Digital Dexterity: Understanding Communication Proficiency in Gen Z

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Introduction

The bulk of "Gen Z professionals prefer a multidisciplinary and global focus to their work," the researchers discovered. Furthermore, it is claimed that Gen Zs are impacted by the notion that employers typically only use and value their workforce when necessary.

Soft skills encompass a variety of competencies, such as effective communication, interpersonal and negotiation skills, networking abilities, leadership qualities, problem-solving and conflict resolution abilities, time management, and public speaking abilities. While Gen Z is predicted to bring strong technological skills to the workplace, some researchers are unsure about their interpersonal communication and relationship skills. The bulk of "Gen Z professionals prefer a multidisciplinary and global focus to their work," the researchers discovered. Additionally, it is claimed that Gen Zs are impacted by the notion that employers typically only use and value their workforce when necessary. Experts in higher education have contended that people's current knowledge only makes up 1% of what will be known in 30 years. People with talent, creativity, and critical thinking skills will be in high demand in the job market in the future. The World Economic World (2016) report estimates that due to the quickly expanding employment landscape, 65% of children entering primary school today will encounter a new type of work that has never existed before. As a result, different stakeholders need to be prepared to offer future work patterns and skills that will satisfy the demands in line with the technological trends of the Industrial Revolution ((Martin, 2018). According to research, facilitators should come up with innovative

ways to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process. Some of the technologies that can draw in Gen Z users include podcasts, websites, simulations, interactive YouTube tutorials, and online educational games. Social media platforms such as Tumblr and Twitter can be used for knowledge sharing and communication. Face book is a useful platform for posting updates about class activities and having discussions (Hunt, R, 2018). Educational institutions must adapt their teaching-learning strategies to meet the demands of Generation Z. These strategies must be more visual, interactive, and provide instant access to information. Most importantly, they must incorporate technology and social media/networking. When it comes to basic educational technology, Gen Z prefers digital tools and online forums that are always available. TED Ed, Sound-cloud, Piktochart, Canva, Twitter, Facebook, WordPress, Educlipper, Prezi, Google Sites, and Testmo and so on (Anealka, 2018). Not only does generation Z need to get ready for the new era of work, but the workplace also needs to get ready. Particularly during technology's invasion and artificial intelligence (AI), businesses as well as employees are needed and companies to grow to meet the demands of a changing global environment (Ruhi, U, 2022). People perceive Generation Z to be technologically savvy and of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. They communicate in an individual, straightforward, and informal manner, and social networking is very important to them. Generation Z is regarded as a generation of digital natives, having little to no memory of the world before smartphones (Parker, K., & Igielnik, R. , 2020). Communication, teamwork, motivation, problem-solving, enthusiasm, and trust are among the soft skills that employers value (Chute, 2012; Ellis, Kisling, & Hackworth, 2014; Rasul, Rauf, & Mansor, 2013; Robles, 2012; Wahl et al., 2012). Effective communication is a crucial skill for employees. Interpersonal conflict is more likely to occur in people with poor interpersonal skills (Moeller, Robinson, Wilkowski, & Hanson, 2012). According to research, Generation Z values soft skills highly because they see them as necessary for both professional and personal success in a world that is becoming more and more reliant on technology. This generation has expressed a strong desire to acquire

technical and soft skills for personal fulfillment and the opportunity to make a significant contribution to society, in addition to career advancement. Moreover, research indicates that when it comes to learning technical skills, Generation Z favors experiential and hands-on learning methods over traditional classroom instruction. Examples of these methods include online tutorials, coding boot camps, and project-based learning. Globalization, technology, and the rise of the gig economy are some of the cultural elements that impact how Generation Z views technical skills. Being technically proficient is seen by many in this generation to secure their careers for the future and adjust to the evolving nature of work. Besides, studies reveal that Generation Z values social responsibility and ethics above all else when assessing technology use, demonstrating a sophisticated awareness of the implications of technical proficiency in a socioeconomic setting.

Soft skills are essential in any workplace and include leadership, public speaking, negotiation, communication, and conflict resolution. Social media and instant messaging have shaped Gen Z, who might not be as familiar with traditional office communication. When moving from remote to in-person work, this soft skill gap widened even more. Given their upbringing in the digital age, business leaders frequently believe that Generation Z possesses superior digital skills. Digital literacy, email, internet use, and office software are examples of basic skills. Data analysis, web development, project management, cyber security, and programming are examples of advanced skills (FDM Services). For Generation Z to succeed in the workforce, it is critical that they cultivate soft skills like teamwork, communication, and adaptability. To better understand and close these skill gaps, more research is required. Additionally, training programs and educational strategies should be reassessed to improve Generation Z's soft skills. The ability to develop creatively, productively, and critically about the use of digital media and its effects on society and the workplace is referred to as digital skills. Digital literacy is a necessary skill for people to successfully navigate their daily lives, careers, and educational pursuits in the digitally driven future. Digital competencies are becoming essential parts of skill sets.

Two types of digital skills are distinguished by us. To effectively use common software, digital devices, and applications, people need to possess essential digital skills. Those who possess these abilities can handle data responsibly, communicate, and share information using digital tools while maintaining their online safety. (Michaela Poláková et al., 2023). Employers view Generation Z as under prepared and lacking the skills needed to succeed in the workplace, even though many of them believe they are prepared to enter the workforce because of their knowledge and open-mindedness (Jones, 2020). The fact that Generation Z has access to a wealth of information is one of the main differences between them and the older generations (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018). Because of the knowledge they have already acquired, members of Generation Z are therefore led to strongly believe that they have high self-efficacy in particular areas, such as soft skills. Although the current generation may have learned about soft skills from information they happened upon online, more research needs to be done on how they are being applied. Educators claim that in projects and project teams, the disparities between generations and their effects are rarely considered or discussed.

But in the modern workforce, it is a fact that four generations are collaborating for the first time. Generation Y is increasingly responsible in project teams, with Generation X and Y making up most of the workforce. The younger generation, Generation Z, is now employed. Project management strategies can be developed more effectively by organizations when they acknowledge and take advantage of the new perspectives, technologies, competencies, and styles that Generation Z brings to projects. Negative conflicts in the workplace can arise from miscommunications and generational disparities. The most prominent qualities and attributes pertain to soft skills, including emotional intelligence, helping others grow, tenacity, dedication, communication, teamwork, and uncertainty. Gen Z is a promising asset in the field of project management, and all of these are critical to the success of any project. But there are also some significant gaps found. One reason is that they may not be aware of certain characteristics about themselves,

like their individualism and lack of interpersonal relationships, or they may be worried about their shortcomings in the context of the project team, like their lack of confidence and leadership, their low self-esteem, their inability to take criticism well, their impulsivity, and their panic. Furthermore, emotional maturity and emotional self-control are examples of soft skills that are not based on personality profiles. These gaps should play a significant role in improving project management education and training to better prepare Generation Z students for a seamless transfer from college to the workforce while also raising awareness of their goals. HEIs might now have a rare chance to modify their pedagogical approaches and give students instruction that better fits the characteristics of Generation Z (Magano J et al., 2020).

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the role of soft skills to empower Gen z students
2. To understand the impact of improving soft skills on enhancing professional Development of Gen Z

Research Question

• What is the role of soft skills to empower Gen z students?
• Do soft skills enhance professional development of Gen Z students?

Hypothesis

H0: there is no significant impact of soft skills on professional development of Gen Z students

H1: there is significant impact of soft skills on profession development of Gen Z students

Review of Literature

Jaturaporn Juntarangsu et al in their research paper "Needs for 21st Century Skills Development among Generation Z: A Case Study at Naresuan University International College (2020 concluded that creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, information technology skills, leadership, computer skills, and ethics are the skills that Gen Zers are

most interested in developing. However, Gen Zers showed less interest in leadership and ethics, two skills that are essential and among the top five for conducting business today. Beyond only helping them advance in their careers, Generation Z's career development has larger ramifications. This nation's workforce will be led by members of Generation Z. Not to mention how drastically the Covid-19 pandemic has altered the world. Talhah, H et al in their research paper "The Relationship between Soft Skills, Self-Efficacy, and Career Development among Malaysian Generation Z" (2021) highlighted that the workforce of any nation will grow and prosper in the future if career development is given more of a priority. To support this generation should they encounter issues in the future, counselors need to be aware of the elements that influence this generation's professional development and the reasons behind them. Through career counseling specifically, they can improve their soft skills and self-efficacy, which could help them advance in their careers. To better support their career development, it is hoped that counselors will gain a better understanding of Generation Z, particularly as it relates to newly hired members of that generation. Susan A. Dean et al in their research paper "Soft Skills Needed for the 21st-Century Workforce" (2019) mentioned in a multiple-case study design viewed through the emotional intelligence lens concluding that effective strategies for soft skills training in the logistics sector was the main goal of the study. Businesses must create and implement plans for creating effective training programs for soft skills to address the soft skills gap. In this fiercely competitive global work environment, failing to do so could have far-reaching consequences for bad business results. L. Kohnová et al in their research paper "Generation Z: Education in the World of Digitization for the future of Organizations" (2021) mentioned that younger generation received very high ratings, particularly for their creativity, aptitude for learning new things, and proficiency with applications and online services. Given how crucial these skills are to the success of businesses in the future, employers

should start setting up Generation Z with the tools they need to keep them. But, based on the findings, we saw that young people's technological proficiency is not particularly high. This might be an issue given the current digital era. The current configuration of the educational system may also be the issue, since digitization education is not covered in the curriculum. However, this young generation's complete adaptation to the problem is crucial for the future of businesses. AS Lubis et al in their research paper "Important Soft skills For Successful Z Generation in Industrial Revolution 4.0" (2019) highlights that Gen Z enjoys collaborating with information technology, causing the candidate to assume that decision-makers will hear his ideas and readily choose to resign from his job if it was considered less enjoyable became its own opportunities and challenges for the business. This article presents four strategies aimed at businesses that will hire members of Generation Z. These strategies centre on the recruitment and selection process for potential employees. Academic credentials alone are insufficient for prospective Gen Z workers to succeed in the workplace.

Imjai N et al. (2024) highlighted the results that demonstrated how heavily Gen Z students engage with digital platforms, demonstrating their deep ties to the digital world. Furthermore, the study sheds light on this group's interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies by examining how well they perform face-to-face social skills and how emotionally intelligent they are. We also looked at the complex interactions that exist between emotional intelligence, face-to-face social skills, and digital connectivity. The results of our analysis showed strong correlations, indicating the complex interactions between these variables. The study also revealed the critical role that social skills play as a mediating factor in the connection between emotional intelligence and digital connectivity. The statistical significance of this mediation highlights how digital connectivity transforms emotional intelligence and how this is made possible by the improvement of social skills.

B. Anupama (2014) had discussed how soft skills are important and how they empower students in her research article. The study tries to explore the various obstacles that student endure in the 21st century due to rapid pace at which technology is evolving, economic integration and fluctuation in the socioeconomic environment. The study underlines the significant role of soft skills in moldings the individual characteristics and furnishing them with the competencies needed to navigate efficient in their private and social life. The study recommends the educational institutions to prioritize students' soft skills to foster them in excelling the complexity of the contemporary world.

Aleksey, Y et al. (2019) has explored on the factors effecting the students and discussed the significance of soft skills for professional competitiveness. The articles probes in depth the scientific and innovative methodologies for enriching the soft skills which were practiced both in Russia and abroad. It offered the multimodal training practices which are very essential for the modern educational framework. It also emphasis the inseparable connects of soft skills like problem-solving, emotional intelligence, critic cal thinking, leadership, time management, communication, teamwork and responsibility to the professional competencies. However, this research study does not delve into specific empirical data or case studies to validate the effectiveness of the discussed soft skill training practices. And also could satisfy theoretically, but could not benefit from practical examples or real-world applications to strengthen its argument. By this we get ample scope to investigate the challenges and barriers associated with implementing soft skills development programs in different educational settings.

Jeni Riley (2022) illustrates on the prominence of soft skills in the contemporary workforce, focusing on skill sets like paying attention to details, engaged listening, and avoiding technology based distractions. The study introduced a novel approach to classroom instructions that makes use of creative and improvisational techniques to encourage

student engagement, endorse Principles of marketing and cultivate soft skills that are crucial for long-term career achievement. The three interactive games employed in the experimental research study supported the students to land on successful job and reinforce marketing concepts. Nonetheless, the research fails to go into deeper details about precise benefits or repercussions of employing interactive improve games to educate soft skills. Also the study does not delve into extensive detail about the piloted games' sample size or scope or how they influenced a wide range of students or educational environments. The future scope of this research throws light on contemplating and carry out longitudianal studies to investigate the effects of improvisation-based teaching procedures on students' development of soft skills throughout a period of time.

According to Panwar, S & Mehata A(2019) there is a dire need and importance of fostering leadership traits among GenZ inhabitants for the ever-changing business climate. The study draws attention on the paucity of those in an organization or workforce who lacks the requisite leadership competencies, thereby rendering the task challenging to adequately fill the positions of upper management or senior leadership. The researchers recommands both the educational or professional institutions and all the enterprises collaborate to eliminate the talent shortfall in the workforce recruitment through generating more prospective managers or executives than they are accessible. Companies can provide mentoring initiatives and offer young apprentices the opportunity for concrete leadership experience to nurture their skills as potential managers.

Succi, C. (2015) attempts to underline the relevance of interpersonal skills in a professional setting that evolves quickly, with a specific focus on attributes beyond expertise in technology including digital literacy and language proficiency. The study pinpoints the various avenues for academic and the human resource development perceptions

on completely novel hiring standards and professional   challenges associated to soft skills.

Caratozzolo, P., & Álvarez, Á. (2018, November) illuminates the significance of instilling soft skills in engineering programs. As the traditional and logical scientific methodologies employed in the educational settings are unable to enhance these critical and creative competencies, which are more essential after the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In response to a study, educating Gen- Z scholars to employ artistic-narrative techniques in a hybrid immersive mode diligently streamlines these skill sets. It was noticed that Critical Reading Micro Workshops substantially improved these qualities.

Glud, S. Z. (2022) illustrated concrete instances of the variety of soft skills that are vital at each phases of the methods of innovation. In this section, primarily the focus is laid on the subjective abilities needed to initiate experimenting with innovative ideas. Furthermore , it tried to clarify how the dearth of certain soft abilities , such as self-efficacy may prevent individuals from exploring and embarking their enterprise , although they can readily recognize an appealing issue to address. Even though, we have a detailed list of all skillets required, it would be too tough job to accomplish without innovate team efforts. It is apparent that no single individual   holds all of the recommended interpersonal skills by themselves.

Research Methodology

To match the attitude of Generation Z, the researcher prepared an electronic questionnaire on the relevance of soft skills   from the perspective of potential employee (Gen Z), so as to understand the level of job readiness with focus on Generation Z. The   questionnaire is based on the training and development needs from the perspective of organizations. The results of this paper are based on secondary data as well as on primary data. The primary data was collected by the Google form method. The survey aimed to determine how Generation Z as

potential employees perceive soft skills in view of competency needs. The questionnaire was created by the researcher and answered by students of various undergraduate colleges in Hyderabad. Out of 100 possible respondents, 84 students answered, the return rate was 84%.

Interpretation: REGRATION TABLE REPRESENTING THE SIGNIGICANCE OF DIFFERENT VARIABLES

Variable	R square	F value	Sig of anova	Std. Error	B coefficient	T value	Sig value
1	.138	0.934	0.491b	1.234	1.990	1.613	.114
2	0.193	0.604	0.751b	2.049	1.164	1.761	.086
3	0.161	1.128	0.365b	2.113	1.224	1.727	.092
4	0.125	0.836	0.564b	2.163	1.189	1.819	.076
5	0.149	1.027	0.427b	2.654	1.144	2.320	.025

Variables (V) declared in the experiment are as follows

V1: Self-motivation towards your responsibilities

V2: Self-confidence in performing the tasks

V3: Commitment towards your responsibilities

V4: Ability to work independently

V5: Time management in completing the tasks

Predictors: Constant values are Personal and Professional advancement Skills

Being open to change to enhance productivity

Ability to work independently

Self-confidence in performing the tasks

Self-motivation towards your responsibilities

Time management in completing the tasks

Commitment towards your responsibilities

Maintaining a positive attitude towards the Job

Interpretation

Based on the provided regression table:

1. For Variable 1:

- R square: 0.138 indicates that approximately 13.8% of the variability in the dependent variable can be explained by this model.

- F value: 0.934 indicates the overall significance of the regression model.

- Sig of anova: 0.491b represents the p-value associated with the ANOVA test, suggesting that the regression model is not statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level.

- Std.Error: 1.234 represents the standard error of the estimate.

- B coefficient: 1.990 indicates the coefficient estimate for the independent variable.

- T value: 1.613 represents the t-value associated with the coefficient estimate.

- Sig value: 0.114 indicates the p-value associated with the t-test for the coefficient estimate, suggesting that the independent variable is not statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level.

2. For Variable 2 to Variable 5:

- R square values range from 0.125 to 0.193, indicating the proportion of variance explained by each model.

- F values range from 0.604 to 1.128, indicating the overall significance of each regression model.

- Sig of anova values range from 0.365b to 0.751b, representing the p-values associated with the ANOVA tests for each model.

- Std.Error values range from 2.049 to 2.654, indicating the standard errors of the estimates.

- B coefficient values range from 1.144 to 2.163, representing the coefficient estimates for the independent variables.

-   T values range from 1.613 to 2.320, representing the t-values associated with the coefficient estimates.

-   Sig values range from 0.025 to 0.092, indicating the p-values associated with the t-tests for the coefficient estimates.

In summary, the interpretation suggests the varying degrees of significance and explanatory power of each regression model for the dependent variable.

Discussion

After reviewing data analysis presented in the regression table, the researcher has come to an understanding of the correlation that exists between the independent and dependent variables. In accordance with statistics supplied, the subsequent discussion is put forth.

The correlation that exists between numerous independent variable (Variables 1 to 5) and the dependent variable is comprehensively summarized in the regression table. The report provides detailed statistics on the degrees of significance of each independent variable, demonstrating whether or not they significantly affect the dependent variable. Moreover, the mathematical model fit metrics (R square values) in the data table also represent how effectively the selected independent variables in conjunction account for the variability in the dependent variable.

In addition, every regression model's overall significance is calculated using its F values and related p-values (Sig of Anova). These statistics above display if at least one independent variable has a apparent impact on the dependent variable and assist to decide whether the model as whole is statistically significant.

By quantifying the strength and direction of the correlations between each independent variable and the dependent variable, whilst holding other variables unchanged, the coefficient estimates (B coefficient values) reveal the greater details. The magnitude of each independent variable's influence on the dependent variable is indicated by these coefficients.

Analyzing the corresponding T values and the p-values (Sig value) that correlate to them is essential to interpret the coefficient assumptions. Practical insights for the decision-making process can be obtained by significant coefficients ($p < 0.05$), that indicates that the corresponding independent variable has a statically significant impact on the dependent variable.

It's very crucial to admit the fact that any limitations of the regression analysis for instance multi co linearity between independent variables or neglected variable bias. Besides, contingent upon the findings, the spotting areas that require additional research study. This might enhance deeper comprehension of the variables influencing the dependent variable, which may assist to improve analysis.

In a nutshell, the regression table provides great insights into intricate correlations between independent variables and dependent variables helping in decision making and inspiring future implications in the right path.

Conclusion

Research based on the result implicates important contribution of soft skills in fostering and augmenting Generation Z (Gen Z) student empowerment for enhancing their career. We now arrive at Gen Z, the most recently born group to enter today's workforce and a set of people who are (in theory) ultra tech-savvy digital natives. But, this knack for digital platforms may also have created holes in face-to-face interaction and the other crucial soft skills that we all need to work on. Equally important in the findings is while Gen Z have a natural digital aptitude, there needs to be focus on building these skills alongside others such as communication, leadership and problem-solving - core capabilities for nurturing well-rounded young people who will excel both academically and professionally.

The survey was given to 100 college students from different colleges on a structured questionnaire and interviews which helped understand the most prevalent views Gen Z holds about soft skills i.e. their essentiality,

importance in real life. Input Stream close It is revealed from the analysis of data in terms of ANOVA and multiple regression that soft skills primarily impact personal growth followed by professional development. Skills like empowerment, time management, digital literacy and hiring predisposition as well as leadership traits and autonomous work were among those that stood out in relation to the impact on professional training actions. The research also found that, despite their strong digital aptitude, when it comes to self-efficacy in leadership skills and emotional intelligence/interpersonal strength (like grit) the Gen Z students are significantly less confident.

The truth is, as the research shows for Gen Z to stay in demand and keep up with a rapidly changing job market they need both technical skills combined with soft-skills. For instance, The World Economic Forum (2016) has highlighted the fact that 65% of children who are about twelve now will find themselves in new kinds of jobs which do not exist anywhere today. This outlook highlights the significance of being well-rounded in terms of skill set, which includes digital as well as people skills. The study calls for educational institutions, employers and other stakeholders to provide specific training programs, innovative teaching-learning strategies and experiential learning opportunities that will narrow these gaps.

In addition to these findings the literature review provides supporting evidence while slightly differently framing our call for a "reformist approach" themed as illustrative of necessity reform which soft skills now required in education. As noted by Kohnová et al. Even in the present, as highlighted by Hollands and Muñoz (2021), education struggles to prepare for much of today's youth with both digital skills they might need and softs kilss because curricula remain outdated w.r.t full integration of digitization & critical softskill training. Tabibian JM et al Agencies of Other Investigators such as Juntarangsu et Al; in his review on Tabibianirans Science Dimensions 2. (2020) and Talhah et al., 2021) that also underscores the importance of upskilling Gen Z in these soft skills given their criticality to future talent development for both national employees and across international workforces.

Yet employers have been raising growing concerns that, for all the confidence of Generation Z and their technological savviness, there is something lacking in terms of readiness at work. This problem can be solved by companies focusing on including mentorship programs, real leadership application options and making soft skill training practical in the outside world. Academicues can introduce newer and technologically advanced ways of teaching which suit the learning style that Gen Z prefers. As a result, these stakeholders will be much more capable of training Gen Z to thrive in the 21st-century work environment and ultimately close current performance gaps by ensuring they have all that is needed for success in this modern world driven by technology.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates an immediate need to develop the soft skills of Generation Z. This involves a partnership of educational institutions, businesses and policymakers to create an ecosystem promoting not only skills for work but basics soft skills too. Bridging these gaps can support Gen Z to succeed in the workplace of today, turning challenges into opportunities for meaningful work and growth. If anything is important in the digital age, it's a blend of strong interpersonal and leadership skills paired alongside solid technical expertise.

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