

GENERATIONS AT WORK IN THE POST-PANDEMIC TIME

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Abstract The Generations@Work research started in February 2019 as a result of the challenges caused by the aging phenomenon, the lack of skilled people and, in general, that there are difficulties for integrating new generations (called in many cases “digital natives”). Our aim was to identify better soft solutions to improve the cooperation between different generations and to identify the best workspaces that facilitate intergenerational cooperation. The research was split into two sections, first focused on the soft solutions identifications and second in the suitable workspaces identification. In the first section, we had 44 people from different generations deeply involved that worked in 7 mix teams with the subject work motivation analyses between different generations and also applying a survey about work motivation to a largest group of people. In the second section with the topic to define better workspaces for different generations, we had involved 2 mixt generations teams, each one had integrated at least one architect or interior designer. The second section was developed, partly, in the normal time and, while the last part, in the pandemic time. Consequently, the topic was adjusted to the situation and the focus was to find good work solutions between generations in the pandemic time but also in the post-pandemic time. The digital natives’ integration challenges are provided especially by the different cultural identities and also by different skills set that the members of this generation have.

The human society, in general, and organizations, in particular, need that all generations live and work together. The research proved that different skills set is certainly a positive value and the diversity is a key element for innovations independently by the general situation (pandemic or not). With a suitable mind set up and suitable tools and spaces, we can work together to pass the pandemic time for a better “Future of Work”.

Keywords: Future of work; workplace; workspace; generations; work motivation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Generations at Work is an initiative, managed by Ergonomics and Workplace Management Society from Romania that should be regarded as a multigenerational platform of work and a debate for a better future of work where to find relevant meaning for humans, in general, aiming to develop better workplace concepts, in particular [8,10].

Facility management domain development in the direction of the workplace management is a consequence of the organizations needs to develop the all necessary tools, as “New Ways of Working” [1,9] and the entire support facilities, to enhance the organization’s sense of community and culture, but also to increase innovation, creativity and initiative [2,5,7,14].

On the other hand, for the human beings, having a meaning of life [4,8,13] and work [3,8] is also an essential need. In the context of AI development [5] this question also a central philosophic question, but also a key question in the “Future of Work” field of thinking [11,15]. What seems a certainty in future is that, for the humans, the need for the community feeling and meaning of life will be found in the long term in the professional work organizations.

The main issue in the pandemic time is that actually, following of the healthy reason, the community spirit is challenged and, also, forward of the economical lockdown, the meaning of work becomes questionable, in the context of individual healthy and planetary context healthy.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE GENERATIONS AT WORK RESEARCH

The purpose of the “Generations@Work” research was to find solutions for the multi-generations workers' integration with focus on the digital natives' work integration. The research had 2 sections, first with the focus on soft tools identifications for a better intergeneration cooperation and second with the focus on suitable workspaces definition for a better intergeneration cooperation.

2.1. Soft tools identification methodology

This section made between February and September 2019 was, based on 7 working teams, each one comprised of 6 - 7 members. The members of each team are from different generations: high school, students, young employees, mature and senior employees. Each member from each team should to do interviews with people from the same category that are not part of the research. In each team, another subject is to self-analyze the group dynamics during the research process [8,10].

The research started on the 22nd of February 2019 and first stage has ended on the 28th of June 2019. We have involved in the first stage 44 people on different levels. From the total number, 21 were high school young people, 6 students, 6 young employees (less of 3 years working experience), 7 medium employees (between 3- and 15-years working experience) and 7 senior employees (more of 15 years working experience).

During of the evaluation and team building process, we used three tools.

- First, there was a Self-Reflection Questionnaire, based on the subject's thinking about different situation from their own life [6].
- The second one was a questionnaire used to make a quantitative analysis of the different motivators and also a tool to build a personality map, or group map function by task. With this tool, the communication is oriented in one direction and the introspective and extrospective behavior in another direction. This tool was used to build a personal behavioral map but also a team behavioral map.
- The last tool used, was the 5 Whys Analysis applied for two topics: Why we should work and Why we shouldn't work. That tool was also applied individually and as a debate topic for the team.

2.2. Multigeneration workspace identification methodology

The second stage was based on two teams by 5 people, respectively 7 people, each one had at least one student, one person with lower experience until 15 years, and one person with high experience, more of 15 years. Also, in each team was at least one architect or interior designer.

The team's purpose was to define, each one, separately, a workspace for a research hub with 49 researchers organized in 7 teams by 7 people each one. An additional topic was also in this stage to analyze the internal dynamic of the group and to identify forward soft solutions for a better intergeneration cooperation.

This analyze was made in two ways – a description of the interactions and work during the process and a questionnaire about the teamwork in an intergenerational context.

A questionnaire was developed and applied online that aimed to identify the main characteristics and conclusions of the intergenerational collaboration process. It was applied only to team members - 10 people - but although it does not have statistical relevance it offers important qualitative insights into the working process. [8,10]

The respondents were divided into 3 age groups:

- students
- employees with <15 years working experience
- employees with > 15 years working experience

There were collected and analyzed information regarding:

- favorite remote communication channels
- style of tasks approaching
- the modalities of planning and organizing the activities/ tasks
- positive and negative aspects identified in collaboration with colleagues from other generations
- proposals to improve the intergenerational cooperation
- ideas/ suggestions for the concept of spatial arrangement that resulted from intergenerational collaboration

3. RESEARCH PROCESS

3.1. First stage of research process

In the first stage of the research the main topic it was the largest survey that was done with a total of 111 respondents about the work motivation with the following structure:

Table 1. School / working categories [8,10].

No.	School /working category	Nr. of respondents
1	High School	20
2	University Student	44
3	Employee with up to 3 years of professional experience	9
4	Employee with professional experience from 3 to 15 years	15
5	Employee with over 15 years of professional experience	23
	TOTAL	111

After the statistical data processing, it was obtained the results from Table 2.

Table 2. Motivation Topics General Top 10 Hierarchy and Each Working Experience Hierarchy [8,10].

General Hierarchy			Each Category Hierarchy				
No	Code	Topic description	HS	US	EL3	E3-15	EM 15
1	M10	To live by practicing personal passions	2	1	5	3	8
2	M3	The opportunity to be among people with whom I feel good, have fun, that are my friends	1	2	9	4	5
3	M16	An organization and / or workplace position in which I feel I can reach my professional vocation and which makes me feel useful.	4	8	1	5	2
4	M4	The opportunity to be among people from whom I can broaden my horizon of knowledge, skills, and abilities.	5	3	6	1	1
5	M1	Reward money or school grades	3	4	4	7	4
6	M2	Comfort and physical work environment (the building and spaces of the company / faculty / school with the facilities that include cleanliness, security, food facilities, socializing and relaxing spaces, fitness, gaming, ergonomics workstations, training spaces, interior design, natural and artificial lighting, green spaces, etc.).	6	5	10	8	3
7	M15	An organization, workplace that gives me the opportunity to learn and do diverse things that I feel are allowing me to grow.	8	11	2	2	11
8	M13	A psychosocial work / study environment that facilitates and encourages the fulfillment of my personal work / learning tasks.	14	18	3	6	12
9	M18	An organization / school where to have a life balance between personal time and work time.	12	6	8	9	15
10	M8	Opportunity to be in a team / organization where I feel appreciated and feel that my worth and contributions are recognized	9	12	7	11	6

If we are looking in both top 5 and top 10 general hierarchies and each category hierarchy, we have found more similarities than differences.

However, in a detailed analysis we can identify differences. Thus, in the top 5, we have for High School and University students as priorities 2 position items that reflect a prevalent orientation to relaxing items as „live by practicing personal passions“ and „the opportunity to be among people with whom I feel good, have fun, are my friends“. In the same time on the top of employed people the priorities are related to vocation, the usefulness of work and personal growth in relation with others.

If are looking in top 10, we have the same obvious differences between High School and University Students and especially the employees with more 15 years experience. For High School and University Students, the priorities are the ones that provide diversity and flexibility, such as M9 and M12 topics, and also a relaxing orientation, as M5 topic shows. For employees with experience, the organization and team capacity become important, as it helps them to implement their ideas / projects – the M7 item, and also a job that avoids a sedentary life – the M11 topic.

A remarkable issue is the topic M1 – “Reward money or school grades” that has only the 5th position in the top of the general hierarchy and the 4th position the 3 categories, position 3 for high school and position 3 for medium employees experience, 3 – 15 years working category.

The general behavior map for the entire respondents' group is presented in Fig. 1 and represents a comparison, with a reference system based on equal values between “tasks” behavior orientation and “relax” behavior orientation on one side and equal values between introvert behavior and extrovert behavior on the other side.

The predominant task behavior is a result of two major influence factors:

- a) The all survey participants are people with a predominant work performance behavior, indifferent of the category of work experience because from other groups that are not so performance of work and school orientated, we didn't find motivations tools to make them part of the research. This is the reason that one of the respondents' group has also more freedom of choosing their work and for them, the „reward money or school grades “is not the first priority.
- b) “The social desirability bias” is mostly associated with the answer regarding tasks orientation and personal development, than with the answer regarding being orientated for relax behavior orientation and „social – economic recognition“.

Majority of the tasks items are associated with an introvert behavior and that is the reason that introvert behavior is more predominate also.

The value of relax items was higher as the general hierarchy for the high school (107%) and university students groups (124%). The extrovert items were also higher as the average for those groups, high school (107%) and university students (101%). The all employee groups have higher values for task items and introvert items as the average.

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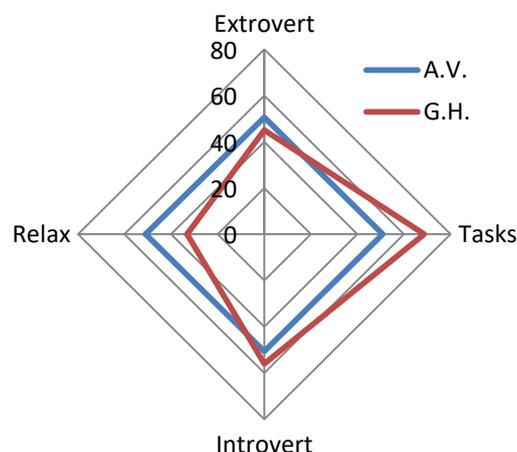


Figure 1. General Map Behavior of the Respondents Group (A.V. - average values, equals values between tasks and relax behavior and between introvert and extrovert values; G.H. – the general values obtained for the entire group of respondents) [8,10].

The first stage of the project “Generations at Work” shows that actually, the differences in terms of work motivations are not very different between different generations of workers and students, but some differences from empirical observations are revealed as a higher orientation for a relaxing behavior in the students groups.

In the same time the research proves it that it is possible to stay and work, reflect together, different generations even without a material reward motivation [8,10].

3.2. Second stage of the research – the working process

The second stage of the research consisted in solving the theme to make the design for an Innovation Hub and monitoring the entire process of working and interaction between members from different generations.

3.2.1. First team (AHMRA)

The first team was characterized by an average age of approximately 33 years, with more members representing the Generation Z and without Baby Boomer Generation.

Between November 17, 2019 - April 02, 2017 the team participated at 9 meetings, of which 5 face to face and 4 online.

The first step was to create a common language, taking into account the significant differences in age and experience in the field of office space design. For this purpose, examples of different spaces were analyzed and defined / included in the main categories existing in the specialized literature (Sedus Study - Fig. 2.).

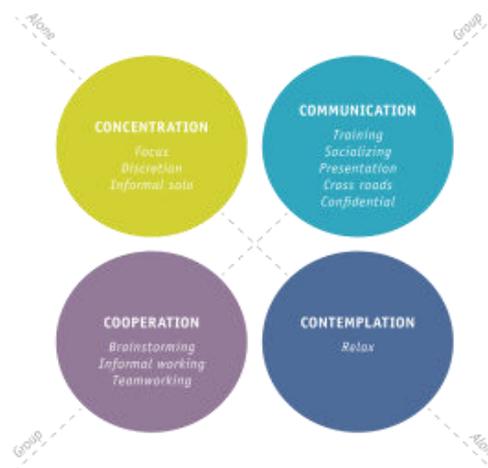


Figure 2. Types of office activities – Sedus Study [12].

Activities were carried out on age groups followed by debriefings in the multigenerational team. Thus, each age group had to draw the plan of different types of spaces and then the team analyzed the similarities and differences that they resigned from the proposals. We could thus identify some age-related preferences many being practical confirmations of the theoretical study results.

For instance – an exercise result: Studio dedicated to a team has resulted from two different views of young students (left space) vs experienced employees (right space).

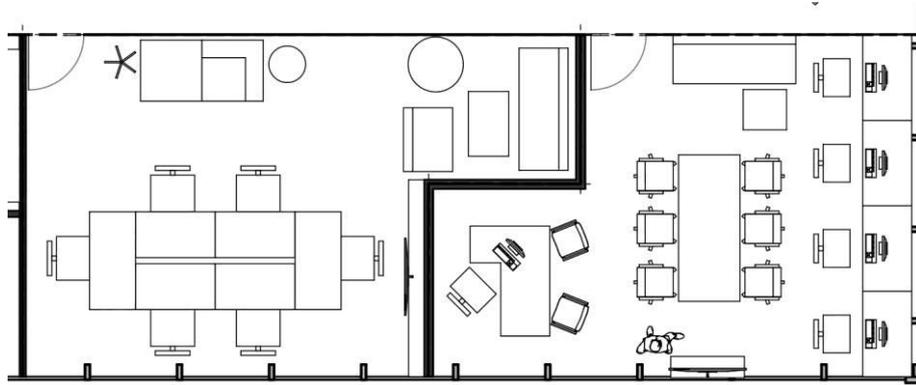


Figure 3. Studio dedicated to a team – 2 approaches.

For each space design, 3 elements were described / analyzed: overview, accent and organizational culture.

Young students

Overview:

- the space is less structured
- there are 2 important areas: 1. work area, 2. informal/ relaxation/ social area
- the work area is located in the center of the space
- the work area is multifunctional (it allows both individual and team work)

Accent (given by size and positioning):

- on teamwork (the common space is located in the center)
- on relaxation / socialization / informal work (large size of this space)
- on personal needs (there is a relatively large space for the cabinet for personal documents/ things)

Organizational culture (reflected/ induced):

- egalitarian - equality between all the team members (there is no special sitting place different from the others)
- relationship oriented
- simplicity and flexibility (in arrangement)
- more informal atmosphere/ work

Employees with work experience

Overview:

- the space is more structured
- there are 4 areas: 1. individual work area, 2. team work area, 3. informal/ social area, 4. dedicated team coordinator area
- there is no main work area. All areas were distributed in the space
- the individual work area and the team work area are distinct

Accent (given by size and positioning):

- on the classic workspaces (individual offices for concentrated work and "meetings" table for presentations / training and teamwork)

- reduced on socialization / informal work (small size of this space, was finally introduced in a hurry)
- there is no significant differentiation between the types of workspaces (they are positioned on the sides of the space)
- reduced on personal needs (small space for the cabinet for personal documents/ things)
- on the coordinator - the coordinator space is generous (as size and endowments)

Organizational culture (reflected/ induced):

- hierarchy - there is a special area dedicated to the team coordinator (there is an inclination towards the hierarchy)
- task oriented
- organization and efficiency (in arrangement)
- more formal atmosphere / work

The integration of exercises for each type of working space conducted finally to the entire space design plan.

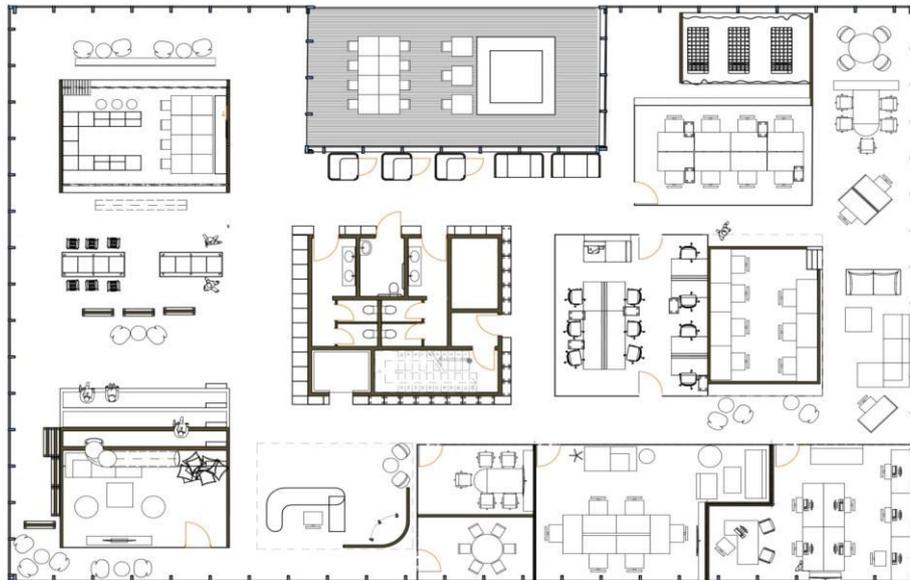


Figure 4. Final design imagined by the team.

3.2.2. Second team (VIFARI)

The second team was characterized by an average age of approximately 38 years, with more members representing the Millennial Generation and Baby Boomer Generation. Consequently, the group structure led to different decisions in collaborations strategies and methodologies comparing to the first team. A strong participation was noticed from the 20-30 years old age group, as they were more numerous and are clearly influenced by contemporary design trends (Figure 5.). The team meetings were dynamic and creative, based on spontaneous decisions and activities. One important activity done prior to deciding on spatial typologies, was to experiment different workplace and meeting settings in the GreenForest, Timisoara headquarters (Figure 5) as individuals, large and small groups, thus aiding the team to identify potential requirements and enclosure variations for the

project.



Fig. 5. Experimenting various collaborative spaces by the team members.

Among the project challenges was the absence of a predefined (existing) space. This allowed a free approach, but raised the difficulty of the design process. This led to a step-by-step way of thinking and collaboration in order to firstly define what the team needs in terms of functionality and potential activities related to the first (Figure 6. a, b).

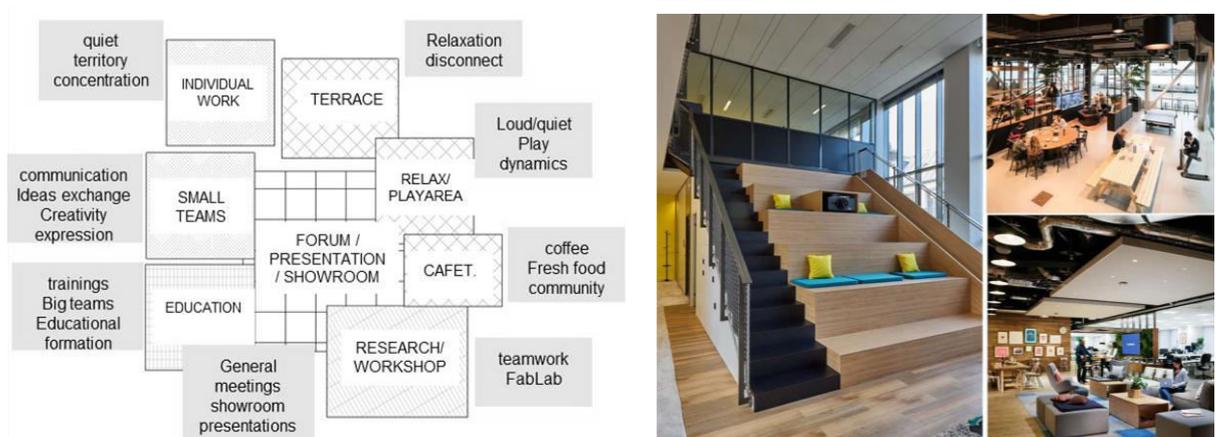


Figure 6. a) Space requirements defined by all the team members b) Overall desired environment

The next step aimed to define ergonomics, involving furniture type selection, correlated to the previously-defined activities; a synthesis of this theoretical and collaborative study is illustrated in Table 3. Each team member expressed his/her opinions and desires regarding the project, in a brainstorming type of meeting that was concluded with valuable information, further transposed into sketches and the final floorplan.

Table 3. Definition of spatial and functional demands.

Space type	Individual work	Small teams/ Meeting	Research	Education	Cafeteria	Relaxation	Presentation/ Forum	Terrace
Action / key words	quiet territory concentration	communication exchange of ideas express ideas	Team work FabLab collaboration	Training Classes Large team meeting	coffee fresh food Socialization	Quiet/loud Play dynamics	General meetings Showroom presentations	Relaxation disconnection
Design requirements	acoustic elements natural light closed offices (managers)	acoustic pods / booth removable walls; closed meeting rooms	Quiet area Close to acces Multiple seating types Small project areas	Flexible spaces for various team sizes	glazed area natural light fruit serving area elements of biophilic design	Multiple seating areas Cosy Dynamic but also a relaxation corner	Large meetings area Flexible Multiple configurations In the center of the space	smoking picnic area
Furniture	adjustable / well-equipped office	mobile acoustic walls elements for expressing ideas wallglass / projection / walldisplay	Test bench 3D printers Library Material library Prototype area	stockable / mobile furniture smart VIA connection systems library	2 types of areas bar type with high tables, lounge type with armchairs and low tables	gaming couches Ping pong lounge	walldisplay podium (with storage of books puffs) display cases / exhibitors	hammock plants, pergolas, trees deck

An initial sketch is illustrated in Figure 7., as a first attempt to define spatial relations of proximity, visual and acoustic dialogue between different activities. This design strategy, “from inside to outside” allows a simple and exact way of defining well-proportioned surfaces, without oversizing or downsizing any space. Empty areas and necessary distances between activities and furniture were studied for both security and acoustic reasons, ensuring the ergonomics and well-functioning of the whole. The functional scheme permitted multiple modifications and alterations, in a dynamic manner, before establishing a final blueprint of the proposed floorplan.

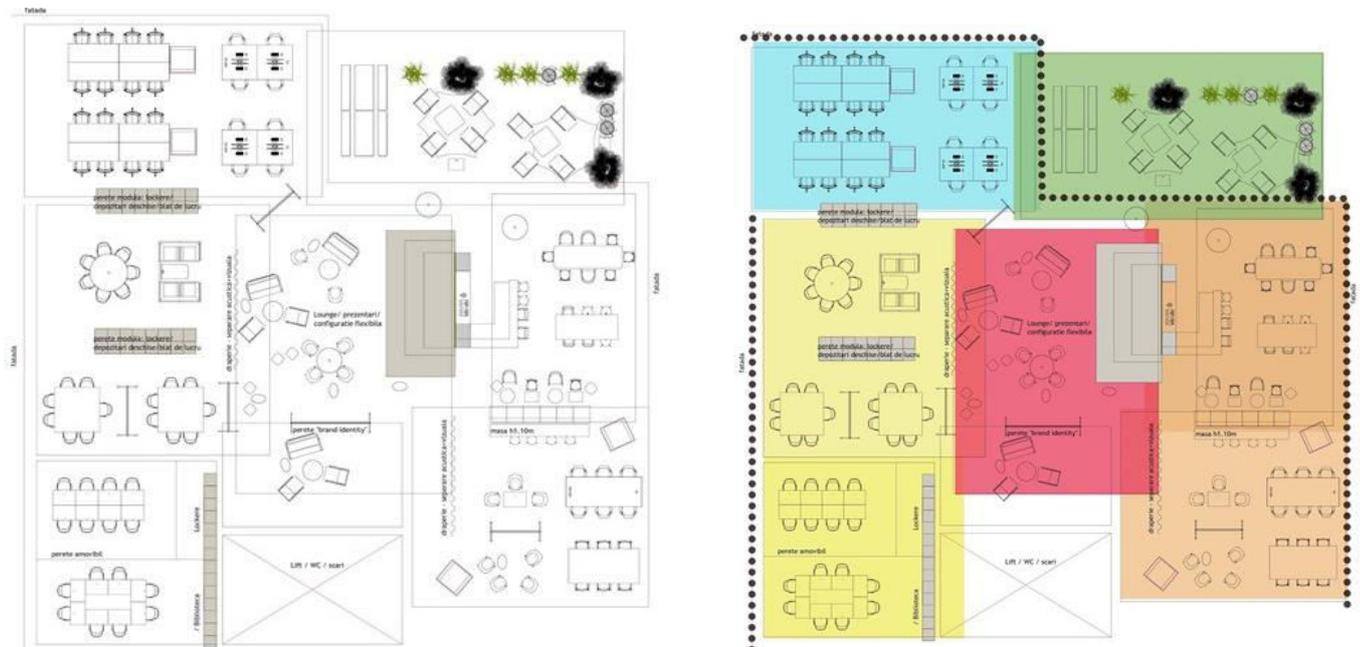


Figure 7. a) First sketch

b) Defining functional dynamics

The final plan (Figure 7) was a result of several alterations. Comparing to the first sketches, the team members opted for more interleaved closed spaces such as meeting areas of various capacities and

also the enclosure of the kitchen/common area, that was an important aspect from acoustical and olfactory reasons.

The trajectory was preserved, as initially discussed: the entry presents a small display and seating area, greeting the visitors or employees. In close proximity, one finds the research areas and several meeting rooms that also serve as filters between the common (active) and individual (static) workspaces. The heart of the layout is the presentation and showroom space, with a central, multipurpose amphitheater and other types of seating furniture; the scope was to create an attractive point to gather all occupants or at least oblige them to traverse the common area. Individual and administrative desks are organized on the perimeter, far from the noisy activities and close to natural light. The teams are separated by enclosed meeting rooms and phone booths, allowing quick gatherings, project work and discussions without altering the general concentration atmosphere.

Furniture selection aimed to ensure the desired flexibility expressed by the team as a common principle of the design. Thus, modularity, mobility and alternation between multiple types of seating were mandatory principles that gave shape to the concept. From foldable walls, to mobile separation acoustic panels, each element participates to the contemporary workplace previously imagined.



Figure 8. Final design imagined by the team.

Acoustic treatment of vertical and horizontal surfaces, as well as textile coverage of certain furniture pieces was studied by Prof. ing. Vasile Bacria who was part of the team. According to the professor's calculations, the acoustic treatment is mandatory to obtain recommended reverberation values of the Romanian Standard no. 125/2013 for Building Acoustics of Office Spaces. As an example, at a frequency of 1000Hz, the reverberation period would be 2.34s without acoustical treatment and would decrease to 0.78s with proposed acoustical materials, thus fitting into the recommended standard values.

3.3. Third stage of the research – the questionnaire about the intergenerational cooperation in the two teams

The process of intergenerational collaboration was also analyzed through the questionnaire which was described at methodology.

Thus, it was found that there are significant differences in the means of remote communication - young people use mainly Whatsapp and Hangouts, employees with <15 years of working experience use e-mail, Whatsapp and Google drive, and employees > 15 years of working experience use e-mail and Skype.

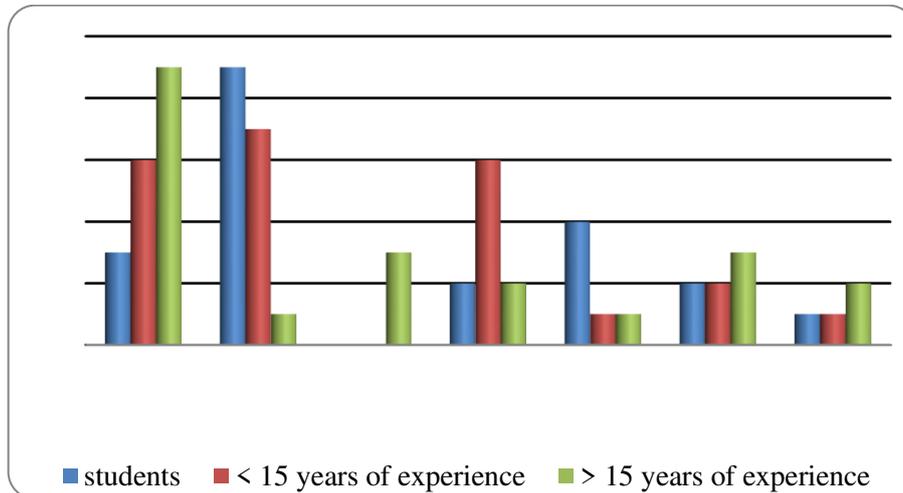


Figure 9. The favorite means of remote communication.

When comes to the style each generation approach tasks we can see that the students' style is characterized by nonconformism, creativity and fun, the employees with < 15 years of experience are seen as creative, flexible but with a tendency to conduct the discussion and to impose their own point of view, and the employees with > 15 years of experience are seen as conservative, rigid and with a tendency to conduct the discussion.

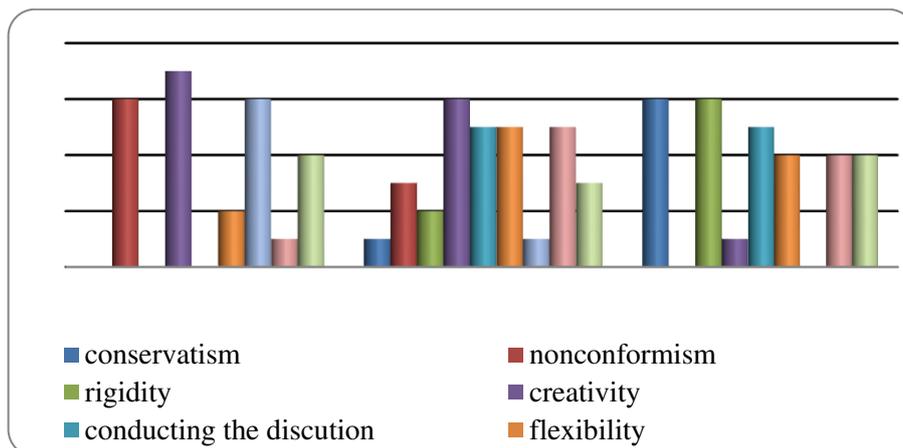


Figure 10. The style of tasks approach.

The analysis shows consistent differences between the way people from different generations plan and organize the activities/ tasks. Thus, the young generation (students) are seen as being characterized by relaxation, unstructured thinking, failing to meet deadlines and short term attention. The employees with < 15 years of experience are seen to plan and organize in a responsible, consistent and focused way while the employees with > 15 years of experience act responsible, consistent, focused and prepared in advance.

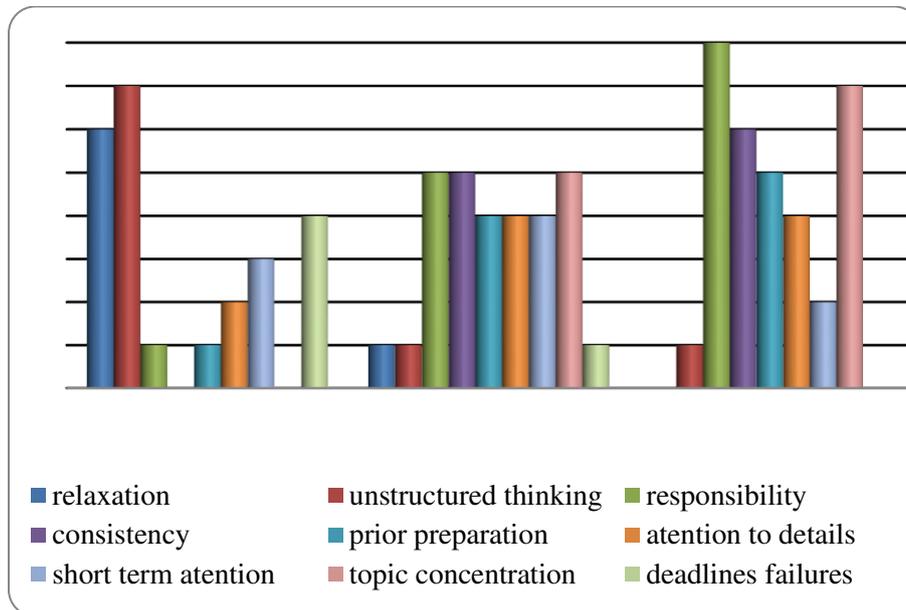


Figure 11. The modalities of planning and organizing the activities/tasks.

There were also investigated the perceived positive and negative aspects of working in intergenerational team and on these bases, we made some proposals to improve collaboration with colleagues from other generations.

Positive aspects in collaboration with colleagues from other generations:

1. new perspectives - flexibility, a more creative approach (without thinking patterns), how other generations think
2. new means of communication - communication applications that they were not used to.
3. new ways of communication to cross the intergenerational barriers (to "speak their language")
4. empathy, active listening, knowledge and mutual understanding ("sometimes appearances are not true")
5. exchange of experience
6. teamwork can be fun too;
7. the work must be characterized by involvement, responsibility, concentration, professionalism, perseverance.

Negative aspects in collaboration with colleagues from other generations:

1. lack of interest for written materials (either to write them, or to read them) from young people
2. Involvement/ initiative / responsibility / commitment towards results were insufficient and unequal
3. short-term attention and difficulty focusing on the subject and lack of desire to deepen it by young people
4. lack of consistency at team level and different reaction time
5. different expectations from the work environment,
6. lack of orientation on cost and efficiency

7. rigidity / insufficient flexibility in formulating common opinions / points of view ("shades are missing")
8. misunderstanding of other generations (probably due to lack of similar experiences)
9. additional effort required for planning/ organizing in order to compensate for the knowledge / experience gap between the younger and the older,
10. reluctance of those with experience to share/ delegate responsibilities and a tendency to impose their own point of view.

Proposals to improve collaboration with colleagues from other generations:

1. building in time the collaboration relationships and practicing communication/ collaboration tools
2. setting up face-to-face or virtual meetings more frequently
3. face-to-face communication and meetings are indispensable - digital communication is useful but not sufficient
4. assigning tasks to "teams" made up of people from different generations (who can benefit from the differences and "strengthen" the collaboration)
5. clarification of misunderstandings and different points of view inherent in intergenerational cooperation
6. flexibility, giving up the routine, a more relaxed approach to collaboration, taking into account the differences between generations ("any good or less good idea is to be considered");
7. strict planning and organization - establishing concrete tasks with deadlines, better organization of processes ("which will include deepening the topics discussed")
8. assigning a person for activities of information/ organization/ motivation of the team members
9. Encouraging generational diversity within the team in order to take advantage of the variety of knowledge/ approaches/ experiences/ attitudes ("regardless of professional experience each person can make a beneficial contribution through their own experiences")
10. understanding, encouraging and supporting young people for involvement, taking over the initiative ("giving up stereotypes")

4. COLLABORATION METHODOLOGY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

4.1. The future (of work) after Covid-19

The impact of the current crisis will be felt on several levels (no one can now assess how intense - it depends on many variables that have very wide margins for possible variation). In our opinion, there are changes that were to take place, the current crisis being just a trigger:

1. Change (or trigger of change) at the cultural level, of the value system:
 - a. transfer of the focus from the outside/ the material area (success, economic gain, social status) to the interior/ the spiritual area (free time, reflection, fulfillment, family)
 - b. preference for fewer possessions and more experiences
 - c. readiness to make efforts to protect the environment, build community
 - d. reassessment of the human role in the economic process (in the context of the increasingly frequent use of new technologies - robots, Artificial Intelligence, etc.)
2. Change (or trigger of change) at the level of the economic system, with:

- a. limiting the waste of resources - less but better quality products, repair and not replacement paradigm
 - b. less competition and more cooperation
 - c. more independent, collaborative work
 - d. the widespread use of communication/ collaboration technologies
 - e. massive restructuring of the production processes both at the macroeconomic level (rethinking globalization) and microeconomics (robots, Artificial Intelligence, "big data", IoT, nanotechnologies, etc.) with direct implications up to the level of each workplace (content, integration in the system).
 - f. increasing the role of the state (in stabilizing the economy) but reducing the administrative apparatus (through computerization/ electronic communication)
3. Change (or trigger of change) in the workplace, with:
- a. more autonomy, flexibility
 - b. more technology/ human-machine interaction
 - c. more creativity and involvement
 - d. work interwoven with personal development
 - e. expansion of "gig economy"
 - f. increasing the number of people/ time working "from home"
 - g. reducing direct interactions (redefining procedures)
 - h. design modifications of the arrangements so as to facilitate the new procedures

4.2 The Generations@work and the Covid-19 pandemic

As the Generations@work project unfolded, the final stage overlapped with the imposed Covid-19 pandemic confinement that also impacted the two teams on both collective and individual levels. Collaboration strategies shifted from face-to-face interaction to digital means of communication, showing clear differences of adaptation depending on generation.

The pandemic situation imposes unprecedented challenges in contemporary collaboration, rising issues such as the need for social interaction that was highly encouraged in modern offices, teamwork, promoted as a great source for creativity of knowledge work and the sudden absence of work communities and facilities. Daily work activities are transferred to employees' residences that now become fulltime home-offices. Specialized technical equipment such as software, hardware and video-conference logistics must be provided by employers to preserve workflow and a similar schedule, although personal-professional life balance is a hard task with all family members confined simultaneously.

Several questions arise in the field, concerning the post-pandemic period, currently defined by uncertainty: is the home office permanent from now onwards? If so, what will future offices look like?

1. The return to "normal" office activities will surely pass transformation and adaptation stages from all stakeholders;
2. Gradual return in the office: usage of closed spaces and imposed social distancing;
3. Businesses will probably reduce in surface due to economical shortages;
4. Space optimization might involve teleworking strategies as solutions to flexibility and alternative

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desk occupation;

5. Co-working spaces and facilities might be feasible solutions for companies;
6. Personal, assigned desks could remain at home, while common spaces might continue to exist and even develop within the office;
7. Interior ambient quality and hygiene, as well as wellbeing were already important in modern day workplaces and could become priorities in the post-pandemic era.

These changes will definitely be experienced differently by occupational and age groups. Generations@Work aimed to identify post-pandemic visions from the involved age groups:

Younger generations: appreciate temporary home-office situation due to flexibility and orientation towards personal projects, but quickly resent lack of community connection.

Experienced generations (including parents): on one hand, school closure and the obligation of homeschooling, puts parents in difficulty of home-working, personal and professional balance being strongly altered. On another hand, conception towards the action of “going to work” is well implemented as a habit of everyday routine, thus, engaging in work activities in a domestic environment is very unlikely in the long term for certain categories of people.

Possible solutions to protect colleagues in vulnerable situations, but which allow a beneficial degree of interaction:

1. larger office spaces, with significant distance between desks
2. colleagues in vulnerable situations should stay in separate areas
3. creating physical barriers between groups
4. flexible spaces that allow reconfigurations, separate offices with movable walls
5. the usage of communication applications even inside the company (working to create habits/routines by those who are less familiar).
6. the usage of projection devices for team work and less of writing instruments, paper, etc. which move from one hand to another
7. arrangement (if possible) of outdoor/ better ventilated spaces.

Proposals for the design arrangement (or rearrangement) the of workspaces in order to increase the security of the workspace and the perception of the safety of its users:

1. solutions for sub-division of spaces so that smaller groups can work separately from the others
2. multiplying common facilities so that they can be used by smaller groups of people
3. adding physical barriers between people who work very closely
4. multiplying the facilities that increase the individual hygiene
5. larger space between offices
6. surfaces that are easy to clean
7. close offices that are not seated face to face and / or offices seated face to face but farther away
8. travel circuits that do not pass through other office spaces
9. closures of glass spaces that isolate the space but allow visualization
10. focus on air quality (air filtration/ recirculation systems)
11. fewer people working in small spaces
12. the work places are not near the entrance (one cannot enter into the offices without permission).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The presented research is a link between two themes: intergenerational collaboration and the future of work. Both contemporary and significant for what is yet to come. Work in a multigenerational team or organization is an increasing challenge, as people are usually different and the rapid transformation of societies has accentuated differences even more.

This paper aims to find answers to the question of intergenerational collaboration, emphasizing the unprecedented challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic.

To find the answer we employed a dual approach: one more theoretical – a field study consisting in applying a survey about work motivation and one more practical – a real life experiment consisting in planning, monitoring and analyzing the interaction and cooperation of two multigenerational teams which had the task of designing a workspace.

The results of both approaches were largely convergent showing that there are few differences regarding the motivation to work but more significant differences between generations regarding „tasks“ behavior orientation and „relax“ behavior orientation.

The results pointed out that there are significant differences of the working styles of the “young” and “old” generations, the first being more “relaxed”, “creative”, “nonconformist”, “fun oriented” and the latter being more “conservative”, “rigid” and “dominant”. The intermediate generation, the millennials, stand somewhere in the middle being “creative”, “flexible” and “dominant”.

The results pointed out that there are significant differences of the means of remote communication used and the modalities of planning and organizing the activities/ tasks. The young generation (students) can be characterized by “relaxation”, “unstructured thinking”, “failing to meet deadlines” and “short term attention”. The “old” generation is seen as planning and organizing activities in an “responsible”, “prepared in advance”, “focused” and “consistent” way. The intermediate generation, the millennials, are seen to plan and organize activities in a “responsible”, “consistent” and “focused way”. We can see the high degree of similarities between the millennials and “old” generation that comes from the fact that they are employees used with organizing work while the “young” generation consists of high-school student less accustomed with the rigor of the working place.

The study’s findings – both theoretical and practical provided us the insights that allowed us to make proposal regarding intergenerational communication and cooperation. Among these we can mention two, the most relevant, of them:

1. The different ways of remote communication / collaboration of the different generations must be standardized (with the efforts of all generations)
2. The difficulties of planning, self-discipline of the young generations must be overcome in the context of extending the work "from home" (training, adaptation of supervision, tools of behavioral economy)

Applicability of the conclusions of the Generations@Work research to the post-Covid working methods (technological evolution and social distancing) can be summarized as follows:

3. Remote communication / collaboration of the different generations must be standardized (with the

efforts of all generations);

4. The difficulties of planning, self-discipline of the younger generations must be overcome in the context of extending the work "from home" (training, adaptation of supervision, tools of behavioral economy)

5. Intergenerational teams bring valuable outcomes due to bi-directional exchange of experience between younger and experienced generations. Both sides could learn valuable lessons from one another during and post-Covid crisis, as technology and discipline will constantly interlace from this time forth;

6. Remarkable differences in spatial usage and perception are mainly because of habits, while general spatial requirements are oftentimes similar across generations, regarding comfort, equipment and wellbeing.

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