form. The consent form further outlined how their personal information and responses were to be stored and used concerning the research. If the participant was willing to have their responses included in the research, they were required to sign the consent form and return it digitally before accessing the questionnaire. Their responses were collected over a week and compiled into 10 separate documents for individual analysis (see appendices). One of the contributing

contextual factors examined in the literature review discussed the impersonal nature of the online medium where many of Gen Z's interactions take place. This was considered for the possible detriment it could pose to Gen Z's development of interpersonal skills and leadership ability. This became pertinent to the mythology and was directly responsible for the selection of an online questionnaire as the medium for data collection. The rationale for this was the impersonal nature of an online questionnaire could provide an additional layer of integrity to the participant's responses. Specifically, by mitigating some of the external biases that could have been present in a traditional expert interview format. As I am a member of Gen Z, my role as the interviewer is inextricably linked to the research topic and may have led to participants modifying their answers.² This method also made the data collection less complicated and prone to erroneous interpretation since no response transcription was required. Despite the participant's awareness of my status as a member of Gen Z, the online questionnaire would serve to further minimize any impact of that knowledge on their responses. Since all research-related interactions were to take place digitally, it reduced the likelihood of participants accommodating any underlying social contract present when engaged in an interview. This again proved an effective strategy and is evidenced by the slightly snarky perspectives of certain participants in various sections of the questionnaire.

3.5 Questionnaire

The initial page of the questionnaire again outlined the parameters of the research for the participants and provided guidelines on their responses. The guidelines first instructed the participants to take as much time as they required when responding and to write as much as they deemed necessary and appropriate. They were then

² The first-person point of view is deliberate and specifically necessary where used. As I am a member of Gen Z, this research inherently has a degree of cognitive bias due to my relationship with the topic. Its usage is meant to represent my awareness of this inherent bias and to pay tribute to my unique access to the participants. With the latter specifically being responsible for the selection of the research topic.

instructed to respond in a freeform manner, and that no corrective formatting was required. The motivation for this was primarily to encourage considerate and honest responses from the participants. Allowing them to focus on conveying their perspectives without the need to perfectly format them. Which consequently lowered the time investment demanded of the participants without compromising the final length of the questionnaire. The participants were further informed to leave any questions blank, should they not feel comfortable responding to them. With exception of the principal question on the status of their consent form. This was done such that only participants who indicated having successfully returned their consent form could proceed to the actual response sections. The questionnaire was comprised of three sections. The first section contained questions about the demographics and professional qualifications of the participants. These were presented as either single choice or short answer questions and could be left blank or unmarked. Once a participant indicates their having completed the first section, they were brought to the second section and presented with the first of the 10 freeform response questions. These were displayed chronologically and in correspondence with their counterpart in the literature review. Each question was prefaced with a brief prompt to assist in providing context for the question. After the completion of the tenth and final question, the participants were directed to the tertiary section confirming their submission and thanking them for completing the questionnaire. Notably, it was found in the literature review that leadership tends to suggest the idea of hierarchy within an organization. This can result in certain emotional and social connotations when discussing individuals who do not occupy leadership roles. This directly led to the substitution of role-based terminologies like "employee" and "subordinate" for the more neutral term "people" in the prompts and questions. This was done to avoid encouraging any peripheral connotation towards these individuals and incidentally influencing a participant's response.

4. Textual Analysis

Q.1 When you think about the word “leadership”, what concepts come to mind?

The most prevalent theme across the participants for Q1 was that of goal-oriented accomplishment. Over half of the participants made a direct or indirect mention of it in their responses. Interestingly, the ability to achieve a goal, in the sense of successfully taking a task from its inception to its completion, took precedence over other mentioned concepts like personality and leadership ability. Specific reference was made to the benefits of the positive emotional response subordinates receive when they successfully achieved, directly or indirectly, the desired result. According to the responses, leadership means to be proficient in accomplishing tasks and by extension, assisting and allowing others to accomplish theirs. Further related to accomplishing goals was the theme of responsibility. Specifically, that leadership means taking responsibility for one's actions irrespective of their outcome. Many responses pointed to the idea of ownership in terms of one's actions. Participant 12 specifically points to leadership implying one "must make difficult decisions and they need to own those decisions" (part. 12). A further frequent theme was that of providing direction as a prerequisite for leadership. Some responses proposed that subordinates require a level of guidance on how to direct their abilities, and that leadership implies providing them that guidance. This is accomplished by providing the correct resources to subordinates. Specifically, "resources include not just things like IT, supplies and an adequate workspace, but the right kind of teammates who are trained, know their jobs and are held accountable" (part. 8) and that implementing resource effectively leads to "continuous performance improvement" (part. 11). The idea of constant improvement was also in the responses. The precise notion is that leadership implies "shaping policy and decision-making to constantly improve the state of affairs, development, guidance [sic]" (part. 7). The remaining responses also referred to the qualities of bad leadership. Pointing to the absence of the previous themes as specific qualities found in examples of bad leadership.

Q.2 What measures or techniques have you applied to keep younger people motivated?

When asked about Q2, four themes emerged from the participants. The first, and most ubiquitous, was the theme of encouragement. The theme, and specific terms, were recurrent among the participants. The term appears in 58% of the responses. There were multiple interpretations of the concept with each being cited as an effective method of motivation. Specific reference was made to explaining the purpose of a task (part. 2), facilitation techniques (part. 5), and personal relationship building (part. 7). With an additional emphasis placed on recognition as a key component for motivating younger people (part. 1, part. 6, part. 9). The next most common theme was involvement. The suggestion throughout the responses is that younger generations are most active, motivated, and engaged when they are directly involved in a particular task. Furthermore, participant 6 suggests that not involving them can be actively counterproductive, stating that “Gen Zers want to be part of a winning team and need constant positive motivation and reinforcement to keep them on the job (or they will skip to another)” (part. 6). Participant 8 mentioned the term micromanagement concerning involvement. They mention micromanagement as similarly counterproductive due to it inherently prohibiting subordinates from exercising additional professional independence (part. 8). Participant 9 attributed a subordinate’s independence as a key factor in their avolition of a project. Further mentioning how their current implementation of this has led to successful outcomes (part. 9). Skepticism was a theme across a minority of responses but was considered a trait especially present in Gen Z. Interestingly, none of the responses considered this an undesirable trait. Rather, it was seen as a positive and desirable trait to have. According to participant 3, “Younger people are more inquisitive and require explanatory information when directed to do something. This is not a negative trait” (part. 3). This aligns with the response from participant 2 who stated, “In my observation, younger folks are more skeptical and discerning in what they support - but when they decide to support that goal, they are as committed as anyone from any generation” (part. 2). Finally, the last theme identified in Q2 was that of failure. Two of the participants mention that tolerating failure when dealing with Gen Z is necessary and inevitable. When taking on a new task, failure is an integral part of the learning process and both

Participant 8 and participant 11 refer to this as a helpful understanding when motivating younger subordinates.

Q.3 How do you define success in terms of leadership? Describe as best you can what has helped you become a successful leader.

The responses to Q3 overlapped rather remarkably displaying two, similar yet decisively unique, themes as a result. The first theme focuses on the success of a symbiotic relationship between leaders and subordinates. Whereas the second specifically addresses the dynamic nature of success. Participants often mentioned the express importance of leadership roles. Alluding to the emotional balance necessary to facilitate the symbiotic relationship between these roles. The concept of respect is used to illustrate this. Participant 9 makes specific reference to this stating, “I think leaders need to be accountable to the people they are leading. Otherwise, they will not earn the respect they need to be effective.” (part. 9). Participant 11 further expands on this, stating of leadership ability, that success is “where individuals place team needs above their own selfish ambitions/desires by serving others before self; a culture where credit to the team is more important than credit to self” (part. 11). This reflects the underlying idea of recognition, which also appears in many responses. According to the literature, for a leader to be considered successful, it is incumbent upon them to recognize their team for both its strengths and its shortcomings (Hameed & Sharma, 2020). This is closely paralleled in the response from participant 4, who wrote that, “understanding the individuals who are part of the group (including their strengths and weaknesses)” (part. 4), is contingent for successful leadership in a team setting. The second major theme across the responses pertains to the dynamic nature of success, and that a leader must fulfill more criteria than simple task completion to be considered successful. The responses listed many conceptual examples of such criteria. These included emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowerment, with the latter criteria being the most referenced amongst them. According to participant 2, contributing to the “development of individuals as members of an organization, with a clear purpose and approach, on the team is the optimal outcome” [sic] (part. 2). Furthermore, the idea of being able to instill a level of autonomy was present. Specifically, that lasting success as a leader

also entails the creation of “a team that can work and excel without you” (part. 8) and that “Success is seeing your subordinates succeed (or even surpass you)” (part. 6).

Q.4 What characteristics should current leaders embody for the next generation?

There was an overwhelming consensus in Q4 surrounding the themes of selflessness and humility as positive characteristics for present leadership to emulate. Of the 12 participants, 10 made explicit use of the term “selflessness” or “humility” in their responses. While both terms may appear like one another, they are used by the participants to exemplify markedly different ideas about leadership. Selflessness is seen as both an aspirational and inspirational quality in a leader. Concerning the latter, participant 2 wrote, “no matter young or old, people will find a selfless leader inspirational” (part. 2). Furthermore, the idea of selflessness gets collated with the willingness of a leader to allocate their time and effort expressly towards developing their subordinates. Directly addressing Q4, participant 9 wrote “One of the most obvious answers to this question (for me) is their willingness to devote time and effort to actually develop the leaders of the next generation” (part. 9). Selflessness is also likened to “The desire to recognize others and ensure they feel their intrinsic worth.” (part. 3). Regarding humility, the term was listed in most responses as a predominant characteristic of good leaders (part. 6; part. 8; part. 11; part. 12). Specifically, participant 6 made a correlation regarding the relationship between humility and ethical tendencies. According to them “You always owe your success as a leader to the work of others (or those before you...or the family that raised you in the values and morals that you now follow)” [sic] (part. 6). Further qualifying that statement with, “Power corrupts (and absolute power corrupts absolutely) and only the humble can truly fend off the corrupting ethical tendencies” (part. 6). This once again raises the broader theme of recognition, which is present through many of the responses across all the sections in the questionnaire. Additionally, the theme of communication also appears in the responses. The concept is that communication, while key to the interactions between leaders and subordinates, must be carried out in a particular way to be effective. Participant 11 wrote that leadership should maintain “open/transparent communication (over communicate)” [sic] (part. 11). The term “overcommunicate” is

notable as it represents an extreme version of communication and is generally considered a beneficial strategy for professional interactions.

Q.5 Is it necessary to change current leadership practices? Why or why not?

When queried about Q5 a stark division between the participants became apparent. Of the 12 participants, two answered "no", four answered "yes", and the remaining six responded with a variation of either to the first part of Q5. However, despite the discernable polarity of the responses to the initial question in Q5, a distinct commonality is present in their respective rationales. This commonality was the suggestion that certain qualities, traits, and aspects of leadership should remain constant. According to participant 2, "Good leaders have timeless qualities but morph and modify their approach based on the environment, their teammates, and the mission" (part. 2). Participant 2 then alludes to personal experience within the military by describing the relationship between an infantry platoon and experienced leadership. They mention a leader must have the ability to bridge the interactions between senior staff and subordinates when exercising their command effectively (part. 2). They state specifically that "The composition of your team, their key skills and attributes, and the nature of the mission and organization should drive the 'how' of a leader's approach" (part. 2). Conversely, participant 6 states "The same good leadership practices that worked a hundred or two hundred years ago still work today (for the most part) and vice versa" (part. 6). Although these statements initially appear to contradict each other, the shared theme remains the same. The older concepts, which have remained universal in leadership, should stay in practice. Since being universal implies an effective approach with quality principles. This is further validated by participant 8, who wrote "The good leadership practices endure, and the bad ones shouldn't. I think it is more important to pick the right leaders, to begin with" (part. 8). The proper selection of leadership was another common theme, whereby the participants affirm the necessity of changing ineffective leaders, rather than leadership practices. This is evidenced by participant 11 who directly states concerning bad leaders, "Hierarchical non-inclusive "do it because I told you to and I'm the boss" doesn't work/resonate" [sic] (part. 11). Which aligns with the concept of certain practices enduring where others do not. This is again demonstrated in participant 12 who states concerning

leadership characteristics, “Compromising character traits or integrity to achieve success or appease popular opinion can cause problems in the long run” (part. 12). Interestingly, participant 8 amplifies this notion by alluding to the arduous nature of filtering out ineffective or bad leaders. Ultimately stating, “Those bad leaders then select new bad leaders. The most knowledgeable, the smartest and the most senior don't necessarily possess the best leadership practices and often the worst” (part. 8).

Q.6 How does the idea of VUCA impact on your professional life?

The responses to Q6 tended in major part to have a non-negative view of VUCA. With it being perceived even as the status quo for some throughout both their personal and professional lives. The broader consensus is that it was both a helpful and necessary conceptual tool for dealing with the inevitable and unpredictable nature of leadership in a professional environment. Concerning VUCA for leaders, participant 2 stated, "It is key to understand the complex nature of problems. Leaders must understand that VUCA requires a flexibility of mind and action" (part. 2). This aligns with participant 9 who wrote regarding the same context "I think leaders have to create clear incentives (as well as remove clear disincentives, something particularly common in government given the tendency toward inertia) to promote innovation and creativity" (part. 4). The concept of VUCA originates from the public sector, specifically stemming from the US military. Notably, participant 11 refers to their military background in their response, "Having led large organizations in combat, VUCA is foundational in its impact on my professional life" (part. 11). The impacts felt by those constantly confronted with VUCA were also present in the responses. This is reflected somewhat in the response of participant 5, "It provides a stimulating challenge. It prevents complacency but it can also create stress" (part.5). And further correlates with the response from participant 8, who mentions VUCA impacts, "Encourage calculated risk-taking and trying new things with incomplete information" (part. 8). However, some responses advised exercising caution when dealing with VUCA. About the nature of VUCA, participant 7 wrote, "It is also impossible to make progress with constant VUCA" (part. 7). The idea of an overabundance of VUCA being detrimental is also supported by the response from participant 3, "Recognizing VUCA and the impact on subordinates is essential to leadership. Positive leaders need to minimize VUCA

through openness and transparency. It can never be completely eradicated but must be controlled and minimized" (part. 3). Notably, one of the participants, responded that they were unfamiliar with the term VUCA despite occupying a public sector position.

Q.7 How do you incorporate reflection as a component of leadership?

Q7 was written specifically to avoid suggesting a definite interpretation of the term reflection. This was done to allow the participants to interpret the question in the way most immediately applicable to them. This decision resulted in the desired effect and the responses were sequestered into two categories. The first is a reflection on one's team, followed by self-reflection. About the latter, participant 6 wrote "I think it is an absolute necessity to find time each day to reflect and prioritize (whatever method is used). It becomes even more important the higher your level of leadership becomes" (part. 6). This is further supported by participant 3 who stated, "Self-reflection is difficult but the ability to exercise it results in a more effective and respected leaders" [sic] (part. 3). Furthermore, the idea of self-reflection then gets expanded upon to include external components by participant 7, who wrote that "One must reflect on the opinions of others, on your own strengths and weaknesses, carefully assess any situation before making decisions on how to move forward, take many opinions into consideration prior to making a decision and be conscious and sensitive to who you are dealing with" [sic] (part. 7). This is mirrored in the response of participant 9 who added aspects of negative feedback. Precisely they responded, "I openly solicit feedback (good, bad, or neutral) from the people I work with, clearly express that I am not offended by critical comments, and don't respond negatively to negative feedback." (part. 9). The importance of feedback was also present in the responses pertaining to reflection on one's team. Essentially, the notion is that reflection on the part of a team or teammate is best instigated through feedback from their leader. Participant 2 responded, "The feedback and investment in time is a type of reflection - it demonstrates care in the teammate and provides them the ability to also reflect and improve" (part. 2). Participant 4 paralleled this and suggested a specific technique for accomplishing it. Namely, "Once the task is complete, ensure that a "hot-wash" (after-action group session that reflects on lessons learned, what went well, what could have been done better) is an integral phase of a task" [sic] (part. 4). From the responses, it is

also apparent that a specific emotional environment is necessary for convalescent feedback interactions to take place. That reflection is conducive to the ability of both sides to interact equitably. Participant 10 parallels this, stating of reflection, "It is an interactive process. It is essential to create an atmosphere where people are connected by shared objectives and where leaders and "subordinates" can freely and honestly interact" (part. 10).

Q.8 What is your perspective on the role digital platforms could play in developing future leaders?

All the responses to Q8 were similarly oriented regarding digital platforms. The clear consensus is that while digital platforms can be excellent tools, they can also lead to less-than-ideal outcomes. Although this might be seen as an obvious conclusion, there were several interesting and varying rationales about why it could be the case. Participant 2 references the duality of digital platforms, proclaiming them as "Advantageous because these platforms can provide novel and progressive means to teach, instruction, inform and influence in development if a leader can use them effectively. However, if used poorly or with malfeasance, they can amplify negative leadership and prove harmful" [sic] (part. 2). This duality is also mirrored in the response from participant 3 "Their overwhelming presence cannot be ignored and should be recognized with the caveat that there is a lot of disinformation. Encouraging the development of an inquisitive mindset is essential to managing and analyzing the volume of digital information" (part. 3). However, some participants viewed digital platforms in a more definite sense. Essentially stating while they provide utility, it is already too late to avoid the pitfalls. Participant 1 exemplifies this in their response "Unfortunately, there are no filters on this internet "knowledge" and disinformation and misinformation can and does thrive" (part. 1). The concept of misinformation was also present in other participants. The linking element is that digital platforms are harmful because of how susceptible they are to bad actors. This is seen in the response from participant 7, who wrote "digital platforms also render people less intelligent in some ways because they no longer read books and believe everything they read online, which often consists of a lot of junk and misinformation. (part. 7). This concept then shifts from the professional domain to a personal one. Specifically, participant 6

recounts an anecdote from their personal life, “I see it in my children where digital media as become all- consuming. YouTube and other social media giants must become more acutely aware of what role they have in society and how they can positively impact future generations of leaders” [sic] (part. 6). Further stating “I think they are currently doing much more harm than good in creating leaders for the next generation” (part. 6). Some participants also discuss their current professional usage of these digital platforms despite their less favorable outlooks on them. Participant 11 responded that, “our organization just hired, for the first time, a strategic communications director, in part because we are ineffectively utilizing digital platforms to tout and connect” (part. 11). And participant 7 wrote, “Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, they're all good platforms to market what you do at work. For example, I market my video podcast series through these platforms to gain views” (part. 7).

Q.9 How do you see the relationships between Generation X, Y, and Z. Also, what do you envision as a long-term outcome of direct competition between the latter two?

There are two parts to Q9, each with unique corresponding themes. When discussing the first part of Q9, the participants held several perspectives on intergenerational relationships. According to participant 6, "In my experience X and Y seem to get along well (except for moderate/large differences in technical proficiency)" (part. 6). Whereas, according to participant 2, "I think there is a tension between them as they perceive the world differently, just like the WWII generation, baby boomers and Gen X had their tensions" (part. 2). The mention of WWII by participant 2 is notable as other responses also included mention of major events as a qualifying aspect to their responses. When discussing millennials, participant 9 stated "I do think graduating college at the start of the Great Recession will have long-term professional consequences for those of us in Gen Y" (part. 9). Major events do have the ability to shape perspectives across a range of individuals and are precisely the rationale behind the use of generational labels. In response to the second part of Q9, the participants tended toward the notion of Gen Z having an advantage in direct competition with Gen Y. With the additional mention of the difficulties each might encounter. According to participant 2 "Gen Z drive will likely create conditions where they will leapfrog Y in

leadership, as Y as a whole will look to experience things versus run thing, with a few notable exceptions" [sic] (part. 2). This is supported by the response from participant 7, "Long-term outcome of direct competition between Gen Z and Y would probably end up with Gen Z having the upper hand since they are more trained in the STEM fields and those are probably the subjects one needs to master to succeed in the future" (part. 7). However, other respondents had markedly different perspectives. Participant 12 responded that they "see the relationships between the three as non-competitive" (part. 12). Whereas participant 11 responded, "I don't envision a long-term outcome of direct competition between Gen Y and Z, provided the organization's culture is right" (part. 11). Interestingly, a third of the participants specifically voiced their dissatisfaction with the oversimplification present in categorizing individuals into generational factions. Participant 8 states about the ancillary question in Q9, "I think the best outcome is to ensure we don't generalize. As we all know from our peer groups there are many differences within. I don't think it's helpful to label such groups" (part. 8). This belief was also shared by participant 1, who stated "I think it is simplistic and prejudicial to place people in these categories" (part. 1). And participant 3, "Simply lumping a group of people together by an arbitrary birth range is an oversimplification of a very complex, constantly changing cultural environment" (part. 3). The prompt to Q9 was written as a generalized example of generational conflicts. Which makes these responses unique in that the participants volunteered their perspectives outside the confines of Q9.

Q.10 When interacting with members of Gen Z, what are some themes you have observed in a professional or personal capacity?

The responses to Q10 were tantamount to previous questions, in that the participants had diametrically opposed perspectives regarding the themes in their interactions with Gen Z. Predictably some positively viewed their interactions, and some viewed them less favorably. For the participants with positive perceptions, a focus was placed on the investigative disposition present in the individuals they encountered. Participant 3 stated, "Gen Z members are more inquisitive and open minded than previous generations" (part. 3). This is further supported by participant 4, who regarding Gen Z's values wrote, "Answering the "why" of doing anything is

relatively important" (part. 4). And is expanded upon by participant 2, who stated, "They want to know the "why" and they are smarter and faster than my generation" (part. 2). Participant 2 then continued, "Since they know how to access and use information faster, they come to decision and action and quicker than is comfortable for older generations" (part. 2). Further positive impressions were shared by participant 11, who responded regarding Gen Z's character-related preferences, "Gen Z prefer wide boundaries; creativity; some autonomy; appreciation; valued teammate; acknowledgement of worth to team; inclusiveness" [sic] (part. 11). The mention of certain positive personal characteristics also appeared in the responses of participants who identified negative themes in their interactions with Gen Z. For example, participant 7 wrote, "I find them curious, polite, and open-minded. But I also find that they don't respect authority as much as older generations and will do all they can to advance professionally" (part. 7). Which is a theme expanded upon by participant 6, who wrote Gen Z harbors a proclivity for "Impatience and tendency to bounce between jobs. Lack of fulfillment at the work place (for a number of reasons) and many also display a somewhat gloomy outlook on life) [sic] (part. 6). This could be attributed to several reasons. One of which is suggested by participant 12, who wrote that Gen Z is "Often sensitive to constructive or direct feedback aimed at helping them achieve goals" (part. 12). Therefore, suggesting that a lack of proficiency to internalize advice or recommendations tends to result in slower growth. This is mirrored in the response from participant 1, who suggested two additional Gen Z inadequacies. Specifically, "Inability to think critically or understand bias. Too much faith in what they read or see on the internet" (part. 1). There are several reasons why participants might maintain concrete perspectives on Gen Z. However, an interesting idea is suggested by participant 10, "We have very little shared cultural background. I read different books, watched different films, have different personal experiences. It is a huge challenge to bridge it. They are often pragmatic and short-termist that I do not like" [sic] (part. 10).

5. Discussion

Of the initial 22 candidates who showed an interest in participating in the research, 12 completed both the questionnaire and consent form within the allotted

time frame. Although the identities of the participants will remain anonymous, their specific demographics are important to understanding the responses. Eleven of the participants identified themselves as male, and the remaining participant identified themselves as female. In terms of age ranges, five were born after 1965 and therefore are generationally considered as "Baby Boomers". A further five were born between 1965 – 1981 and are therefore considered "Gen X". And the remaining two were part of the millennial generation "Gen Y" born between 1982 – 1994. Notably, none of the participants were born after 1995 and therefore part of Gen Z. In terms of nationality, ten participants are US nationals and two are European nationals. All 12 of the participants currently hold formal leadership positions in the public sector, with the majority having done so for over 15 years. And the minority for fewer than 10 years. All the participants have held a formal leadership position in at least two different countries and come from a variety of backgrounds both personally and professionally. Ranging from lifelong careers in the US Military to over 40 years in Academia and civil service. After analyzing the responses, three themes for Gen Z's leadership ability were made clear. Each of the themes is discussed in rank order to their prevalence within the responses. The first theme is that of reflection in Gen Z, more precisely how Gen Z's usage of digital platforms has pigeonholed them into an increasingly limited digital stratum devoid of reflection. The second theme encapsulates why Gen Z might better be suited to entrepreneurship in terms of which positions best fit their generational predispositions. And the final theme is how Gen Z's proclivity for introspection could serve as a characteristic marker of whether their values align with those required from leadership roles.

Reflection

In the literature, it was found that Gen Z is the most connected generation to date and is thought to result in unprecedented access and exposure to information (Csobanka, 2016). However, this is likely only partially true. While Gen Z does, in a technical sense, have unprecedented access to information, their exposure to it could be more limited than originally imagined. The nature of digital platforms is to maximize their user's experience by collating together the prospective information and content they will want to see. The result of which is inevitably exposure to an increasingly more refined set of content that alters itself to match their values and ideas (Boldyreva et al., 2018). While this is true of any generation when talking about digital

platforms, there is a novel level of concern with Gen Z. According to the participants, a prerequisite component of effective leadership is reflection. The participants either mentioned this as the reflection of one's perceptions or specifically the ability to reflect on the perspectives of the others. Further citing the significance of feedback, both positive and negative, as a fundamental part of growing as a leader. For the most part, Gen Z conducts its interactions with the world digitally. Even more so in recent times and at an increasingly more critical stage of generational development (Diz, 2021; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017). Their search for new ideas has them using a medium that leverages their tendencies towards an already immature system of beliefs. Specifically, Gen Z is placing themselves into digital echo chambers resulting from their constant exposure to that increasingly finite set of values and ideas. Regardless of the value or detriment reflected in these magnified conceptualizations, they are inherently limited. When an argument lacks a counterargument, it becomes difficult to determine the comparative value of its assertions. Without the ability to effectively reflect on their perspectives, Gen Z is missing an important opportunity for personal development. Less exposure to those who think differently can lead to missing the personal growth that comes from having to rationalize one perspective relative to another. Without exposure to these contrary perspectives, the likelihood of leaving increasingly unsubstantiated arguments without their due criticism rises. This could leave Gen Z unable to observe the duality of things in favor of never having to question them. Which is not only a trait unamenable to leadership but can also be dangerous if left unchecked.

Entrepreneurship

According to the literature by Baldonado (2018), Gen Z values the right kind of motivation as the primary contributing factor to their willingness to accomplish a particular goal. And that they put a particular focus on the ability to grow and develop within any chosen domain. The participants confirm this and further mention that once properly motivated, Gen Z can be very committed to pursuing what they set upon. As discussed in the literature review, Gen Z's engagement in the workplace also plays a key role in their motivation. It was found that once given a certain level of autonomy, they were able to achieve their set goals more effectively than when given explicit guidance (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). The same notion was found in responses from many of the participants. The majority of which pointed toward the importance of

allowing younger subordinates a higher degree of independence to maximize their engagement. All of which are indicative of Gen Z likely being best suited towards working in an environment where they are primarily responsible for any outcomes. Ozkan & Solmaz (2015), specifically proposed the idea of Gen Z being best suited for entrepreneurship because of their technology integration and digital abilities. Ozkan & Solmaz (2015), also noted that this integration with technology allows them to leverage the digital space such that entrepreneurial endeavors become just as feasible as traditional employment. In starting their own business, Gen Z would be able to fulfill all the outlined criteria for effective motivation. All the while being responsible for their outcomes. Regarding responsibility, both the literature and the responses mention how it can be a primary catalyst for personal growth in Gen Z. Hence their generational gearing towards entrepreneurial pursuits can also be seen as their attraction towards taking on additional responsibility. According to Deloitte (2021), the need for personal growth can be directly connected to Gen Z's broader longing for purpose. Therefore, when looking at traditional positions, Gen Z is likely to evaluate them based on the amount of independence they offer. However, they will be doing so with entrepreneurship set as the benchmark for what is offered elsewhere in terms of responsibility and satiating their longing for purpose. This could add an extra layer to the implicit opportunity cost present in accepting one position relative to another. Thus, making it less likely for Gen Z to consider accepting most traditional positions. This is further compounded by Gen Z's tendency to care less about monetary compensation in favor of fulfillment and satisfaction (Baldonado, 2018; Deloitte, 2021; Diz, 2021). Entrepreneurship is by no means a negligible path for Gen Z, however, their proclivity towards it could prove problematic in terms of their leadership capacity. According to the participants, humility is paramount to any semblance of leadership success. They attribute it to the ability to ward off the ethically corrupting tendencies of holding any leadership role. As well as the key component for facilitating productivity and satisfaction in subordinates. Should Gen Z retreat from traditional positions of employment in favor of commencing their entrepreneurial endeavors, they are likely to miss the lessons in humility that stem from working for a "boss". Without learning that humility they would start in a leadership role lacking a key component of effective leadership. Which could impact their professional relationship and leave them at a disadvantage to older generations with experience at the foot of existing successful leadership.

Introspection

Gen Z is very much an introspective generation. According to the literature Gen Z places a high degree of value on both the emotional intelligence of others as well as their own ability to exercise it. This was confirmed by the participants who also introduced the idea of recognition as being an important part of that value system. Concerning Gen Z's desire for responsibility, they appear to want more of it to ensure recognition for their accomplishments. According to Lukianoff & Haidt (2017), Pichler et al. (2021), the American Psychological Association (2020), as well as many of the participants, acceptance lies at the center of their want for recognition. Acceptance not only of their preferences but also their limitations. The latter of which is mentioned in certain responses as an important aspect of leadership. According to said responses, when leaders actively recognize their limitations, it can benefit their relationships with subordinates. However, according to Gabrielova & Buchko (2021), and many of the other participants, promoting those limitations haphazardly can be detrimental to ones standing as a leader. When subordinates observe a leader displaying their flaws without due course, it can result in them straying from their faith in that individual's capabilities. Moreover, when left conjectural, a leader who displays their misgivings too often could fall prey to losing faith in their own abilities. Should Gen Z's desire for recognition comparably carry into their future careers, it could jeopardize their validity as leaders in the eyes of their subordinates. Additionally, the idea of self-awareness was present in both the literature and responses. As it pertains to Gen Z, the focus was primarily put on their appreciation for maintaining one's emotional self-awareness. Stress and anxiety have become endemic to Gen Z at a developmental stage already plagued by VUCA, and show no signs of early abatement (Hameed & Sharma, 2020; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017). Hence why Gen Z now places such value on their state of emotional well-being (Universum, 2019). According to Hartung (2020), this could even prove to be an effective tool for their ability to lead. However, many of the respondents did not share that belief. Rather, the responses suggested selflessness as the key value to look for in a leader. Despite the similar subject of intent, selflessness and self-awareness present a conceptual dichotomy when applied to the leadership capacity of Gen Z. While both terms are by no means negative in their connotation towards leadership, they represent contradictory values. According to the participants, selflessness is putting the needs of others above the needs of the

individual. Whereas according to the literature self-awareness implies caring for one's own individual emotional sense of comfort and happiness (Diz, 2021; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2017; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015). This indicates that Gen Z's proclivity towards self-awareness would run contrary to a significant component of leadership. The implication is that Gen Z's introspective focus on their individual needs is not compatible with the leadership prerequisite for focusing on the needs of others. While this could give Gen Z an advantage in creating successful interpersonal relationships with those who faced similar circumstances. They would be at a disadvantage in terms of the extrospective mindset necessary for leadership.

6. Limitations

This research is to be considered within the bounds of its limitations of scale, representation, and formatting. The nature of the research inherently limits it to a small population from which to choose a sample. From the 22 queried individuals, only 12 became official participants in the research. While 12 participants are not insignificant, more responses from additional individuals would have been preferable and may have to further context when evaluating the research question. The second limitation of this research is its representation in terms of diversity and organizational affiliation. While the latter issue came as a general precondition for selecting the Marshall Center as the only organization from which to choose participants. The former manifested precisely because of the individuals who choose to participate in the research. Only one of the participants identified as female, which is not an accurate representation of the real proportion of the women who currently occupy leadership positions within the Department of Defense "DoD". Notably, had all 22 queried individuals participated in the research as originally intended, the male-to-female participant ratio would have accurately reflected the current proportion of men and women working for the DoD (Department of Defense Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2021). Finally, the limitation of formatting should also be considered and is a direct result of the chosen methodology. The participants were given the questionnaire online and instructed to respond in an open answer format. This put the amount and quality of the responses they would provide entirely at their discretion. This was chosen for several reasons as

outlined in the methodology section of this thesis. However, once again this decision comes with certain inherent limitations. Namely, apart from the questions and their prompts, no additional clarification on context could be given to the participants. This means any contextual misinterpretations could not be corrected before their response was collected for analysis.

7. Conclusion

The existing literature and the results of this research have provided significant enough context for answering the driving question behind this thesis; what capacity does Gen Z have for effective leadership? Based on the discussed incompatibilities between Gen Z's characteristics and what characteristics are required for leadership. It can be concluded that Gen Z currently possesses a diminutive capacity for leadership. Thus, implying a rejection of the original hypothesis. This conclusion is drawn from their apparent lacking ability for the comparative reflection demanded of personal growth. The generational tendency towards entrepreneurship, which though important for aspects of innovation, would have Gen Z robbed of the lessons that come from being subordinates. And finally, the value they place on introspection runs contrary to a necessary condition for effective leadership. Specifically, the ability to put the needs of the team above everything else. As with all generalizations, this research does not lend itself to uncovering the details and inner workings of specific issues. Rather, its goal is to provide a specific lens with which to view the larger picture. Gen Z is a generational grouping of over 2.5 billion individuals (Deloitte, 2021). To consider each of their lived experiences when conducting research would simply be impossible. However, even if it were possible, it would likely cloud the tendencies and characteristics present only in the view from a generalized macro-level perspective. These wider observations can provide significant utility towards understanding, and help prepare for the categorical shifts that come with generational shifts. The implications of which remain yet to be fully examined within the larger body of research on Gen Z. However, this thesis uniquely contributes to the existing body of research in two ways. First, in the quality of its participants and their responses. The access to which is directly responsible for the selection of leadership as a topic. And

second, despite its mention as a limitation, all the participants have positions in the public sector. This is notable as there are no superfluous monetary motivations for better leadership in the workplace. Meaning their desire to improve or demonstrate leadership stems primarily from an intrinsic motivation to do so. This may lend credence to the validity of the findings in this research since Gen Z was identified as being less concerned with monetary compensation than previous generations. This research is an attempt to better examine Gen Z's current standing. While only future research will reveal any empirical outcomes of these current trends. Perhaps the details availed through this thematic analysis will assist future researchers in understanding what shaped Gen Z in terms of their leadership willingness, capacity, and behaviors.

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9. Appendices

Questionnaire:

Introduction (please read)

There are a total of 10 participant questions, all of which are in an open-answer format. Please write as much or as little as you see fit. My research focuses primarily on the patterns and themes in the collected responses.

Each question has a short "Prompt" that serves as context and clarification for the question. Please read it first and then write your response.

The answers you provide will help me to identify which themes and concepts appear across a variety of professional domains. The analysis itself will amount to what is essentially a literature review using your responses as the content and sources.

My thesis aims to provide predictive insight into Gen Z through understanding the environment that awaits them from current professionals, and if they have the capacity to become leaders themselves down the line.

I want to thank you for taking the time to contribute to this research. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact me.

Consent to participate in research You should have received the consent form in the original email. If you have not done so already, please do. It outlines the specifics of how your information and responses will be utilized in this research. It only requires a signature at the bottom of the page. This can be done with a digital signature, or by printing off the document, and signing it. Once complete please send it to this email address: williamburelli@gmail.com

Have you filled out and sent the participant consent form? *Required

Mark only one oval.

Yes, I have filled out and sent the consent form.

No, I have not filled out the consent form.

~Skip to section 14 (Your responses have been recorded.)

Information form

First name.

Last name.

Please identify your gender.

Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Please select your age range.

Mark only one oval.

- Born before 1965.
- Born 1965 - 1981.
- Born 1982 - 1994.
- Born after 1995.

What nationality would you consider yourself?

What is your current position?

How long have you occupied a formal leadership position?

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 5 years.
- 5 - 10 years.
- 10 - 15 years.
- More than 15 years.

Have you occupied a formal leadership position in more than one country?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

Is your current leadership role in the public or private sector?

Mark only one oval.

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Prefer not to say.

Prompt

The parameters for leadership tend to change, which amplifies the necessity for current leaders to remain adaptable. Hence, leadership can remain ambiguous in terms of how people think about it.

Question 1: When you think about the word “leadership”, what concepts come to mind?

Prompt

Many researchers have found that Gen Z responds differently to other generations in relation to motivation and incentive. Specifically, when looking at interpersonal relationships.

Question 2: What measures or techniques have you applied to keep younger people motivated?

Prompt

Generation Z is expected to encounter several challenges as they enter more of the working population. Many researchers believe that the right kind of leadership will ensure a successful outcome for Gen Z workers.

Question 3: How do you define success in terms of leadership? Describe as best you can what has helped you become a successful leader.

Prompt

Leaders tend to be remembered for the way they make people feel. Especially the characteristics they possess that leave an impact on people. Hence, the characteristics of a leader are often pointed to as a catalyst for development in subsequent leaders.

Question 4: What characteristics should current leaders embody for the next generation?

Prompt

Leadership tends to have similar goals that ring true regardless of the timeframe. Motivating people and empowering them are generally understood to be universal in leadership. Leadership practices are the way to go about imparting those ideas. These practices tend to be less concrete and have historically changed to integrate with new ideas and approaches.

Question 5: Is it necessary to change current leadership practices? Why or why not?

Prompt

VUCA is an acronym that represents Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity. VUCA is used across many organizations to discuss the unknowns present in new ventures.

Question 6: How does the idea of VUCA impact on your professional life?

Prompt

Gen Z is thought of as a generation particularly concerned with self-awareness. Many attribute this to an increase in emotional intelligence on a generational scale. Hence, reflection has become especially important in their personal and professional lives.

Question 7: How do you incorporate reflection as a component of leadership?

Prompt

Gen Z has grown up in an entirely novel way. Never in history has a future generation had so much access and exposure to information. Media platforms like YouTube have enormous volumes of the works and lessons, both old and new, from the most excellent leaders and role models in history. All of which can be seen and discussed immediately by anyone with an internet connection.

Question 8: What is your perspective on the role digital platforms could play in developing future leaders?

Prompt

Many researchers have concluded that generational incompatibilities appear in personal and professional domains. The most cited example being that Gen X and Gen Z tend to get along well, whereas Gen Y gets along with neither of them.

Generation X was born between 1965 - 1981. Now: 41 - 57 years old.

Generation Y was born between 1982 - 1994. Now: 28 - 40 years old.

Generation Z was born between 1995 - 2010. Now: 12 - 27 years old.

Question 9: How do you see the relationships between Generation X, Y, and Z. Also, what do you envision as a long-term outcome of direct competition between the latter two?

Prompt

You have likely dealt with a member of Gen Z on either a professional or personal level. Just as every new generation brings new perspectives, it also brings new challenges.

Question 10: When interacting with members of Gen Z, what are some themes you have observed in a professional or personal capacity?

Your responses have been recorded.

Thank you for participating in this research. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact me.

Participant Responses:

Q1: When you think about the word “leadership”, what concepts come to mind?

- | |
|---|
| 1. Direction and management of people to accomplish a task or mission |
| 2. The ability to provide purpose and direction to individuals and/or groups to accomplish a goal or mission. |
| 3. The ability to positively influence others to accomplish a task. |
| 4. Vision, Initiative, Understanding, Communication |
| 5. Outgoing, approachable, caring, inspiring |
| 6. Unquestionable ethics, moral compass, the importance of leadership by doing (learning the job from ground up) and leadership by example, loyalty, humility, mentoring subordinates and rewarding accomplishments, servant leadership, doing the right thing even when no one is watching. Exude confidence and calmness, even in stressful situations. Make the hard decisions promptly and with conscious thought and rationale. Treat others as you would want to be treated (the golden rule you learn as a child). |
| 7. Inspiring others, helping others grow, teaching others what you know, shaping policy and decision-making to constantly improve the state of affairs, development, guidance |
| 8. Providing direction/vision and the right tools for your team (resources). Resources include not just things like IT, supplies and an adequate workspace, but the right kind of teammates who are trained, know their jobs and are held accountable. The best leaders don't make it about them and create teams that are fully functional without the leader present. |
| 9. The main concepts which come to mind for me are: accountability, exemplarity, emotional intelligence, and responsiveness. I think the absence of any of these qualities indicates that someone is not acting as a leader. |
| 10. incorporation, leadership by example, competence |
| 11. Character; serving those entrusted to your care by meeting their legitimate needs; inspiration; feedback; continuous performance improvement |
| 12. Inspiring teammates. Providing purpose, direction and a positive example. Creating an environment where people are motivated and inspired to serve a larger purpose. Developing shared goals and consensus around core objectives of the team while allowing diversity in thought and action. Allowing freedom of action to team members and accepting positive results achieved by different means. Teammates feel they have a voice and a stake in the service they perform. Loyalty to team goals and team members. Acknowledge that leaders at times, must make difficult decisions and they need to own those decisions. Displaying professional competence and providing opportunities for professional development. Routinely review operating assumptions and be open to change and |

adapting to new models. Operating in an ethical and values based environment. Acknowledge team members have different core values and beliefs. Creating a culture of shared accountability and success. Selfless service, active empathy, good listening skills. Lead through adversity with a positive attitude and a work ethic, while maintaining balance. Folks are happy about the work they do, the purpose they serve, the team they are a part of and the results they achieve.

Q2: What measures or techniques have you applied to keep younger people motivated?

1. Empowerment, explaining purpose and meaning of task. Encouragement, praise, and recognition. But these hold true, regardless of age.
2. In my opinion, younger people respond to the same leadership measures and techniques as older persons if they believe in the goal. That is the one caveat - a leader must get them to buy into the mission and goals. In my observation, younger folks are more skeptical and discerning in what they support - but when they decide to support that goal, they are as committed as anyone from any generation. There leaders must develop an approach that shows the importance of the goal and why they (younger people) should support it. They will not just assume its importance because a leader says it is.
3. Younger people are more inquisitive and require explanatory information when directed to do something. This is not a negative trait.
4. Providing context and explaining the “why” we are doing something
5. Facilitation techniques to encourage young people to express their views
6. Encourage their technical proficiency and proclivity. Gen Z is almost always more adept at Social Media and the latest Apps and technical advancements. Use this to your advantage in your organization and encourage them to be creative and think "outside the box." Gen Zers want to be part of a winning team and need constant positive motivation and reinforcement to keep them on the job (or they will skip to another). They generally have less patience and often want to see immediate results. Encourage team building activities and off-site events/sports. Use their exuberant energy to have them tackle solo or duo projects (independently).
7. Relate subjects under study to modern day issues, having a sense of humor, listening to them, mentoring them, guiding them to reach their goals, group projects, building personal relationships, bonding activities
8. Provide adequate training. Make expectations clear. Create some independence in how systems and processes are established and how work is done. Don't micromanage. Use humor. Make it fun. Show respect and create ways for them to earn it and feel proud of their work. Give ample credit where credit is due. Allow room for mistakes.

9. In my current position, I manage Marshall Center alumni from Southeast Europe. A big part of my job is to give the alumni sufficient motivation to remain actively engaged with Marshall Center activities once they return home after completing a course. One of the trends in the region I cover is that the average age of the alumni in any given country tends to be high on average, I would say around 45-50. This is a natural consequence of the overall demographic trends in the region, in which young people tend to expatriate for better paying jobs and a better quality of life, as well as a consequence of professional trends in which people who manage to obtain a civil servant job rarely leave the position.

That being said, with the limited tools I have at my disposal, I do try to keep younger alumni engaged and involved. First and foremost, being frank and credible is essential to keeping people involved, even when I can't necessarily give them what they want (an opportunity to come back to Marshall Center for example). If people know they can trust you and you are being honest with them, they will continue to have a relationship with you.

In the situations where I do have some ability to proactively involve younger people, I do exactly that. For example, when I took over this position five years ago, I implemented an application process for our regional alumni forums that put the focus back on merit and demonstrable willingness to contribute. This reduced the idea that people needed to become friends with me to benefit and emphasized that alumni would be selected to participate based on merit. Another component of this is that I could curate a good mix of people, young and old, coming from all different backgrounds to make these regional forums a success and interesting for participants.

10. offering them challenging tasks and consult them about their achievement/performance in order to help their development.
11. Inclusion in processes/meetings; truly valuing inputs/ideas; getting to know individual personally by asking about them; allowing for creativity and failure
12. In person counseling. Listening. Challenging personal assumptions when trying to understand what motivates others. Allowing teammates to describe their goals and then aligning those with the means to motivate. Allowing yourself to be a little uncomfortable with the way a younger team member achieve/complete a task/mission. Encourage members to go beyond their comfort level. Clear discussion on standards, expectations and shared accountability. Open discussion on expectations. Providing access and opportunity to resources aligned with motivating factors.

Q3: How do you define success in terms of leadership?

1. Mission accomplishment and team engaged, empowered and recognized for their achievements and contribution towards the goal

2. An organization is achieving its goals or progressing towards its goal while its team members find satisfaction in their work and the work of the team. For me, development of individuals as members of a organization with a clear purpose and approach on the team is the optimal outcome. Even is the organization struggles or the mission is difficult, individuals (especially younger people) that feel that the organization is invested in them and thus invest in the organization leads to longer term success for them and the organization. Younger folks want to know the "why" - just being told to do something is insufficient and often counter productive. That can harder for older generations like Gen X, which want people just to "do," to assume the task and mission is sufficient without the addition explanation of "why" we do what we do.
3. Accomplishment of a task or mission that includes all participants enjoying a sense of accomplishment and feeling that they are part of a cohesive team..
4. Having a vision for where you want the group to accomplish, understanding the individuals who are part of the group (including their strengths and weaknesses), communicating what you want the group to accomplish and when, doing your fair share to contribute to the group effort, encouraging others to do their share, and thanking them for their efforts.
5. Achieving the task in hand while creating a productive, creative and professional team. Leading by example
6. Success is knowing you have given your best on a given task (even if the outcome was less than expected). Success is seeing your subordinates succeed (or even surpass you), knowing that your mentorship has helped guide their way. Success is leaving your job/position in a better state than when you've first found it. Success is persevering through adversity. Success is getting others to accept/support your approach. Success is balancing job and family (but family must always come first).
7. When your students or employees are happy and satisfied, when they have clearly improved on their path, if they keep in touch with you for years to come, allowing them the space to do things their own way, not micromanaging
8. Create a team that can work and excel without you. Resolve any personnel issues quickly. Hold people accountable. Know your people and treat them as adults. Discuss the bad and the good -- learn from mistakes.

9. For me, based on my experience in government and with all manner of particularly bad leaders, I think there are a few criteria to be met for someone to be considered a successful leader. I will refer back to the leadership qualities I mentioned in the earlier question: accountability, exemplarity, emotional intelligence, and responsiveness.

1) I think leaders need to be accountable to the people they are leading. Otherwise, they will not earn the respect they need to be effective. This is a particular challenge in government because it is so difficult to get rid of unqualified people. And in some cases, especially for example with the military, people are put into leadership positions who are not qualified and do not even want to be in the position. I have seen so many people in leadership positions who feel so threatened by even the slightest legitimate questioning of their decisions or performance. Once this is apparent to the people they are leading, it is not uncommon for the leader to completely lose the attention and respect of those beneath them. Particularly when leaders don't follow the expectations that they themselves publicly set for their people, they are not accountable and quickly lose respect.

2) Leaders need to be people who others can easily point to and say "I admire their leadership and want to emulate them." I think the cases where people point to a leader and say "well I don't really admire them, but I think they are doing a good job" are pretty rare.

3) I think emotional intelligence is essential - the absence of it in several of my workplaces has clearly led to a hostile work environment. People behave the way they do for specific reasons, within organizations, and leaders have to try to get to the bottom of this to lead effectively.

4) Unresponsiveness to situations that clearly require the attention of leaders is a serious challenge for someone to succeed as a leader.

10. When people understand the reasons for various decisions and accept them even when it is not favorable to them. I don't know if I was a successful leader but in both institutions I was directing former colleagues voluntarily cooperate with me.

11. Success as a leader is establishing a culture where all feel valued and contributory to a team; where individuals place team needs above their own selfish ambitions/desires by serving others before self; a culture where credit to the team is more important than credit to self (amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit); a culture where ALL are treated with dignity and respect regardless of "status," education, position within organization; humility as a baseline for personal and team interaction. Genuinely caring for those entrusted to my care by serving them and meeting their legitimate needs (not insatiable wants) and investing in THEM (leadership and professional development) as well as valuing and instituting their ideas has led to leadership success. People need to know how much you care much more than they care how much you know. Humbly, consistently, fairly, transparently, and communicatively interacting with all with dignity and respect as a baseline.

12. If the team succeeds the leader succeeds. Watching someone you have led or supervised achieve personal and/or professional success. Watching a teammate gain confidence in their abilities to complete a task and succeed. Mentors that provided opportunity and were patient with mistakes while providing course corrections and guidance. Leaders that challenged me to achieve goals that often seemed unattainable.

Q4: What characteristics should current leaders embody for the next generation?

1. Empathy, empowerment, communication, encouragement and recognition of contributions

2. Selflessness, humility, and drive. I'll explain in reverse order. Drive because young people still want to be successful. They want leaders that will accomplish goals, so the organization is successful and by extension the individuals. Humility because older folks must recognize that younger folks have skills and attributes that are inherent, especially in technology, because of when they grew up. Older folks must recognize that younger may have better, faster but different ways that older would never know or understand. A humble leader places pride aside and harnesses that potential. Selflessness because it is timeless to leadership - no matter young or old, people will find a selfless leader inspirational. Selfless leaders take care of subordinate, peers and superiors while meeting goals and building a successful organization.

3. Openness, transparency and selflessness. The desire to recognize others and ensure they feel their intrinsic worth.

4. Optimism and confidence to accomplish the task

5. Openness, flexibility and technological awareness

6. One word: Humility (it can not be overstated)! You always owe your success as a leader to the work of others (or those before you...or the family that raised you in the values and morals that you now follow). Power corrupts (and absolute power corrupts absolutely) and only the humble can truly fend off the corrupting ethical tendencies. Follow the ideals of a servant leader or you might veer to the wrong path of totalitarianism and authoritarianism. Always see yourself as part of something bigger that aims to improve on one or more aspects of life or humanity.

7. Flexibility, adaptability, willingness to learn from the younger generations, creativity, analytical ability, understanding how the world changes rapidly, selflessness, compassion, kindness, intellectual openness, empathy, a sense of humor

8. Honesty. Communication. Respect. Humility. Ability to connect. Recognition for individual contributions. Ensure everyone knows their part.

9. One of the most obvious answers to this question (for me) is their willingness to devote time and effort to actually develop the leaders of the next generation. Referring to my own experience in government, virtually no one has ever made any effort to mentor me or do anything that would help me progress in my career. In that sense, I think demonstrating some degree of selflessness (in the case of the U.S. government, given the demographics of the employee population, this could actually mean contributing to someone's career prospects in a way which could ultimately challenge your own career prospects) is a quality which leaders should embody.
10. Rationality, long-term thinking (being strategic), modesty, determination.
11. Humility (#1 trait of a good-to-great leader); character (the person you are in the dark when no one is looking); open/transparent communication (over communicate); fairness/consistency; regularly express appreciation/value; provide meaningful/constructive feedback; actively seek feedback; compassion/empathy coupled with ability to uphold standards; reward excellence; don't do for one that which you can't do for all!
12. Competent, Caring, Disciplined, Balanced, Humility, Moral Courage, Trusted, Friendly, Sense of Humor, Selfless

Q5: Is it necessary to change current leadership practices? Why or why not?

1. In my opinion no. Good leadership is the same regardless of the size or age of your team.
2. Yes. Good leaders have timeless qualities but morph and modify their approach based on the environment, their teammates and the mission. The military is a good example - a leader would deal with an infantry platoon, comprised of younger people and designed to operate in and overcome extreme conditions, while that same leader would approach leadership in a senior staff section, comprised of older and more experienced people and focused on more intellectual and complex problems. The composition of your team, their key skills and attributes, and the nature of the mission and organization should drive the "how" of a leader's approach.
3. Change is always necessary and often results in discomfort. If one cannot adapt to a changing cultural climate, they may still achieve results but with less participation and enthusiasm by their subordinates.
4. Not necessarily. Knowing your people is a timeless prerequisite for leading people effectively.
5. Yes, leadership needs to be more transparent, more open to ideas and ready to embrace diversity - gender, race, ethnicity etc.
6. Depends on the leader in front of you. I've worked with both great and horrible leaders and the patterns for both are timeless. The same good leadership practices

that worked a hundred or two hundred years ago still work today (for the most part) and vice versa. The only thing that has really drastically changed are technological advances, but on typical one-to-one interactions the leadership principles have remained virtual unchanged, as these interactions are driven by human attributes, traits and qualities. Typical universal traits are belonging, community, creativity, curiosity, family, love, memory, purpose, storytelling, voice/verbal expression.

7. If leaders actually hold to those principles they should keep on doing so. But many leaders are too ego-centric and don't help others grow. Many leaders are stuck in their own ways, don't take the time to listen to others and learn. No one can grow if they do not keep an open mind to radically opposing views from their own.
8. I don't think so. The good leadership practices endure and the bad ones shouldn't. I think it is more important to pick the right leaders to begin with. We have not always been good at that. I have worked with a number of "leaders" who shouldn't have been in that role, but were picked for reasons other than the ability to lead. Those bad leaders then select new bad leaders. The most knowledgeable, the smartest and the most senior don't necessarily possess the best leadership practices and often the worst.
9. Obviously, the core leadership values and qualities may not change much. However, I think leadership practices inevitably need to be updated because they are invariably connected with values and norms that define how organizations are run and how humans relate to one another. As these values and norms change (which they definitely do), leaders need to reflect on their leadership practices to make sure they correspond appropriately.
10. Leadership practices vary. I would be tempted to change one practice: There are too many transformational leaders who declare and then don't deliver or are unaware of the costs of transformation. Arbitrariness.
11. Depends...in many cases, yes. Hierarchical non-inclusive "do it because I told you to and I'm the boss" doesn't work/resonate. The current workforce is much more mobile than previous generations and much more willing to vote with their feet if an organization is poorly led. Leaders must strive daily to discern the legitimate needs (not insatiable wants) of each person entrusted to them and then go about meeting those needs. Needs may be recognition for a job well done, feedback for falling short of performance expectations, asking about family/friends/weekend (taking time to get to know the teammate personally), etc.
12. Yes and no. 1. Adaptive leadership in practice is often necessary. Cooperative relationships among teammates require discussions about 'the why' of particular actions. Where in the past, describing the why was not always taken into account by those directing action. 2. Many if not all of the leadership characteristics listed earlier can be described as universal or absolute. Compromising character traits or integrity to achieve success or appease popular opinion can cause problems in

the long run. Finding balance and gaining organizational buy-in (not group think) to enduring principles up remains important.

Q6: How does the idea of VUCA impact on your professional life?

1. VUCA has been the norm throughout my professional life.
2. It is key to understand the complex nature of problems. Leaders must understand that VUCA requires a flexibility of mind and action.
3. Recognizing VACU and the impact on subordinates is essential to leadership. Positive leaders need to minimize VACU through openness and transparency. It can never be completely eradicated but must be controlled and minimized.
4. The concept of risk exists in many tasks. Therefore, a group pursuing a task must identify the risks, evaluate the gravity and probability of those risks, and then manage, mitigate, avoid, and/or assume those risks.
5. It provides a stimulating challenge. It prevents complacency but it can also create stress
6. To be honest, I've never heard the term before until I read your prompt. I've never been confronted with the acronym and would need to know more about it before forming my own opinion. It may not be as well known among government organizations and perhaps more in private industry (not sure).
7. Some amount of VUCA is normal. But when there is too much VUCA it is a sign of being disorganized and lacking a clear vision. It is also impossible to make progress with constant VUCA
8. Life in general is the same. Know that change is constant and work to establish systems and processes that can be easily adapted to it, but also work to perfect and maintain systems and processes that aren't impacted by VUCA. Encourage calculated risk-taking and trying new things with incomplete information.
9. This idea has been nearly omnipresent over the past two years in my own professional life because of the impacts of various current events, namely the COVID-19 pandemic and budget issues within the U.S. government. Being tasked essentially with connecting people, the impossibility of traveling and doing in-person activities rendered my job extremely difficult. Additionally, as our funding was unsteady and we faced the threat and reality of numerous government shutdowns, it became nearly impossible to plan and execute any activities with any semblance of normalcy.

One obvious consequence was that we really had to consider our entire model of engagement and try to creatively fill gaps created by the pandemic. We weren't necessarily attempting new ventures, rather just trying to execute existing ventures in brand new conditions. Returning to the concept of VUCA in the

leadership context, I think leaders have to create clear incentives (as well as remove clear disincentives, something particularly common in government given the tendency toward inertia) to promote innovation and creativity.

10. I think I have learned how to reassure people whom I lead. I am not taking hasty decisions and make people understand the underlying rationale. I had a number of bosses whose example was not reassuring and I learned from their example.

11. Having led large organizations in combat, VUCA is foundational in its impact on my professional life. From today's job market to what I must do for the good of institute (as balanced by the good of the individual), VUCA are day-to-day considerations.

12. Positive impacts.

Q7: How do you incorporate reflection as a component of leadership?

1. I do not know.

2. Must invest time in personal development. The best leaders are good at committing time to providing feedback to teammates often and in a manner that is not just about their performance in absolute terms (ie number of reports completed). The feedback and investment in time is a type of reflection - it demonstrates care in the teammate and provides them the ability to also reflect and improve. This is my most difficult thing as a leader, taking the time to talk to my subordinates and discuss not just their performance but also how they feel about it, how they want to improve and how they see themselves progressing professionally but also personally.

3. Failure to recognize reflection will reduce subordinate willingness to accomplish a task. Self-reflection is difficult but the ability to exercise it results in a more effective and respected leaders.

4. Check in periodically with those you are leading and see how they are doing and how they perceive their efforts towards the task are going. Once the task is complete, ensure that a "hot-wash" (after-action group session that reflects on lessons learned, what went well, what could have been done better) is an integral phase of a task.

5. Through feedback mechanisms and allowing time for personal reflection

6. My wife would say yoga would help me in this, but I've not bitten off that apple (just) yet. I do feel it's important every day to spend a few minutes to reflect on the day in front of you, the tasks at hand, and again at the end of the day to analyze what went well and what didn't. Some use a diary or journal for this. Others (like myself) are more self-contained and can compartmentalize and mentally organize. Nevertheless, I think it is an absolute necessity to find time each day to

reflect and prioritize (whatever method is used). It becomes even more important the higher your level of leadership becomes.

7. One must reflect on the opinions of others, on your own strengths and weaknesses, carefully assess any situation before making decisions on how to move forward, take many opinions into consideration prior to making a decision and be conscious and sensitive to who you are dealing with
8. By example, shared learning and incorporation into business processes.
9. I openly solicit feedback (good, bad, or neutral) from the people I work with, clearly express that I am not offended by critical comments, and don't respond negatively to negative feedback.
10. It is an interactive process. It is essential to create an atmosphere where people are connected by shared objectives and where leaders and "subordinates" can freely and honestly interact.
11. Providing time for reflection and seeking professional and personal development opportunities are essential. Additionally, in every position I've been blessed with as a senior leader I've conducted weekly leadership and community development sessions and opened these to ALL in the org interested in attending, in-person or virtually. Core to these sessions are pulling out teammates' reflection (in this case, specifically on leadership but you'd be amazed on where the discussion often goes).
12. By challenging assumptions, being open to new ideas and by creating time and space for reflection. While not allowing reflection to cause paralysis in action. Building a culture that encourages change if an individual no longer feels aligned with group mission, goals...after reflection.

Q8: What is your perspective on the role digital platforms could play in developing future leaders

1. Unfortunately, there are no filters on this internet "knowledge" and disinformation and misinformation can and does thrive. Also unfortunately, I think because the information is taken on in solitude and individually there is a lack of "space" and opportunity to question, discuss and examine this new "knowledge" in context. Great role models perhaps, bad role models also. Who moderates or outlines truth. Everything is posted with some type of bias and agenda. Is this known or understood by individuals? Lack of questioning and critical thinking on what is on the internet. Just because it has a lot of likes or views doesn't mean it is correct.
2. They can be both advantageous and destructive. Advantageous because these platforms can provide novel and progressive means to teach, instruction, inform and influence in development if a leader can use them effectively. However, if used poorly or with malfeasance, they can amplify negative leadership and prove harmful. A leader must learn and adapt to make the most of these

platforms - they cannot ignore them as they are here to stay and how younger people will communicate.

3. Digital platforms are both a positive and negative influence. Their overwhelming presence cannot be ignored and should be recognized with the caveat that there is a lot of disinformation. Encouraging the development of an inquisitive mindset is essential to managing and analyzing the volume of digital information. Ignoring the digital information is simply not an option.

4. A necessary resource, but it also poses a risk of overwhelming the individual to devote too much attention to learning at the expense of the finite time for doing.

5. This is a significant challenge. Future leaders are faced with a "blizzard of information". Leadership development needs to focus on sources that provide quality and relevancy, rather than be confronted with the sheer quantity of material currently available through on-line sources

6. To be honest, my current thoughts on the impact of digital platforms on the next generation are, in many ways, negative. I see it in my children where digital media has become all-consuming. YouTube and other social media giants must become more acutely aware of what role they have in society and how they can positively impact future generations of leaders. As these companies are for-profit organizations, I doubt they will act on their own, which is why my current view is mostly pessimistic. I think they are currently doing much more harm than good in creating leaders for the next generation.

7. I am sure that is going to be a big part of the future. Leaders need to adapt to current technologies and listen to the younger generations who are far more knowledgeable on this. LinkedIn for example is a very useful platform to become professionally connected and build a network for future employment opportunities. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, they're all good platforms to market what you do at work. For example, I market my video podcast series through these platforms to gain views. But digital platforms also render people less intelligent in some ways because they no longer read books and believe everything they read online, which often consists of a lot of junk and misinformation.

8.

9. By learning how to value and judge information that is valid, important, relevant and useful for what you need from that which is not. Know how to use it to properly to deeply focus when needed and not distract. Ensure it is used to learn how to think for yourself. It should inform and not replace.

10. I don't think I could be a particularly good judge on such a matter. However, I have regularly recommended to my colleagues to use TEDx to my colleagues among others on leadership issues. I think the working environment is essential to understand the needs and hence I am somewhat doubtful general guidance available on electronic platforms.

11. Digital platforms are foundational to future leader development, but the personal/in-person must continue to be emphasized and CAN'T be replaced by

"digital interaction." Digital platforms are important, not just in future leader development, but also in the organization's culture. For example, our organization just hired, for the first time, a strategic communications director, in part because we are ineffectively utilizing digital platforms to tout and connect.

12. Transformational if harnessed and included in leadership development with an understanding that application and/or experience does matter. Applied leadership is different than learned skills. Theory, through the lens of practice results in reality. But, as a general rule there is tremendous opportunity.

Q9: How do you see the relationships between Generation X, Y, and Z.

1. I think it is simplistic and prejudicial to place people in these categories. I think life experience, education, mentoring are more accurate ways to put people into categories.

2. I think there is a tension between them as they perceive the world differently, just like the WWII generation, baby boomers and Gen X had their tensions. These can be good if recognized and leaders mitigate the negative and amplify the natural points of agreement and approach that exist between any generations. As they are younger, Gen Y and Z likely have greater tension as they don't yet have the experience to determine how to best approach each other.

For Gen Y and Z will likely see a few Gen Y committed to big impact type endeavors while Gen Z will provide most leadership in business and government. Gen Z drive will likely create conditions where they will leapfrog Y in leadership, as Y as a whole will look to experience things versus run thing, with a few notable exceptions. These Y exceptions will be visionary time leaders wholly committed to a cause (political, business, etc), while Gen Z will likely demonstrate a more pragmatic approach that balances reflection and experiences with brass tacks, get to the point mission accomplishment. This is also likely why X and Z get along easier.

3. I don't necessarily agree with the assertion that Gen Y dos no get along with Gen X or Gen Z. Simply lumping a group of people together by an arbitrary birth range is an oversimplification of a very complex, constantly changing cultural environment. While there may be trends with each generation, everyone is an individual and should be recognized and treated as such.

4. I don't know

5. I have not been aware directly of this generational competition in my workplace. Personality differences have had more impact

6. In my experience X and Y seem to get along well (except for moderate/large differences in technical proficiency). I personally work well with my Gen Y colleagues. My experience with Gen Z has been minimal at the work place, but I would say (generally) that they tend to be more impatient and also bounce around jobs more than X and Y (who still value steady and stable relationships).

7. I haven't personally noticed whether the generations get along...But I've noticed that Gen Z is completely different and cares a lot more about identity issues, equality, more social programs, ecological issues and environmental issues. They seem to have moved past the conservatism of the past. I would have thought Gen Y and X would get along based on that. Long-term outcome of direct competition between Gen Z and Y would probably end up with Gen Z having the upper hand since they are more trained in the STEM fields and those are probably the subjects one needs to master to succeed in the future

8. I think the best outcome is to ensure we don't generalize. As we all know from our peer groups there are many differences within. I don't think it's helpful to label such groups. The individuals within these groups will adapt and change as time goes along based on their experiences.

9. As a Gen Y with mostly relationships with Baby Boomers and the first half of Gen X, this is a difficult question for me to answer. To be honest, I often don't really know how old/what generation someone belongs to. I cannot think of any conflicts with Gen X coworkers.

According to the Federal Employment Viewpoint Survey conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), most federal employees, about 43%, come from Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980). They are followed by the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964). Traditionalists, born in 1945 or earlier, make up 1% of the federal population, and Millennials born in 1981 or later comprise 21% of the total federal workforce. (source: <https://www.govexec.com/management/2020/04/how-manage-multi-generational-federal-workforce/164688/>)

I do think graduating college at the start of the Great Recession will have long-term professional consequences for those of us in Gen Y. Most of the other challenges, for example the difficulty in accumulating wealth relative to previous generations or the inability to buy a house because of student loan debt, are challenges shared by Y and Z.

10. I don't belong to any one of those generations. I think I get along with people of different generations that are not selfish and are unemotional in their professional lives. However, as far as the youngest generation, I am always concerned that they accept my leadership without knowing why, simply due to age difference. (one of my children is generation Y, two are generation Z).

11. Relationships founded on trust, dignity, and respect where each person's value as a teammate is emphasized and communicated transcends generations. Because of this, I've never thought of relationships amongst generations. I don't envision a long-term outcome of direct competition between Gen Y and Z, provided the organization's culture is right.

12. I see the relationships between the three as non-competitive and situational. Have seen effective teams formed with members across all three. Takes time, trust and common purpose. I don't see a competition between the latter two.

Q10: When interacting with members of Gen Z, what are some themes you have observed in a professional or personal capacity?

1. Inability to think critically or understand bias. Too much faith in what they read or see on the internet. Inability to examine alternatives/
2. They want to know the "why" and they are smarter and faster than my generation (X). Like most younger generations, they question things a lot but for Z, they want to know the conceptual and intellectual underpinnings of why we are doing a "thing." And since they know how to access and use information faster, they come to decision and action and quicker than is comfortable for older generations. The gap is much wider for X to Z than it was for WWII or Baby Boomers to X - they were all essentially analog. Digital age has provided a speed that makes the generational potential exponential versus geometric for Gen Z.
3. Gen Z members are more inquisitive and open minded than previous generations. However, any statement that stereotypes a generation is a vast oversimplification of today's complex society.
4. Answering the "why" of doing anything is relatively important.
5. A greater wish for personal empowerment and a desire for a better work/life balance stand out
6. Impatience and tendency to bounce between jobs. Lack of fulfillment at the work place (for a number of reasons) and many also display a somewhat gloomy outlook on life. I don't think many Gen Zers really know what they want in life and also don't seem to get fulfilled from a given job or family. They are not happy with the house and white picket fence concept, like Gen X. I also think there is a huge discrepancy with managing finances between Gen X and Z. Generally, Gen X saves and invests, while Gen Z spends everything it earns (perhaps not true, so just my impression). I still pay in cash whenever possible. Gen Z prefers Apple Pay.
7. I was briefly a Professor at a University and taught Gen Z. I find them curious, polite, and open-minded. But I also find that they don't respect authority as much as older generations and will do all they can to advance professionally.
8. The same as always -- immaturity, the need for many experiences to learn, thinking for yourself, understanding the need to sacrifice, questioning your beliefs, appreciating work for work's sake, respecting other viewpoints.
9. To be honest, I have really had very minimal interaction with Gen Z people in my professional life. I am still one of the youngest people in my organization, and most of my interactions are with Baby Boomers (as are most of my intergenerational conflicts in my professional life). A very tiny minority of the alumni I work with from the region I cover are probably Gen Z, but relative to other regions they constitute an even smaller percentage of the overall population of security sector professionals due to demographic trends.

10. We have very little shared cultural background. I read different books, watched different films, have different personal experiences. It is a huge challenge to bridge it. They are often pragmatic and short-termist that I do not like.
11. Gen Z prefer wide boundaries; creativity; some autonomy; appreciation; valued teammate; acknowledgement of worth to team; inclusiveness
12. 1. Takes time to build trust. 2. Often sensitive to constructive or direct feedback aimed at helping them achieve goals. 3. Driven by purpose and the idea of service to others. 4. Hungry for responsibility and learning how to lead diverse teams while also achieving larger goals.