



A Phenomenological Study of Gen Z Workers in Facing Conflict Generation Gap in the World of Work

I Putu Dharmawan Pradhana^{1)*}, Danny Bahari Kusnady¹⁾, I Kadek Arya Wibawa Saputra¹⁾, I Putu Yoga Purnama Wijaya¹⁾, Andreas Pratama Sihaloho²⁾

¹⁾Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Pendidikan Nasional, Denpasar, Indonesia

²⁾Departement of Public Policy and Management, Monash University, Clayton, Australia

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*Corresponding Email: pradhana@undiknas.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to determine the practical efforts that Generation Z can take to resolve or overcome the generation gap. The main challenge that an organization must face is how to manage and understand workers who come from various generations. Currently, there are several generations of work groups in an organization based on their age, such as that Gen Z workers often experience in Bali is the generation gap conflict. In this research, using qualitative methods with observation, interviews and documentation techniques, data was collected from 6 Generation Z people, 1 Generation Y person who works in the tourism sector, and one communications expert. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively with an interactive model and Nvivo 14 plus software. The validity of the data is checked through triangulation of sources and techniques. The research showed a mismatch in communication with their superiors and coworkers. However, they overcame it by implementing good communication patterns and adapting to their work environment. Thus, this research provides in-depth insight into the practical efforts made by Generation Z to resolve or overcome the generation gap.

Keywords: Generation Z; Generation GAP; Conflict

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INTRODUCTION

Managing and understanding workers from various generations is a big challenge for organizations today, where each generation has diverse and unique characteristics, expectations and work patterns. Various generations in the workplace consist of baby boomers and generations that generation (Karnaukh & Brozyna, 2023; Samanatha et al., 2022). Each generation grows and develops in different situations and conditions, influencing their attitudes towards work and principles of collaboration (Lepeyko et al., 2022).

The earlier generation is likely to view technological advances with scepticism. In comparison, the younger generation, which is often referred to as "digital natives", is more adaptable and open to the use of new technology, which can result in friction and gaps in adaptation and understanding between generations. change itself (Afsha et al, 2022). The right strategy to bridge the generation gap can be done by creating mutual respect, creating work flexibility and adjusting each other's communication styles (Sruk, 2020;- Ratajczak, 2020).

Organizations should also avoid stereotyping employees based on age, leading to oversimplification and hindering genuine understanding and collaboration (Steve, 2020). Integrating the perspectives of diverse generations will indeed increase innovation and problem-solving in organizations by leveraging the unique strengths of each generation (Dunne, 2023). The modern workplace is characterized by a diversity of ages and values, which, in addition to fostering creativity, can also give rise to intergenerational conflict due to differences in values, views and work styles (Agustin et al., 2023). If managed effectively, This mix of generations can significantly contribute to organizational success despite challenges in understanding and managing these differences to create a harmonious and productive work environment. (Beham et al., 2012).

Research shows that younger generations tend to be more engaged in their work, while previous generations have the advantage of high levels of organizational commitment (Palo & Dokadia, 2022). This shows that each generation has different attitudes towards work, which can be leveraged to improve workplace dynamics (Annosi et al., 2023). For example, older employees often provide experience and stability, while younger workers offer adaptability and technology savvy (Kosowski, 2020). However, the perception that older employees are less agile and resistant to new technology can create barriers

(Macovei & Martinescu, 2022), underscoring the importance of overcoming stereotypes and fostering a culture of inclusivity.

As introduced by Neil Howe and William Strauss in 1991, the concept of generational differences states that individuals within a generational group have similar values, beliefs, and behaviours because they grew up under the same historical conditions and were influenced by the same events (Appelbaum et al., 2022). This theory has been integrated into the term "folk sociology", where individuals seek to identify themselves with certain generational groups and create specific patterns of behaviour in their communities, especially in communication patterns (Karsli, 2022). However, the generation category for implementing human resource management must still be considered inadequate (Parry & Urwin, 2021). The differences in characteristics in each region show that generational grouping cannot be applied universally in various countries, thus indicating the need for different approaches that take into account specific regional and cultural contexts. (Ahmed et al., 2019). The concept of generation also intersects with broader socio-cultural dynamics, where generations are seen as influencing the socio-cultural environment and can be identified with various approaches (Dan, 2018). Regardless of the pros and cons of defining and studying generational characteristics, it is instrumental in understanding social and cultural change with its various limitations and the complex nature of human behaviour (Pishchik, 2018).

The generation gap between the Baby Boomer Generation and younger generations, such as the Millennial Generation, presents both challenges and opportunities for organizations. Research has shown that stereotypes associated with the Millennial generation often reflect professional conditions and lead to differences, disparities and different positions (Arras et al., 2023). This differentiation is not limited to identity but extends to perceptions of fraud prevention measures, indicating a real impact on organizational practices and beliefs (Tri et al., 2023). Additionally, generational differences have been linked to increased emotional exhaustion due to conflict and poor communication, directly impacting employee burnout (Kim & Hur, 2023). However, these challenges are manageable. Generation Y's approach to work-life balance is creating a shift towards a more inclusive and flexible workplace culture (Schmidt, 2024). Overcoming generational conflict through mentoring and embracing generational diversity can reduce conflict and increase organizational cohesion (Appelbaum et al., 2022).

Empirical studies have identified significant differences in values and mindsets between generations, suggesting that tailored HR strategies can leverage these differences to foster a more dynamic and innovative workplace (Kwiecińska et al., 2023). This is supported by the finding that values such as living wages and personal growth are consistent across generations, highlighting the importance of tailored approaches to motivation and engagement (Kwiecińska et al., 2023). The integration of technology in the workplace, although beneficial, also presents challenges, but they are perceived to have lower loyalty and a higher propensity to change jobs (Oeij et al., 2023). This turnover intention is influenced by several factors, including psychological situation, work-life balance, and the quality of relationships with coworkers (He & Janney, 2022).

Additionally, job burnout has been identified as a significant contributor to millennials' turnover intentions, highlighting the need for adaptive capabilities to mitigate this issue (María & Pérez, 2020). To overcome these challenges and retain millennial talent, organizations must adopt strategies that align with the values and work preferences of the millennial generation. This includes offering flexibility in work arrangements and encouraging work-life balance, which has positively impacted loyalty and job satisfaction among the millennial generation (Hudiono & Sari, 2022). This research examines how intergenerational gaps in the workplace occur, especially in areas with very high ethical values, such as Bali. The clash between the applicable norms of work professionalism values creates a gap pattern that tends to be unique and exciting to study in more depth.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a phenomenological study to explore the subjects' most profound awareness of experiences and their meaning. This research focuses on conscious experience from the first person's perspective (those who experience it directly). This method tries to understand how humans construct meaning and essential concepts within intersubjectivity.

Data collection techniques used in this research were observation, interviews and documentation. The data validity checking technique determines the truth of data obtained from field sources through source and technical triangulation. Testing the data's credibility is done by checking the data from the same source using different techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. This research uses a qualitative

approach where the author pays attention to procedures for measuring the consistency or accuracy of qualitative research.

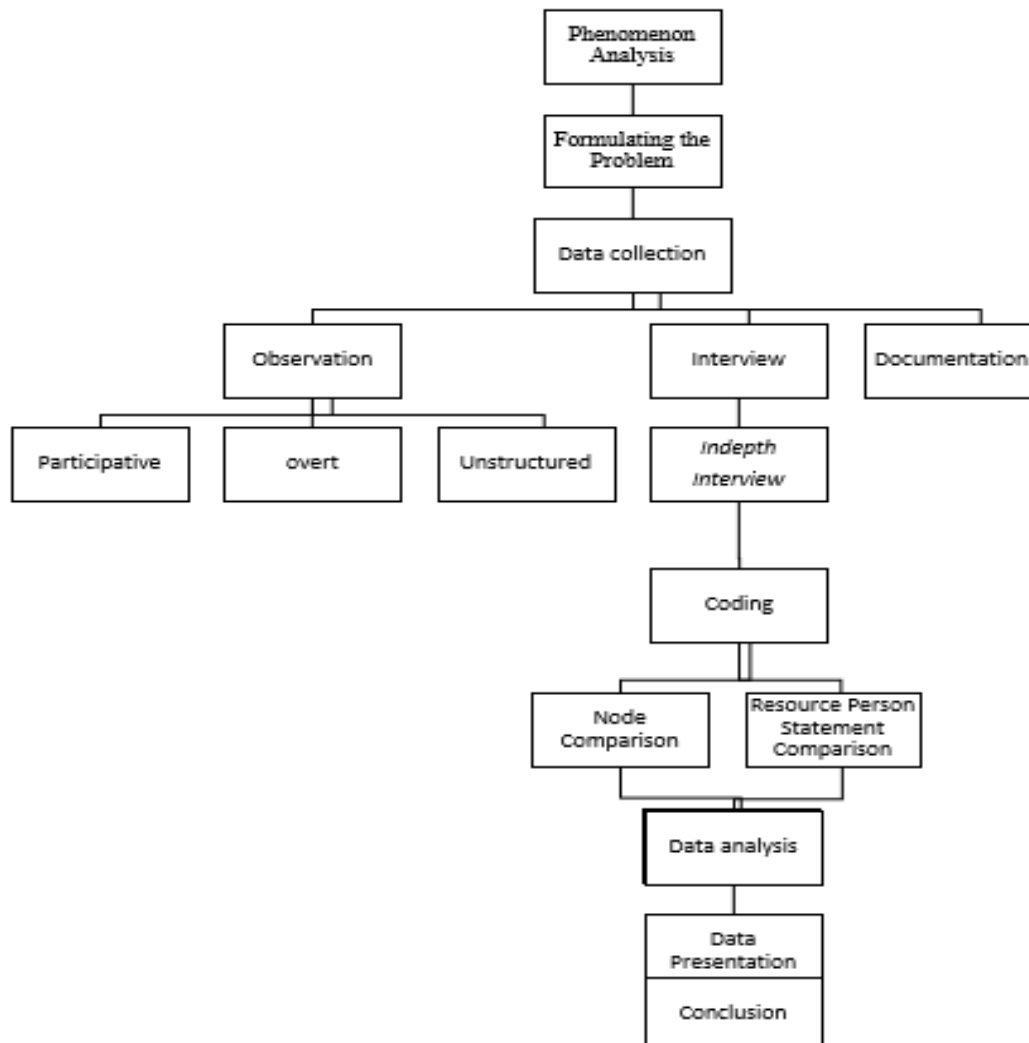


Figure 1. Research Framework

The author carried out data analysis using NVivo 14 plus software. To obtain effectiveness and efficiency to achieve goals. Authors are advised to use the NCapture feature to make downloading articles easier and transfer them to the NVivo 14 Plus software.

The data analysis process used in this research is data analysis while in the field using the Miles and Huberman Model. Data analysis is carried out during data collection and after completing data collection within a certain period. At the time of the interview, the researcher carried out an analysis of the interviewee's answers. The researcher tries to ask more questions until the researcher gets an answer to what is being asked if the answer from the interview needs to be revised. Miles and Huberman stated that activities

in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continue continuously until completion, so the data is saturated.

Activities in data analysis, namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Miles and Huberman's explanation of data analysis includes data collection, reduction, presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Researchers conducted in-depth interviews (dept interviews) with several informants consisting of 5 Generation Z people who work in the tourism sector, 3 Generation X or Y people who work in the tourism sector and one superior of a Generation Z worker. This interview was conducted from the beginning of November until early December to determine how effective Generation Z is in resolving or overcoming the generation gap.

The majority of Gen Z interviewees often experience conflict when they work because, in the world of work, they meet different generations with different characteristics and behaviours, which will cause a generation gap. The generation gap usually refers to the perceived differences between generations, which cause conflict and make communication difficult, thus creating a "Gap". Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that Gen Z generally has a high enthusiasm for work but often faces problems in the world of work because in the world of work, there is a gap between generations, and this is usually the beginning of a problem; this is what often makes Gen Z discouraged from working. Often the situation faced by Gen Z is that there is a mismatch in their communication process with their superiors and coworkers. However, they have managed to overcome this by implementing good communication patterns and adapting themselves to their work environment. This is in accordance with research from Pelin (2023) which states that Generation Z faces a communication gap between generations, so it requires the ability to adapt to form effective communication patterns.

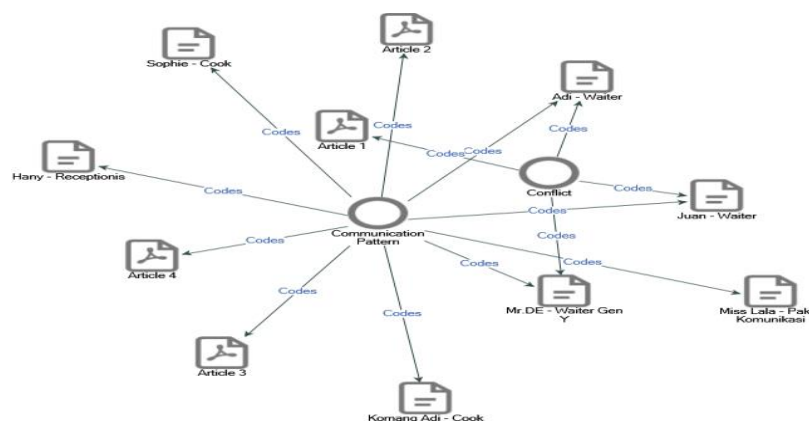


Figure 2. Person's Statement Comparative Analysis
(Source: data processed)

They are adjusting to their work environment, such as remaining focused on positive things, practising emotional intelligence, and not being embarrassed to ask questions. Thus, this research provides in-depth insight into the practical efforts made by Generation Z to resolve or overcome the generation gap.

It can be seen in the comparison files above the efforts made by one of the Gen Z workers in Bali, named Kadek Adi Indrawan (Adi), in overcoming the generation gap conflict in the world of work that he experienced, including paying attention to communication patterns, understanding individual characteristics and doing compromise. Adi stated that he had colleagues with a significant age difference. He felt a difference in the work speed between himself and his colleagues, who were much older than him. Sometimes, he thinks how his seniors communicate with him could be more ethical. Adi stated in an in-depth interview quote as follows;

"..... if there is a problem related to work, I try to solve it myself without immediately asking for help. Sometimes, they yell at me, but I always take it as a lesson. ...sometimes I have disagreements with them. Sometimes, how they talk to us creates conflict over trivial issues."

Almost the same thing was also expressed by Sophie, a cook at a restaurant. He felt that the difference in work speed with his senior employees often caused problems for him. In an in-depth interview excerpt, he revealed that;

".....perhaps because they feel they are older, so they are bolder in blaming me and speaking in an unpleasant tone..."

Juan, an employee at a hotel around Badung, stated that his disappointment with his seniors was mainly caused by work instructions that did not match his job description. Juan revealed that;

"...he arbitrarily delegated his work to me. Even though I also have work that I have to finish."

Juan makes in-depth interpersonal communication a solution to the conflict he experiences with his seniors. He tried to express his dislike for every treatment he received.

Hani Primardani, an employee of a recreation club in the Badung area, Bali, said that the leadership of her workplace puts various pressures on employees regardless of the various conflicts experienced by employees across generations. Hani revealed that

"...the character of my boss is like that. He could not control his words. Maybe because he feels he has a position, is more senior and older than us."

Hani expressed his luck in having colleagues who help and encourage each other.

Adi Pratama, a worker in the kitchen of a restaurant in Badung Regency, Bali, also revealed the conflict he faced with his senior, who was much older than him. However, Adi feels more sincere when facing every problem that arises. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews. In one of the conversation excerpts, Adi stated that;

".....disputes will always exist, but we try to follow his orders. We realized that we were juniors, and they were more experienced than us."

DE, a senior employee who serves as a waiter coordinator at a restaurant, revealed that younger employees often work less than optimally. He said in an interview that.

"The younger generation must be willing to learn. Moreover, dares to practice his skills at work. Don't play a little social media while working. If you do not need help understanding, please ask your superior. Do not hesitate."

Miss Lala confirmed this as a communications expert, and Kadek Adi as a Gen Z worker. Miss Lala said that in the world of work, we will encounter various ways of communicating, which can change the discomfort or things in an environment. The job is to have to make more compromises, so apart from adapting, we also have to be able to compromise; the compromise is that we understand what he means or understand the nature of our seniors, so do not swallow it raw when given the ABC words out loud or ABC with a bad word then what we absorb is the command, not other words. This statement also confirms Byrd & Zhang (2023) view that good communication has a big impact on workplace comfort. It can be seen in the in-depth interview that the efforts made by one of the Gen Z workers in Bali named Hany to overcome the generation gap conflict he experienced in the world of work, one of which was by compromising. The job is that we have to make more compromises, so apart from adapting, we also have to be able to compromise; the compromise is that we understand what he means or understand the nature of our seniors, so do not swallow it raw when given the ABC words out loud or ABC with bad words then what we absorb are only the orders, not other words. Hany also did this when experiencing the Generation Gap conflict and preferred to confirm what his superiors told him. Hany continues to do what is his responsibility while working.

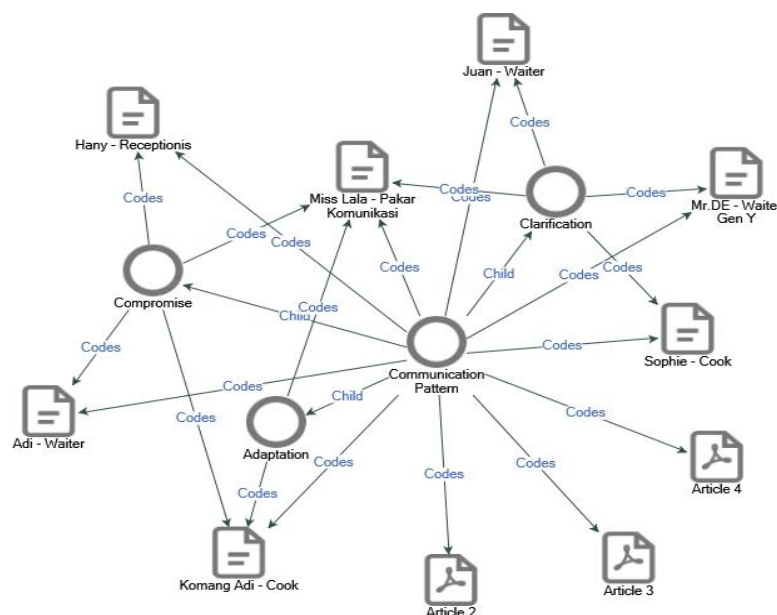


Figure 3. Image of the Analysis Project Map
(Source: data processed)

It can be seen from the diagram above that Gen Z's efforts to resolve the Generation Gap conflict in the world of work are by implementing communication patterns. This is supported by Miss Lala's statement as a communication expert who states that in communication, there are several ways to resolve conflict, including clarification, negotiation and accommodation, these are three of the many ways to resolve communication conflicts in the workplace because in this research there is a discrepancy in the communication process that occurs between superiors and subordinates, where the correct interpersonal communication process should be the delivery of messages that reach their destination or reach the communicant by getting appropriate feedback. The research results of Szamburski & Bodarski (2023) are confirmed in the diagram above, where excellent and effective communication can ensure the delivery of appropriate messages and feedback in the workplace using clarification, negotiation and accommodation methods. When the message is delivered inappropriately, the communicant or person receiving it will interpret it differently, so it is a wrong interpretation from communicator to communicator. When the message is conveyed inappropriately, the recipient or communicant will misinterpret it. Interpersonal communication conflict at work is an increasingly important social phenomenon in workplaces that rely on cooperation, collaboration, and coordination to complete work tasks, especially in work teams. From the diagram above, it is also proven that the interviewees Sophie and Juan made clarification efforts when experiencing conflict in the world of work; besides that, other things were done by the interviewees Hany, Kadek Adi and Komang Adi. They made a compromise when a problem occurred in their workplace; Hany, Komang Adi, and Kadek Adi prefer to confirm a problem and do not want to prolong the problem; as Miss Lala said, it is difficult for Gen Z as subordinates to provide information to seniors. When we are at work, we will encounter various types of ways of communicating, which can change the discomfort or things in a work environment, and there must be more compromise.

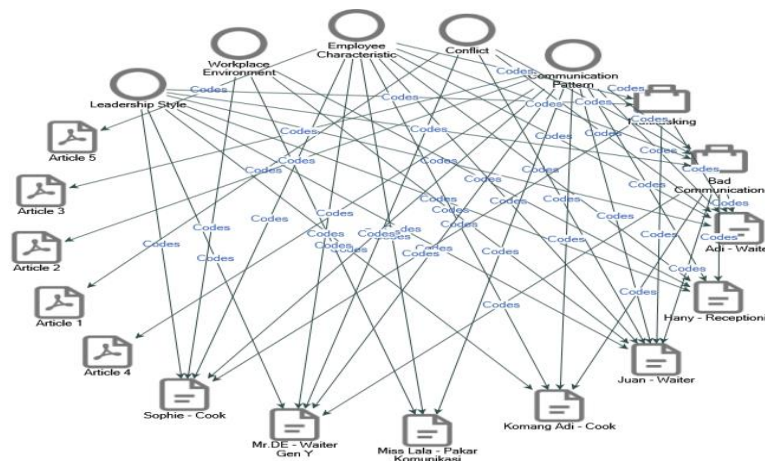


Figure 4. Image of the Analysis Project Map
(Source: Data Processed)

As seen from the project map above, this research examines how effective Generation Z is in resolving or overcoming the generation gap. Data was collected through interviews with five Gen Z informants with work experience in various fields. Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that Gen Z generally has a high enthusiasm for work but often faces problems in the world of work because in the world of work there is a gap between generations, and this is usually the beginning of a problem; this is what often makes Gen Z discouraged at work, Miss Lala also said that what frequently happens to Gen Z is that when they receive a little pressure, they will always feel hurt, or they immediately feel small, or they immediately feel that they cannot work with people like them. This confirms the opinion of Stumpf & Fielding (2023) that Gen Z faces challenges related to the generation gap in the workplace and the pressure that accompanies it. This is what is happening in the world of work today.

Based on the results of interviews with five Generation Z workers in the tourism sector, it can be concluded that they face various problems related to the environment and interactions with colleagues and superiors. Kadek Adi shows his resilience to pressure by focusing on his work, even though his superiors often blame him. Sophie Arista Putri faces challenges by voicing her opinion against colleagues who make light of problems, showing a proactive attitude to create a better work environment. Juaniver Timmothy, faced with work demands beyond his responsibilities, chose to talk to his colleagues and find a solution together. Komang Hany Prima Wardani faced problems with his superiors who used unpleasant language, but he decided to understand his superiors' character and remain focused on his work. Meanwhile, Komang Adi, pressured by colleagues and superiors, maintained positive thoughts, saw their every action as an effort for his good, and tried to adapt to his work environment.

In general, the conclusions from this interview show that Generation Z workers tend to have a proactive attitude in overcoming problems, either by focusing on work, speaking openly, understanding the character of their superiors, or trying to adapt to the work environment. Their understanding of the importance of creating a comfortable and collaborative work environment is reflected in their actions to resolve their conflicts and challenges.

This research identified specific findings, namely the importance of the workplace environment that Gen Z workers must pay attention to to overcome generation gap conflicts.

The diagram above also confirms research by Luka et al (2023) (article 1), which states that ineffective communication creates conflict between generations. Companies are expected to improve communication between generations McElfresh & Stark (2019) (article 2). Effective communication can reduce various problems faced by employees of

different generations (Olsson et al., 2024) (article 3). Ability and knowledge have great potential in developing communication patterns and emotional bonds between workers with various backgrounds (Lane et al., 2024) (artikel 4). article 4). Work motivation looks different on multiple generations according to their characteristics, but support from the work environment creates conducive situations and conditions in the workplace (Pak et al., 2023)(article 5).

Special Findings

In research on how effective Generation Z workers make efforts to overcome the generation gap in the tourism industry in Bali, researchers found notable findings.

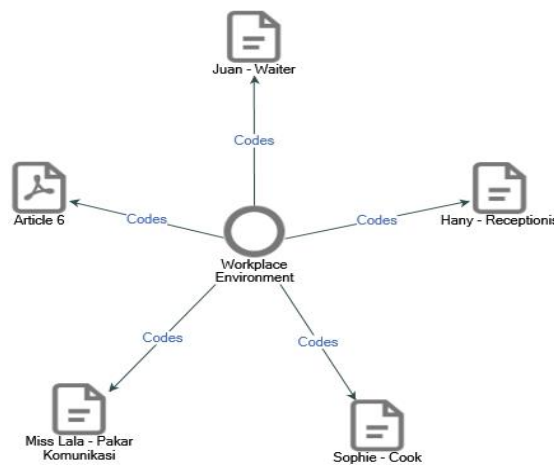


Figure 5. Workplace Environment custom discovery image
(Source: data processed)

In the diagram above, a remarkable finding from this research is the existence of a Workplace Environment. Juan, as one of the informants, stated that when you experience a conflict in the world of work, it must be resolved immediately because it will impact the work environment and increasingly spread to other things. He sees this as something that must be resolved immediately; creating and maintaining a good work environment makes Juan feel comfortable doing his work. Another thing was also conveyed by one of the speakers, named Sophie; he stated that work would be happier if the environment our work is excellent and comfortable.

Meanwhile, a company's other aspirations, such as an excellent managerial system, transparent communication, and management that treats its workers well, are basic or natural. Regarding Gen Z being nicknamed 'fleas', these young workers are also not bothered by this nickname; being a psyllid is okay. Why not if there is a choice to work in a better place? Gen Z as 'fleas' is not a negative stigma but a reality many young workers face today. Therefore, the ideal working environment and Health should not be a generational issue but a universal problem affecting all generations of workers. These findings confirm research from Egerová & Roten-

bornová (2021) (article 6), which states that conflict handling will negatively impact the work environment if it is not optimized.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to determine how effective Generation Z is in resolving or overcoming the generation gap. Data was collected through interviews with five Gen Z informants with work experience in various fields. Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that Gen Z generally has a high enthusiasm for work but often faces problems in the world of work because in the world of work, there is a gap between generations, and this is usually the beginning of a problem; this is what usually makes Gen Z discouraged at work.

Gen Z workers in Bali often face generation gap conflicts when they work. Usually, the problem faced by Gen Z is that there needs to be a better communication process with their superiors and colleagues. However, they have managed to overcome this by implementing good communication patterns and adapting themselves to their work environment. They are Adapting to their work environment, such as remaining focused on positive things, practising emotional intelligence, and not being embarrassed to ask questions. Thus, this research provides in-depth insight into the practical efforts made by Generation Z to resolve or overcome the generation gap.

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