

What Are the Best Leadership Styles for Managing Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z Who Work Remotely?

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In this study, we answered the following research question: What are the best leadership styles for managing Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z who work remotely? We examined four generations of remote workers: Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1994), and Generation Z (1995-2010); therefore, each generation will prioritize different aspects of their work-life-balance, which could be pivotal in the style of leadership controlling their level of productivity. We use an integrative literature review to analyze findings from prior research to gain a comprehensive perspective on remote work management. Transformational and situational leadership appear to be the most productive for remote work due to flexibility, engagement, and adaptability to varying needs. We conclude that leaders engage in practices that create a productive, inclusive, and adaptable remote work culture. We offer two recommendations.

Keywords: generations, leaders, leadership style, management, productivity, remote work

INTRODUCTION

Return to In-Person Work

“Heads of all departments and agencies in the executive branch of Government shall, as soon as practicable, take all necessary steps to terminate remote work arrangements and require employees to return to work in-person at their respective duty stations on a full-time basis, provided that the department and agency heads shall make exemptions they deem necessary” (January 20, 2025, whitehouse.gov)

The Covid-19 pandemic forced companies into remote work almost overnight (Oquendo & Bell, 2024). There’s research that shows America went from 5% of the workforce working remotely at least 3 times a week pre-pandemic to 37% being remote full-time post-pandemic, with 60% of total working days being

from home with evidence of a negative impact on individual performance (Naderi, 2022). In 2024 the majority of workers were in-person across the various industries: Bhutada (2025) reports that “*Across all industries, the share of employees reporting to work in person doubled to 68% in 2024, from 34% in 2023*” (para); with mostly in office from 2023 to 2024, consumer/retail from 33% to 87%, Pharmaceutical & Medical Products from 18% to 58%, Healthcare Systems & Services from 35% to 73%, Education from 51% to 84%, and Advanced Industries from 42% to 73%, and combined industries overall went from 34% to 68% (Bhutada, 2025). Although most employees are in-person, a sizeable percentage (32%) of American workers remain remote. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported “*a workforce of 161.94 million in 2024*” (bls.gov). The fact is that 161.94 million workers times 32% is equal to 51.82 million remote workers in 2024. Because over 50 million Americans work remotely, could the best leadership style depend on the employee’s generation being managed? Are there other factors impacting the productivity of remote work?

While generational differences are often considered significant in workplace preferences, Rudolph et al. (2017) challenged the notion that leadership style should vary based on generational characteristics alone. Their review found limited empirical support for static generational distinctions in leadership preferences, suggesting instead that individual developmental stages and experiences play a more critical role. This perspective implies that younger employees may appreciate autonomy and transformational approaches, but these preferences may be more closely tied to the career stage rather than generational identity. We postulate that the leadership style depends on the employee’s generation being managed, as different generations have different values in the workplace. Despite the January 20, 2025, Presidential Action Return to In-person Work issued from the White House, federal workers are a drop-in-the-bucket of all remote workers. “*In November 2024, the federal government employed just over 3 million people, or 1.87% of the entire civilian workforce, according to BLS data*” (<https://www.pewresearch.org> 2025). Research is still needed to clarify what types of leadership styles are best suited for effectively managing workers across four generations of workers; thus, using secondary sources, we sought an answer to the following research question.

RQ: *What are the best leadership styles for managing Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z who work remotely?*

As organizational culture evolves, particularly with the rise of remote work, leadership approaches must also adapt. Successfully managing remote teams involves a set of strategies and tasks that differ from the traditional in-office environment (Bharadwaj, 2024). Remote work management requires clear communication channels and a trusting culture (Bell & Muir, 2014; Bharadwaj, 2024; Chatman, et al, 2020). Leaders must foster a results-oriented environment where teams can perform independently while aligning with organizational objectives. While leadership styles vary, it is also essential to consider how generational differences shape these approaches, as leaders from different age groups bring perspectives to managing teams.

Four Generations Who Work Remotely

Figure 1 is a breakdown of the generational makeup of the American workforce based on a 2020 research study published by US Black Engineer. These percentages indicate that Generation X (Gen X) and Millennials currently represent most of the American workforce. However, demographers predicted that by 2025, most American workers will shift sharply to Millennials and Gen Z (Deen, 2024). Today’s workforce is comprised of four generations: Baby Boomers, Gen X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z (Gen Z), and each generation has a different set of values when it comes to their workplace. While Baby Boomers value traditional hierarchical structures, Gen X is more resourceful and independent, bringing some skepticism (Bharadwaj, 2024). Millennials value meaningfulness and purpose (Smith & Watkins, 2023), while Gen Z emphasizes work environment and work-life balance (El-Menawy & Saleh, 2023).

FIGURE 1
REMOTE WORKER GENERATION DIVIDES

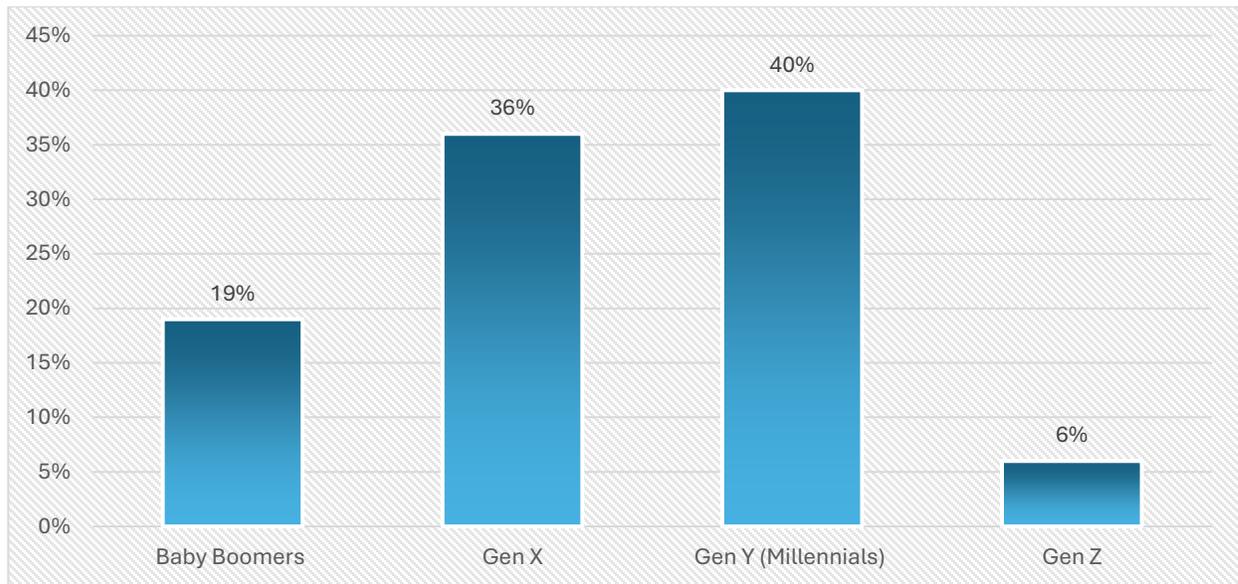


Figure is an adoption from Deen (2024).

Generational differences are often considered significant in workplace preferences, but what about leadership preferences? DeClerk (2007) applied generational differences and leadership styles to the retail industry and found that transformational leadership was most effective across Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y but found no discernible effect regarding tenure. Ten years later, Rudolph et al. (2017) challenged the notion that leadership style should vary based on generational characteristics alone. Their review found limited empirical support for static generational distinctions in leadership preferences, suggesting instead that individual developmental stages and experiences play a more critical role. This newer perspective implies that younger employees may appreciate autonomy and transformational approaches, but these preferences may be more closely tied to the career stage rather than generational identity.

Bell and Martin (2019) view generational divides as well-established barriers to communication. In fact, the barriers are both verbal and non-verbal. Bell and Martin (2019) deduced that:

Generational differences are a large barrier to communication in organizations...there are five generations of communicators in the workplace who impact the effectiveness of your success in the MC process. While historians and sociologists differ somewhat on the exact years that differentiate the generations, there is general agreement on the characteristics of each group. If you were born between 1925 and 1945, you are a traditionalist. If you were born between 1946 and 1965, you are a Boomer. If you were born between 1966 and 1979, you are a Gen Xer. If you were born between 1980 and 1999, you are a millennial. If you were born between 2000 and the present, you are a Gen Zer. Effective managers recognize generational issues and communication preferences that differentiate Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials, and Gen Zers. Intergenerational issues are the communication gaps that exist because of age and behavior patterns among various groups of individuals. Each group has habits that are broadly defined by their life experiences.

Boomers are more likely to use e-mail and voice messaging rather than texting or sending tweets, which Millennials routinely do. Traditionalists might not even use computers on a daily basis. Imagine the barrier this habit alone would create if a millennial is attempting to tweet a Traditionalist who probably does not even have a Twitter account (pp. 40-42)

Conversely, Lissitsa and Laor (2021) identified generational preferences in technology adoption and social behavior that could influence how employees respond to different leadership styles. While there is no dispute that generational divides exist among age-groups, the ranges defining those generations vary a bit (DeSai & Lele, 2017). For example, on *The Generations Defined* image from the PEW Research Center (Dimock, 2019) shows generation Silent (74-91 years-old, born 1928-45), Boomers (55-73 years-old, born 1946-64), Generation X (39-54 years-old, born 1965-80), Millennials (23-38 years-old, born 1981-96), and Generation Z (7-22 years-old, born 1997-2012). Generation Y, who often value social recognition, may respond positively to feedback-oriented or participative leadership, while Generation X may prefer an autonomous, hands-off approach. This nuanced view aligns with Easton and Steyn’s (2023) findings that generational assumptions should be cautiously approached, as Millennial leaders did not significantly differ in their leadership styles from other generations. Therefore, while some generational trends exist, individualized leadership based on professional context and developmental stage may be more effective.

Differences in workplace values mean different views and opinions on remote work and its effectiveness. A study conducted by researchers in Indonesia focused on these opinions. Using four categories of functions, informative, persuasive, regulative, and integrative, the researchers gathered each generation’s opinion on the subject. Table 1 is a summary of those results. According to these results, Baby Boomers prefer face-to-face and believe remote work hinders effectiveness in all four areas. Gen X sees how remote work can still be practical in some places but also believes that some functions are still more effective face to face. Millennials and Gen Z believe that everything done face-to-face can be done remotely as effectively (Sukmana & Komalawati, 2023).

**TABLE 1
GENERATIONAL VIEWS ON REMOTE WORK**

Generation	Birth Year	View on Remote Work
<i>Baby Boomer</i>	1946 - 1964	Prefers face-to-face and sees remote work as a challenge to effectiveness. Believing it hinders effective communication and information sharing and that regulation and authority are challenged in a virtual environment.
<i>Generation X</i>	1965 - 1980	Believe remote work can be effective but believes there are some functions that are more effective in a face-to-face environment, such as authority-related communication, information sharing, and strategic decisions.
<i>Generation Y</i>	1981 - 1994	Believe that all functions can be done virtually versus in person. Any mishaps or miscommunications are attributed to the communication style and competence of the supervisor.
<i>Generation Z</i>	1995 - 2010	Believe that all functions can be done virtually as well. Feels they can be more relaxed at home.

(Information in Table 1 is adopted from Sukmana & Komalawati, 2023)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership styles have been a subject of extensive research, with various models being explored to understand how they influence organizational outcomes. Throughout the years, leadership styles have adopted different approaches to decision-making and team management (Claes, 1999; Fulk, et al, 2011).

For instance, traditional autocratic leaders prioritize top-down decision-making processes, which rely heavily on a clearly defined hierarchy and a transparent chain of command. This approach ensures that authority is centralized, and decisions are made quickly, albeit often without broad input from subordinates. Conversely, laissez-faire leaders foster an environment of autonomy by offering minimal supervision and entrusting their teams with the authority to make independent decisions (Claes, 1999). Is there a best practice for leadership style regardless of the generational divide among remote workers being managed? Ultimately, adopting leadership styles to meet the needs of remote workforces is essential for long-term success among a significant proportion of American remote workers.

Contemporary Leadership Styles

As DeClerk (2007) puts it, transactional leadership is simply management by exchange whereby management encourages employees to perform work for some reward in return, and transformational leaders use charisma to influence and show care for their subordinates. Transactional leadership, emphasizing task completion and reward systems, was found to have limited effectiveness in multigenerational remote settings. While it works well for short-term productivity, it lacks the engagement and adaptability required to motivate a diverse, remote workforce over the long term (Makowski, 2023; Spagnoli, et al, 2021). The autocratic leader is what we would view as a transactional leader. The leader makes the decisions. Based on an exchange model of task completion and rewards, transactional leadership is effective for short-term productivity but fails to sustain engagement in remote environments. In contrast, transformational leadership, which emphasizes vision, inspiration, and individualized consideration, has been identified as highly effective in motivating and engaging remote teams. Transactional leader focuses on maintaining structure and efficiency through clear expectations, performance-based rewards, and disciplinary measures, ensuring consistency but often lacking the flexibility needed to inspire long-term innovation and adaptability in remote teams.

Transformational leadership emerged as one of the most effective styles for managing remote teams, especially in multigenerational contexts. Employees execute, and employees are paid for the work done. The participative leader moves into the realm of a transformational leader. This leader is transformational in that he or she considers the input from employees, but in the end, the leader makes the decision. This style emphasizes vision, inspiration, and individualized consideration, which helps align diverse generational expectations. Transformational leaders foster trust, engagement, and motivation, critical in remote settings where physical supervision is absent (Boccoli, et al, 2024; Burns, 1978; Chu, 2022). The laissez-faire leader exhibits management that can be seen as positive management practices. These allow employees to set goals and display authentic leadership behaviors (Monzani, et al., 2022). Burns (1978) refers to leadership as the most observed phenomena that is the least studied despite millennia of prior studies on the matter; he categorizes leadership as either transactional or transformational, with transformation labeled as the more potent of the two, despite being more complex. He presents a psychological matrix of leadership that he breaks down into four parts: the cocoon of personality, the wellspring of want, the transmutation of need, and the hierarchies of need and value. He also presents 3 distinct social sources of leadership. These are family background and experiences, political influences, and the combination of self-esteem social role and empathy of the individual. Leadership is driven by power, and power must have purpose and be seen as a relationship.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) presented a new theory of leadership. They begin their book, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, by introducing a new leadership theory. According to their research, a leadership environment can be captured in three contexts. The first is commitment by instilling trust, vision, and meaning for those who follow. The second is the complexity of the problems that all organizations face. The third is the credibility of the leader in the public's eye. Kouzes and Posner (2017) posit that credibility is the foundation of leadership. Power is needed to lead in any capacity, and transformative leadership is simply the wise use of power. Attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning, and deploying oneself through positive regard and the Wallenda factor are the four competencies of effective, transformative leaders. Bennis and Nanus (1985) also explored what they deem as the "three styles of social architecture." The first is the formalistic style. This is a hierarchical style that

gives direction by authority and maintains control through rules, rewards, and punishments with an end goal of compliance. The second is collegial. This is more of a group-oriented, peer-to-peer style where decisions are reached through discussion and agreement centered around what the group thinks or feels. The end goal with this style is consensus of the group. The third style is a personalistic style. This style is based on the individual instead of the group where decisions are sourced from within based on a “what I think and feel” mentality and the goal is self-actualization. Each style has the capability to be successful when used in the proper environment.

Schein (2004) tied leadership to culture first by describing the levels of culture: artifacts (visible structures or processes), espoused beliefs and values (strategies, philosophies, and goals), and underlying assumptions (unconscious beliefs, assumptions, and values). He also listed several typologies that help categorize the different variables of an organization’s culture. He rightfully summarizes that leadership plays a critical role in the process of building and planting organizational culture as well as evolving the culture as the organization changes. In their book, *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner (2017) provide five practical practices of exemplary leadership: 1) model the way, 2) inspire a shared vision, 3) challenge the process, 4) enable action of others, and 5) encourage the heart. These five actions summarize how previous literature has described the actions of transformative leadership.

Leadership Approaches Amidst Generations

Liao (2024) noted that in generation differences are now one of the most prevalent concerns with remote work. After the sudden shift due to COVID-19, employers expected their employees to continue normal daily work, had to provide more technological resources, and still highly desired the same level of social interactions within their teams, that was seen in the in-person (Liao, 2024). Today’s work environment includes workers from multiple generations. Baby Boomers are the oldest, Generation X and Millennials are the largest group, and Generation Z is starting to enter (Albrychiewicz-Słocińska, 2022). These groups are what’s been called generational cohorts which is defined as “*a group of people who share significant social or historical life experiences throughout pivotal developmental periods*” (Mahmoud et al, 2024). Baby Boomers and Generation X are labeled as more technologically illiterate, which could lead to the assumption that they may not be fit for remote work. However, these two groups have been working for the longest and are best with independent work. Millennials have been known to be constantly on their phone checking email, social media, texting, and making calls, much of the technology they use socially can be used professionally as well. It’s evident that despite the differences, each generation is a good candidate for remote work (Nowakowski, 2019). With companies becoming more global and the pandemic, teleworking is being put into practice more and more. De Sousa Figueira et al. (2023) highlighted “cyber slacking,” a term used to describe counterproductive behaviors while using technology, as a manager’s concern. Their study shows that to improve remote work performance, leaders must establish policies around remote work, follow government guidance, and provide communication and competence plans for employees.

Grant (2024) highlighted one of the most critical challenges in the shift to hybrid or remote environments, managing the different generations working together. Research has shown that each generation has different drivers and levels of engagement with communication quality and satisfaction playing a large role in engagement outcomes (Grant, 2024), and each will commit to their work when company values align with their values (Thomas & March, 2023). A second challenge of today’s workforce make up is what Mahmoud, et al (2024) calls the generational digital divide. The concept focuses on the birth time frame of each generation. Generations born before the acceleration of the digital age in the 1990s are seen as more technology-resistant from digital shock. On the other hand, Generation Z, born into the digital age 1995, is regarded as the digital natives or more technology savvy (Mahmoud, et al, 2023). Interestingly, Knowles (2023) observed that technological advancement has disrupted Generation Z today’s world.

With Gen Z being the newest entrance to the workforce and the most technological generation, more research is emerging that explores remote and hybrid work from their vantage point. Generation Z’s expectations and values of work are uniquely different than the other generations. A study by Albrychiewicz-Słocińska (2024), gave eight general areas that can help determine how they feel about

remote work. These are intra-organizational communication, employee relations, technical aspects of communication, organizational learning, availability of knowledge, operational efficiency, well-being/convenience and work comfort. Robak (2023) found that Gen Z feels remote work allows the combination of work and private life emphasizing various advantages like flexibility in managing personal time, a sense of independence, and a limitation of professional stress. Knowles (2023) adds that this generation looks for immediate feedback, flexibility and time-off to keep work-life balance, and an environment that allows them to interact and bond with coworkers. Another study found that remote work has value to them because it provides autonomy and free time. While only a small percentage felt that their productivity improved with remote work, a number stated they gained time in their normal routines primarily from saving time by not having to commute to work. This allowed them more time for value-generating activities, like time with family, workouts, reading, and other leisure activities (da Silva & de Barros Neto, 2024).

The basic communication tools of the younger generation include technology, such as laptops and smartphones, and this usage could overshadow direct communication. Problems related to the exchange of knowledge or the recognition and expression of tacit knowledge may be present that the employees are not always aware of. Gaps in social and communication skills have the potential to slow the processes of encoding and decoding of messages (Bell & Martin, 2019). The knowledge exchange processes shapes relationships between employees and good relations enhance the knowledge exchange processes (Albrychiewicz-Słocińska, 2022). This requires information management. In a study on information management with Generation Z, Robak (2023) found that people from generation Z see a positive effect of remote work on the speed of information exchange and the ability to understand and assess the veracity of the information. However, they are doubtful about the reliability of the information and have a negative view of the amount of information flowing to them. They depend on the manager when it comes to exchanging information in remote work. Their study on the challenges of implementing remote work with Generation Z, Wojcik and Lukasinski (2022) concluded that it's necessary to develop the competencies of leaders needed to manage remote work and its implementation to meet the organization's expectations. They emphasized the importance of monitoring remote work and the developing self-control and self-discipline in employees.

Jiatong et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership significantly improved organizational commitment and job performance by enhancing employee engagement. Monzani et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership paired with positive management practices improved performance in work from home environment. On the contrary, Allen, et al (2023) contend that another style known as situational leadership is particularly well-suited for hybrid and remote settings where adaptability is crucial. This style is characterized as one that underscores flexibility and self-management, and leaders who embrace a situational approach can tailor their style to the unique demands of remote work, fostering both productivity and satisfaction. Situational leadership, which involves adapting leadership style based on the team's needs, was highly effective in remote, multigenerational environments. Leaders employing this style can adjust their approach to suit the varying levels of experience, autonomy, and technological fluency across generational groups (Abbasi, 2023; Lileikytė & Widmark, 2022).

Laissez-faire Leadership Style emphasize employee empowerment. This leadership style allows subordinates significant autonomy. Conversely, E-Leadership Style could be introduced as a new leadership style that emphasizes elements of both transformational and situational leadership, focusing on digital communication and technology integration. However, cyberslacking occurs with excessive independence, which could lead to issues (De Sousa Figueira et al., 2023). A laissez-faire leader should allow subordinates to make their own decisions. The emphasis should be on empowerment in decision-making with little interference from the leader. This type of leader should include all subordinates in making hard decisions. Leaders who are skilled in using digital tools can foster stronger connections, engagement, and support in remote environments. E-Leader will require leaders to create a digital emotional intelligence to recognize and respond to team members with emotions virtually. This approach is especially important for engaging a tech-savvy younger workforce while also providing training and support to accommodate older generations who may be less comfortable with technology (Chu, 2022; Boccoli, et al, 2024). Millennials

and Gen Z excel under E-Leadership styles due to their digital fluency, while Baby Boomers and Gen X may require additional technological support to adapt. Unlike transformational or situational leadership, E-Leader will primarily function in real-time interactions which thrive on asynchronous engagement. This approach will aid in managing effective workflows across different time zones. E-Leader will prioritize digital inclusivity to ensure their teams received equitable participation opportunities. This will include AI-driven training modules and user-friendly platforms tailored to all generations.

Allen, et al (2023) emphasized time management, focus, and technology skills as critical behaviors that correlate with higher job performance and satisfaction in remote work environments. Additionally, they noted that self-management is essential, as remote employees often work independently. Rudolph, et al (2017) further underscore that age-related factors like career stage and adaptability may predict remote work success better than generational traits, advocating for a focus on individual competencies and workplace skills. McKay, et al (2007) highlight how a company's diverse climate affects employee commitment, especially for minority groups. Their study showed that Black managers who perceived a positive diversity climate were more committed to their companies. In a remote setting, a supportive diversity culture may play a similar role in retention, especially when direct engagement is less frequent (McKay, et al, 2007).

TRANSFORMATIONAL AND SITUATIONAL STYLES WORK BEST

Efficacious leadership in remote work environments requires a nuanced understanding of leadership styles, generational dynamics, and other factors impacting team productivity. Transformational and situational leadership styles have emerged and are becoming adaptable for fostering engagement, flexibility, and performance in virtual settings. However, generational differences should be considered alongside individual career status and competencies rather than a fixed trait. As organizations understand the complexities of telework, developing adaptive and inclusive leadership strategies will be critical to enhancing sustainability and employee satisfaction. The answer to the research question is a result from the synthesis of the literature. Previously, we asked:

RQ: *What are the best leadership styles for managing Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z who work remotely?*

RQ Answer: *Transformational Leadership and Situational Leadership* approaches appear to be the most productive leadership styles for remote work environments across the four generations, due to their flexibility, focus on engagement, and ability to adapt to varying needs. Leaders should prioritize individual development, support a diverse-friendly culture, and foster strong team cohesion to maximize productivity and satisfaction across virtual teams. Embracing these practices can create a remote work culture that is productive, inclusive, and well-adapted to the demands of a modern, decentralized workforce. Burns (1978) popularized Transformational Leadership as a distinguished skillset rooted in moral fortitude, genuine caring behaviors, and attitudes. Bell and Bodie (2012) summarized Burn's contribution in the following passage.

Although there are many definitions of leadership, James MacGregor Burns (1978) in his classic b-book Leadership provides a definition which is still relevant: "Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers." Apparently Burns perceived the ideal leader as "transformational." Appealing to the followers' values and a higher vision, transformational leaders encourage the followers to exert themselves in the service of achieving that vision (pp. 49-50).

Transformational Leadership nor Situational Leadership are a one-size-fits-all concept with today's multigenerational workforce. A number of recent articles have confronted leadership's concerns with employment trends, ranging from Scientific Management Principles used as a tool for interpersonal communication effectiveness (Bell, & Martin, 2012); to thought leadership as an employee participatory process enhancing revolutionary developments in organizations (Brady, et al 2025); to the SCOTUS ruling ending raced-based admissions as a test of leadership's integrity (Woodard, et al 2024); to the CEO's use of ideological rhetoric affecting the bottom line via modern technology (Hamilton, et al 2024); to the prediction that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion would be destroyed without transformational leadership, and the lack of top-down leadership in fact has led to its elimination in the federal government and industry (Cooper, et al, 2023). The destruction of DEI is currently happening at an impressive pace because advocacy for it lacks leadership. Social and psychological contracts are stark reminders to transformational and situational leaders of the dire consequences of violating these contracts: Southwest Airlines is a modern example of Chester I. Barnard's theory of authority which predicts that all communication commands reside in the recipient of the command. When employees called in sick and cost Southwest \$75,000,000 in one weekend, vaccine mandates showed managers the power of who truly has the authority in communication commands (Bell & Kennebrew, 2023).

Communication is a skillset demonstrated to clearly fall under the leadership function (Bell & Muir, 2014). The differences between workplace expectations, values, and leadership styles among Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z emphasizes the complexity of leading effectively in virtual work environments which require superlative communication skills—which is a two-way process with feedback across tiers and especially between genders and among cultures, all while utilizing an integrated system approach to manage conflict across these cultures (Roebuck, et al 2016a; Roebuck, et al 2016b; Williams, et al, 2019). Emotional intelligence and training are also essential for effective leadership of the generational divides (Brown, et al 2023; Chatman, et al, 2020; Nguyen, et al, 2019). Distinct historical, social and technological contexts have shaped these generational groups. This impacts how individuals perceive work, authority, and collaboration. As organizations enhance the adaptation of work-from-home and hybrid work models, these generational differences become even more critical, requiring leaders to adapt their styles to create engagement and productivity while balancing individual and group needs.

Organizational culture can have an impact on employees' productivity. Suppose we use diversity culture as an example. In that case, we can look at a study conducted in 2007 by McKay et al. that highlights statistical information about the racial breakdown of voluntary turnover. Their research showed that voluntary turnover was almost 30% higher within racial minority groups, which brought forward the question of how diverse climate perceptions influence turnover intentions. The results revealed that Black managers' perception of the diversity climate had the highest relation to their commitment and desire to remain with their company (McKay, et al 2007). Further research could reveal if an organization's culture affects remote employees' productivity. An organizational culture rooted in trust and explicit communication is essential for successful remote work. Bharadwaj (2024) emphasizes that such a culture empowers employees to perform independently while feeling aligned with company objectives. This cultural foundation can significantly enhance productivity in remote teams by creating a supportive and trusting environment (Bharadwaj, 2024).

Challenges within remote work present traditional leadership approaches. To effectively manage today's multigenerational workforce environment, leadership style must change with the differences in values and expectations of each generation. Research reveals significant differences in work preferences among Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Baby Boomers generally require structure, prefer hierarchical environments with clear direction, and work with traditional norms (Bell & Martin, 2019). Growing up in a digital and interconnected world, the younger generations often see remote work as more productive than working in person, allowing flexibility (Sukmana & Komalawati, 2023). Several employees prefer remote work due to reduced office politics, micromanagement, and better work-life balance (Oquendo & Bell, 2024). This suggests that traditional leadership styles may not be as effective in remote settings, which lack the hierarchical and politicized culture that remote workers actively avoid.

It is critical to understand that these generational differences in leadership are not arbitrary but are developed in each generation's unique experiences and historical background. The life experiences of Baby Boomers, structured by stability and hierarchy, are conversely different from those of Millennials and Gen Z. These generations entered the workplace in a rapidly changing tech-driven world. Research by Lissitsa and Laor (2021) explains how these differences affect leadership preferences. Younger generations respond positively to hands-off approaches and feedback, allowing them to utilize their self-sufficiency.

Adopting a leadership style that resonates with each generation's distinctiveness will increase productivity and create a stronger sense of connection and engagement within their teams. Personality traits and digital skills influence engagement, which could translate to productivity in remote work environments. When designing virtual team strategies, leaders might consider how generational attitudes toward multitasking, tech adoption, and social approval affect productivity.

Fostering collaboration enhances the dynamics of remote work. Kouzes and Posner (2017) argue that leaders must "develop cooperative relationships" and "listen deeply to diverse points of view." To bridge the gap between the employees and leaders, create a space for open discussion where individuals can express their concerns about censorship and free speech in a safe, structured way. The approach will allow effective communication and conflict resolution, enabling the employees to work side by side despite having different preferences.

While generational differences are sometimes emphasized in leadership studies, evidence suggests that individual developmental stages and career experience may play a more critical role than generational traits alone (Rudolph et al., 2017). Younger employees may value autonomy and transformational styles. Still, this preference is often tied to career stages rather than generation, implying that leadership strategies should be adaptable and development-focused rather than generationally driven.

Generational differences should dictate leadership styles instead of emphasizing individual developmental stages. The lack of generational differences in perceived usefulness and ease of use suggests that generational identity may not need to dictate leadership style. Leaders could adopt consistent strategies for technological engagement across all age groups. This indicates that while generational assumptions may not be reliable, understanding employees' age-related needs could still guide leadership adaptations. However, recognizing specific age-related needs, such as flexibility for younger employees managing early-career pressures or support for older employees adjusting to new technologies, could still guide leadership adaptations nuancedly. By balancing consistent engagement strategies with understanding these unique needs, leaders can create a more adaptable, inclusive environment that effectively supports diverse teams.

Baby Boomers appreciate the clarity of vision and structure provided by transformational leaders. Millennials and Gen Z are more responsive to inspiration, empowerment, and opportunities for personal development (Edleston, 2023; Makowski, 2023). Baby Boomers may require more directive styles in technology-related tasks, whereas Millennials and Gen Z, accustomed to digital tools, benefit from a more delegative approach. Millennials and Gen Z thrive under e-leadership due to their digital fluency, while Baby Boomers and Gen X may require additional technological support to adapt. Older generations may value the stability and predictability of this style, while younger employees often find it disengaging and overly rigid. This style resonates across generations, promoting collaboration and reducing generational conflict by prioritizing the team's collective well-being.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have documented that traditional leadership styles, autocratic and laissez-faire, impact team decision-making differently (Claes, 1999; Bertsch, et al, 2022). Autocratic leadership involves minimal feedback from followers and focuses on directive decision-making by the leader. It aligns with transactional leadership, where the leader manages through structured exchanges, assigning tasks and expecting results in return (DeClerk, 2007). Though effective in specific settings, this approach may limit engagement in remote teams.

Remote work has fundamentally reshaped leadership dynamics, compelling organizations to restructure traditional management styles. By understanding this, leaders should adopt new approaches tailored to

virtual environments. As leadership styles evolve, questions arise: what leadership style is most effective in managing remote work? This article review explored the influence of various leadership styles, generational impacts, and other remote work productivity factors. Investigating transformational, transactional, and situational leadership styles and considerations like employee engagement, generational preferences, and diversity climates were revealed.

Beyond leadership style, several factors influence remote work productivity, such as employee engagement, adaptability, and technology use. Tefertiller et al. (2024) highlighted that subjective organizational norms significantly impact employees' acceptance and use of communication technologies, affecting job satisfaction and engagement. Such social influences create an environment where employees feel supported using essential remote tools, which is crucial for maintaining productivity and cohesion in virtual teams.

The rapid shift to remote and hybrid work has highlighted the importance of effective leadership styles that *encourage autonomy, adaptability, and engagement* in managing remote teams. The rapid shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted leadership dynamics, necessitating reevaluating how leadership styles affect productivity in virtual environments. While research has shown that remote work can negatively influence individual performance (Naderi, 2022), leadership effectiveness in these settings may also depend on generational differences within the workspace.

With Baby Boomers favoring traditional, face-to-face interaction and Gen X showing some skepticism toward complete remote work, Millennials and Gen Z embrace the flexibility of working from home. This generational difference suggests that leadership styles must be adaptable to meet a multigenerational workforce's varied needs and values. As the workforce composition shifts toward Millennials and Gen Z, leaders must foster an inclusive, results-driven organizational culture rooted in trust, clear communication, and flexibility.

Understanding these nuances is essential for organizations seeking to maintain competitive and employee satisfaction in a post-pandemic world, where remote work will likely remain a significant part of the workspace structure. Ultimately, aligning leadership approaches with generational preferences and remote work demands will be critical for long-term organizational success. Therefore, we make two recommendations for leadership styles that appear to be most prominently addressed in the literature.

Recommendation One

First, we recommend that transformational leaders incorporate employee input into decisions, with the leader having the final authority. This approach uses influence and personal consideration to encourage and motivate employees (Jiatong, et al 2022). Our research shows that transformational leadership enhances organizational commitment and performance. Transformational leadership, which nurtures employee motivation and self-management, has shown significant promise in enhancing remote work productivity. Jiatong, et al (2022) found that transformational leadership significantly improved organizational commitment and job performance by enhancing employee engagement. This approach, which supports self-management, a crucial aspect of remote environments, allows employees to work independently while feeling connected to organizational goals. Furthermore, Tefertiller, et al (2024) emphasized that leaders who promote and normalize communication technologies can create a more connected and efficient remote workplace, thereby enhancing engagement and satisfaction among remote employees.

Recommendation Two

Second, we recommend that situational leaders tailor their style to the unique demands of remote work, fostering both productivity and satisfaction are very well-suited to managing remote work. Allen, et al (2023) contend that situational leadership, a style that underscores flexibility and self-management, is particularly well-suited for hybrid and remote settings where adaptability is crucial. Leaders who embrace a situational approach suggest they might be most effective in remote work environments by enabling flexibility, autonomy, and active engagement.

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