

The Axiological Distance of Generation Z in Poland: Comparing Work-Related Value Expectations with the Globe Model's Societal Practices and Values

Research Paper

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Abstract: Research purpose. This study identifies the axiological profile of Generation Z in the Polish work environment and measures the cultural distance between this cohort and national cultural patterns defined by the GLOBE model. The research investigates dimensions where Generation Z's expectations diverge from societal values (Should Be) and where they contradict prevailing cultural practices (As Is).

Design / Methodology / Approach. The research employed a diagnostic survey (CAWI) using purposive snowball sampling targeting Generation Z representatives. The tool was based on the GLOBE project's nine cultural dimensions. Primary data were compared with reference data for the Polish population using comparative statistical procedures. Additionally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the impact of professional experience on the value-practice gap.

Findings. The study identifies a profound practice gap (cumulative distance of 9.00 points), indicating that Polish organisational reality is significantly misaligned with the ethical and emotional needs of the youngest employees. Key tensions were noted in Gender Egalitarianism, Future Orientation and Human Orientation. Crucially, the analysis rejected the hypothesis that professional experience mitigates this gap; Generation Z demonstrates high axiological stability and resistance to traditional organisational socialisation, regardless of seniority.

Originality / Value / Practical implications. The article fills a research gap by applying the GLOBE framework to a specific generational cohort in Poland. The findings suggest that traditional accommodation theories are failing; organisations must undergo deep cultural transformation toward egalitarian and relational models to attract and retain Generation Z talent. The practical value lies in guidelines for HR managers to redefine motivational systems based on substantive rather than formal authority.

Keywords: Generation Z • GLOBE model • organisational culture • work values • cultural misfit

JEL codes: M12; M14

Introduction

The contemporary labour market is undergoing an intense demographic transformation, triggered by the mass entry of Generation Z into professional careers. This shift occurs at a time of profound technological changes and shifting workplace dynamics, forcing organisations to fundamentally rethink their talent retention and leadership strategies. As traditional organisational frameworks often fail to effectively engage younger workers, a pressing need arises to explore how generational aspirations align with established institutional practices. Understanding

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the axiological profile of this cohort represents a key challenge for human resource management. This study aims to empirically identify the cultural value profile of Generation Z in Poland and to quantitatively measure the cultural gap, defined as the distance between respondents' expectations and the actual organisational practices identified in the Polish business environment.

The conceptual foundation of this research is rooted in the premise that a significant mismatch between personal values and organisational culture, often termed an axiological distance, leads to reduced job satisfaction, lower organisational citizenship behaviour, and increased turnover intentions. While existing literature frequently categorises Generation Z through a broad lens of digital connectivity, empirical research is needed to measure how their specific professional expectations interface with existing workplace realities. The research was designed to verify several key assumptions regarding the nature of this cultural discrepancy. It was hypothesised that the workplace values expected by Generation Z representatives would align more closely with GLOBE Polish Country Values than with GLOBE Polish Country Practices (H1). Furthermore, the study examined whether professional experience serves as a differentiating factor, assuming that increased seniority leads to a reduction in the discrepancy between expectations and market realities through organisational socialisation and exposure to everyday operational constraints (H2). Finally, the analysis sought to confirm whether Gen Z is characterised by a significantly higher level of expected gender egalitarianism compared to the national benchmarks established in the GLOBE project (H3). The research was conducted using the diagnostic survey method (CAWI) on a sample of N=387 individuals born between 1995 and 2012, employing an original research tool based on the GLOBE model.

To provide a comprehensive examination of these dynamics, this study is structured as follows. First, a thorough literature review contextualises generational theory, the mechanics of culture fit, and the architectural framework of the GLOBE model. Next, the methodology section outlines the operationalisation of the variables and the data collection process. This is followed by a presentation of the empirical results, including comparative statistical analyses across the nine cultural dimensions. Finally, the paper concludes with a detailed discussion of the findings, their theoretical and practical implications for human resource management, and the limitations of the study.

Literature review

A generation, from a sociological perspective, is formed under the influence of shared historical experiences that shape specific attitudes and predispositions (Abramson & Inglehart, 1987; Mannheim, 1952). Although the chronological boundaries defining Generation Z (Gen Z) remain divergent, ranging from 1997 (Dimock, 2019) to 1995 (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010), this group is defined by its status as *digital natives*, shaped by permanent access to mobile technologies (Prensky, 2001; Twenge, 2017). According to Evolutionary Modernisation Theory (Inglehart, 2018), stable existential conditions favour egalitarianism and tolerance (Dalton & Welzel, 2014); however, contemporary economic crises may force a return to material pragmatism (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). This study adopts the 1995-2012 timeframe, which enables the analysis of both market debutants and individuals with several years of professional experience. Scientific discourse includes criticism of generational theory, pointing to a lack of unambiguous empirical evidence and the frequent confusion of the *age effect* with a true *cohort effect* (Parry & Urwin, 2011). To address these theoretical challenges, this study investigates the generational profile of Polish Gen Z by positioning professional experience as a key moderating factor that potentially shapes their shifting expectations. Furthermore, by utilising the baseline Country Values scores for Poland, this research establishes a structural benchmark to evaluate how local macroeconomic and cultural realities interface with generational aspirations. Introducing these pivotal elements early provides a cohesive framework that links the subsequent literature review directly to the empirical core of the study.

Nevertheless, contemporary analyses emphasise the role of technology as a factor permanently altering the socialisation process (Edmunds & Turner, 2005). The concept of the *global generation paradigm* and the phenomenon of *digital cosmopolitanism* assume that the profile of Gen Z is becoming more aligned with global trends than local norms (Twenge, 2017). Consequently, networked connectivity constitutes professional values such as flexibility, agency, and the meaning of work, leading to the simultaneous convergence of global aspirations and divergence resulting from local cultural conditions (Leurs & Georgiou, 2016; Mertala, 2024).

In the subject literature, culture fit based on value congruence is shown to surpass demographic similarity as a predictor of effectiveness (Elfenbein & O'Reilly, 2007). A deficit in this alignment reduces satisfaction and constrains organisational citizenship behaviours, whereas high axiological congruence constitutes a key retention

factor (O'Reilly et al., 1991; Vandenberghe, 1999). Optimal culture fit determines the effectiveness of HR strategies and the success of mergers, mitigating failures arising from cultural differences (Cartwright & Schoenberg, 2006; Denison et al., 2011; Horwitz et al., 2006). A significant challenge remains with the *reality shock* experienced by newcomers, whose expectations frequently collide with business realities (See & Kummerow, 2008). Analyses indicate a duality in Generation Z motivation: global convergence in developmental aspirations alongside a strong influence of local codes on salary and social expectations (İlhan & Duran, 2025). Some researchers, however, question the distinctiveness of Gen Z, emphasising shared high Uncertainty Avoidance with Millennials, shaped by socialisation under conditions of persistent crises (Heys, 2024).

In Central Europe, this cohort's priorities combine financial stability with autonomy (Rehor et al., 2025). Their ethical and pro-environmental orientations generate elevated expectations toward employers' CSR activities (Casalegno et al., 2022; Pradhan et al., 2023). Although Polish studies suggest a strong orientation toward success and continuous feedback among younger employees, these traits may reflect an age effect rather than stable generational distinctiveness (Kwiecińska et al., 2023). Despite a preference for the ICT sector, young workers in V4 countries face unemployment risks associated with a skill gap (Rigó et al., 2025).

Organisational culture is a system of shared values and norms (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), defined by Schein (2004) as a set of established group assumptions, and by Hofstede (2001, p. 13) as the "collective programming of the mind".

In this study, the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness) research program is adopted as the foundational theoretical framework. Initiated by Robert J. House, the project evolved from a cross-cultural study of leadership and behaviour into one of the most comprehensive organisational frameworks in contemporary social sciences. In international management literature, the model has been widely applied to analyse cross-cultural human resource management, international joint venture performance, and regional leadership expectations. The primary methodological and conceptual advantage of this model over Hofstede's classic concept lies in its distinct dual-level measurement architecture (Alipour, 2019; Javidan et al., 2006):

- Practices (As Is): a systematic diagnosis of the actual state of a culture, reflecting the daily behavioural realities, institutional norms, and operational dynamics of a society or organisation.
- Values (Should Be): an assessment of the desired state, capturing the aspirations, ideological preferences, and deeply held beliefs of what the culture ought to look like

In the standard architecture of the GLOBE model, Country Practice (As Is) scores are determined through aggregated questionnaire responses from societal members who report on actual behaviours witnessed within their organisations and broader communities, rather than personal perceptions. In cross-cultural research, these baseline country scores are usually utilised as a structural macro-level benchmark or an environmental anchor. Researchers typically employ them to evaluate how national contexts restrict or influence organisational behaviour, or to measure institutional distance when companies expand across borders (House et al., 2004).

In this study, this dualism is operationalised to examine the axiological fit gap between established market realities (captured via GLOBE Polish Country Practices) and the specific value expectations of Generation Z.

This framework enables the empirical testing of hypotheses concerning these cultural discrepancies across the nine cultural dimensions identified by the GLOBE model (House et al., 2004):

- Performance orientation: the extent to which group members are rewarded for innovation, improvement, and high standards of performance.
- Uncertainty avoidance: the degree of reliance on norms and procedures to mitigate unpredictability and maintain order.
- Future orientation: the level of engagement in planning, development, and delaying gratification in favour of long-term benefits.
- Power distance: the extent to which unequal distribution of power and hierarchical privileges is accepted.
- Institutional collectivism: the degree to which social practices promote collective resource distribution and prioritise group welfare over individual autonomy.
- In-group collectivism: the level of loyalty, pride, and cohesion within close reference groups, such as family or teams.

- Gender egalitarianism: the extent to which gender inequalities are minimised and equal access to roles and positions is promoted.
- Assertiveness: the degree of confrontational and aggressive behaviour in social relationships, as opposed to harmony and cooperation.
- Humane orientation: the extent to which individuals are rewarded for fairness, altruism, generosity, and care for others.

The multidimensional structure of the GLOBE model enables precise operationalisation of variables and analysis of the fit gap. Limitations include the age of reference data for Poland (2004) and the lack of full access to results from the GLOBE 2020 edition (Bullough et al., 2020). However, replication studies confirm the evolution of cultural dimensions and leadership attitudes over time, justifying the need for contemporary measurements to update knowledge on generational profiles (Pagda et al., 2021).

Research methodology

This study empirically examines the occupational preferences of Generation Z, employing the GLOBE model to diagnose nine dimensions of organisational culture. It addresses a gap in the literature, which often remains limited to general behavioural characteristics while overlooking a systematic analysis of values grounded in validated theoretical frameworks. Providing robust data in areas such as uncertainty avoidance and future orientation enables organisations to move beyond intuitive management toward evidence-based strategies.

The aim of the study is to quantitatively measure the cultural distance separating representatives of Generation Z in Poland from two benchmarks defined in the GLOBE project. Achieving this objective requires identifying the cultural value profile that guides Generation Z in the workplace. The study focuses on diagnosing the values of individuals born between 1995 and 2012 and confronting them with actual organisational practices represented as GLOBE Polish Country Practices, as well as identifying differences in the values dimension compared to results for the general Polish population presented in the GLOBE model (GLOBE Polish Country Values).

The study seeks to answer the following research question:

- What cultural value profile in the workplace is most desired by representatives of Generation Z?

Based on a review of the literature and the sociological characteristics of Gen Z, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

- *H1: The workplace values expected by Generation Z are more closely aligned with the Polish population's aggregated Country Values scores than with the Polish population's aggregated Country Practices scores within the GLOBE framework.*
- *H2: The level of professional experience serves as a significant moderating factor: as work experience increases, the distance between Generation Z respondents' expectations and the Polish population's Country Practices scores decreases.*
- *H3: The surveyed representatives of Generation Z will exhibit a higher expected level of Gender Egalitarianism compared to the baseline Country Values scores for the Polish population obtained in the GLOBE project.*

The study employed the diagnostic survey method. An online questionnaire (CAWI) was used as the data collection technique, while the snowball sampling method was applied for sample selection. This choice was driven by the specificity of the target group, which predominantly operates in a digital environment, as well as the need to reach a diverse sample within a short timeframe. However, it must be acknowledged that the use of snowball sampling introduces inherent limitations regarding sample representativeness and the subsequent generalizability of the findings to the broader population, a constraint that is further addressed in the limitations section of this study.

The proprietary research instrument was developed based on the theoretical framework of the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness). The questionnaire consists of a demographic section enabling the socio-demographic characterisation of respondents and a main section containing 36 diagnostic statements. To optimise analysis and facilitate respondent evaluation, a standard 7-point Likert scale was applied,

allowing for direct and reliable comparison of mean values with GLOBE reference data. This scale enables precise measurement of the intensity of attitudes, ranging from strong disagreement to full agreement. The items were formulated in a normative postulative manner.

The original GLOBE methodology typically employs 3 to 5 items to measure each dimension at the level of desired values in both organisational and societal contexts. For the purposes of this study, a standardised questionnaire structure was adopted, allocating exactly four diagnostic statements to each examined dimension. This decision was primarily motivated by the lower tolerance of Generation Z respondents for extensive research instruments. During the final reliability verification process, based on Cronbach's alpha analysis, selected items were excluded from the calculation of aggregated indices for individual dimensions, as discussed in the section on statistical analysis of results.

The research instrument used in this study is an original questionnaire inspired by the GLOBE project, which, despite being grounded in its theoretical framework, contains modified item formulations. The wording of the questions was adapted to ensure copyright compliance and to adjust the language to the perception of Generation Z, who often lack professional experience. Although this adaptation limits direct comparability with the original GLOBE results, it was necessary to avoid measurement errors stemming from respondents' limited familiarity with corporate environments. Nevertheless, the internal consistency of the questionnaire ensures high reliability of within-group analyses, enabling precise comparisons between employed and non-employed respondents, as well as examination of the impact of labour market experience on declared values within the studied population.

The aim of the study was to assess respondents' expected values and their vision of an ideal workplace, rather than to evaluate their current workplace. The decision to focus on declared values while excluding practices was based on the characteristics of the studied cohort and the assumptions of the adopted analytical model. A substantial proportion of Gen Z representatives are at a very early stage of their careers, including students or employees with relatively short tenure. Consequently, they may not yet possess sufficient experience or comprehensive knowledge of business realities to reliably assess actual organisational practices.

To optimise diagnostic quality and minimise the risk of incidental results, the target sample size was aligned with the theoretical benchmark for random sampling. For a general population of approximately 7.3 million individuals, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the required size was determined to be 384, a threshold exceeded by the final analytical sample consisting of $N=387$ respondents. Given this robust volume, combined with significant internal diversity in terms of professional experience and educational background, the gathered data provides a reliable basis for identifying stable axiological patterns and cultural trends within the studied cohort.

The sample is characterised by a high level of diversity in terms of professional experience: 18% of respondents have no work experience, while over 58% have at least one year of tenure. This allows for a reliable verification of the impact of organisational socialisation on declared values. The educational structure of respondents (primary: 19.1%, secondary: 43.4%, higher: 31%) reflects the life-cycle stages of the cohort from individuals continuing formal education to independent professionals.

The methodological limitations of the study include the overrepresentation of women (59%), a phenomenon typical of online surveys, and the low share of respondents with vocational education (6.5%). The latter may result from both the high educational aspirations of Generation Z and from the specificity of digital distribution channels. Despite these conditions, the sample size and its internal dispersion allow for the formulation of reliable conclusions within the surveyed sample.

Research results

Prior to the main analysis of attitudes, a detailed Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was performed. Reverse-coded items were intentionally included in the instrument's design to mitigate acquiescence bias and enhance the tool's content validity (Hinz et al., 2007). However, the analysis revealed that for eight out of nine examined dimensions (excluding Gender Egalitarianism), removing the reverse-coded items led to a marked improvement in the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. For instance, in the Future Orientation dimension, excluding the reverse-coded item increased the indicator from 0.43 to 0.61.

Consequently, the scales were optimised by excluding 12 items (including eight reverse-coded ones), resulting in most dimensions being based on three statements. The Assertiveness dimension was excluded from the aggregate analysis due to a coefficient below 0.4. Nevertheless, the eliminated items were not discarded; instead, they were

subjected to a separate analysis as independent diagnostic variables. This approach allows for the capture of specific, non-linear aspects of Generation Z's perception of professional reality, which traditional correlational models may fail to fully represent.

Reliability analysis revealed that most scales achieved low Cronbach's alpha indicators: Uncertainty Avoidance (0.49), Future Orientation (0.61), Performance Orientation (0.41), Humane Orientation (0.65), Power Distance (0.59), Institutional Collectivism (0.52), In-group Collectivism (0.67), and Gender Egalitarianism (0.41). While these results may raise concerns in a classic statistical sense, they must be interpreted within the methodological framework of the original GLOBE study. In the original research, the average alpha for organisational culture values was 0.55 (House et al, 2004), with the lowest score being 0.43. Despite not meeting the typical 0.70 threshold, the GLOBE authors retained these scales, arguing they provided acceptable consistency and significant empirical evidence for predicting leadership attributes. The average alpha in this study is 0.54, representing a negligible deviation of 0.01 from the original reference tool.

According to information processing theory (Bierwisch & Schreuder, 1992), the process of generating and receiving ideas integrates conceptual and lexical levels, which ensured the equivalence of the measured traits with the GLOBE project definitions despite linguistic modifications. The retention of these scales is further justified by the exploratory nature of the study and the specific characteristics of the target group. The lower coefficients also stem from the short length of the scales (Cronbach, 1951) and the adaptation of the tool into concrete professional scenarios to match Generation Z's perception. Furthermore, these results reflect a non-linear and hybrid perception of cultural dimensions within Generation Z. For instance, their orientation toward uncertainty avoidance simultaneously combines a structural need for stability with an acceptance of workplace flexibility, which inherently reduces the statistical consistency of traditional scales while capturing the complex, multi-layered nature of contemporary generational identity.

A central element of the analysis is the comparison of the obtained results "Gen Z Score" (GLOBE Gen Z Values) with reference data from the GLOBE project: Practice Score (GLOBE Polish Country Practices) and Value Score (GLOBE Polish Country Values). The radar chart (Fig. 1) illustrates significant shifts in the attitudes of the youngest generation entering the labour market compared to general societal norms and expectations across several cultural dimensions.

A comparative analysis of the mean values obtained in the current study against the GLOBE project reference results, summarised in Table 1, enables the precise identification of the evolutionary vector of cultural attitudes among Generation Z representatives. The adopted interpretation methodology is based on the analysis of directional deviations, where positive values correspond to a stronger expression of a given dimension within the surveyed sample, whereas negative values signal the respondents' distancing from the established cultural patterns of Polish society.

The most pronounced distance between the expectations of young employees and the perceived reality is observed across three primary dimensions. In Future Orientation (5.02), a profound need for strategic stability encounters significant organisational reactivity, resulting in a gap of +1.91. Similarly, Humane Orientation (5.33) reveals high expectations for empathy and support, creating a discrepancy of +1.72 relative to current practices. Finally, the increased demand for clear procedures, reflected in the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension (+1.59), serves as a direct response to the volatility of the contemporary macroeconomic environment.

The highest cumulative change relative to both cultural values and practices was recorded in the Gender Egalitarianism dimension (5.54). This result significantly exceeds both market practices (+1.52) and general values (+1.02). Full equality and meritocracy have ceased to be mere postulates and have become a fundamental standard expected from the modern work environment.

In the area of Performance Orientation (4.74), a decrease in aspirations compared to the original GLOBE studies was observed (-1.38). Although the surveyed sample still values efficiency more than current practices (+0.85), respondents reject traditional pressures in favour of work-life balance and overall well-being. This shift may suggest a redefinition of professional success among the younger generation, moving away from the *rat race* toward more sustainable career models.

Supplementary analysis of selected organisational culture attributes

Analysis of items excluded from the GLOBE aggregates provides further insight into the specific attitudes of the surveyed sample. The results confirm the primacy of cooperation over competition and a drive toward authentic

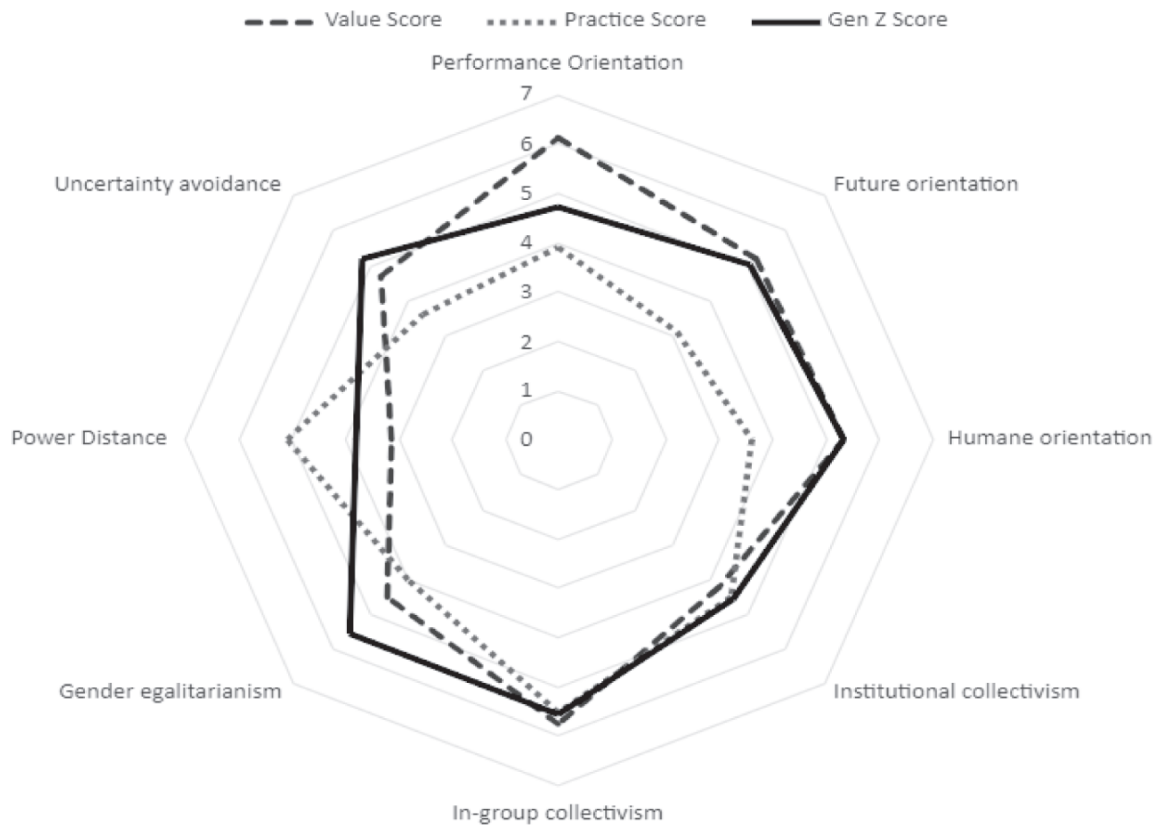


Figure 1. Comparison of Generation Z's cultural value profile with GLOBE project reference results for Poland (Source: own elaboration based on House et al., 2004).

Table 1. Comparison of GLOBE Gen Z Score with GLOBE Polish Country Value Score and GLOBE Polish Country Practice Score (Source: own elaboration).

Dimension	GLOBE Polish Country Value Scores	GLOBE Polish Country Practice Score	GLOBE Gen Z Value Score	Diff. GLOBE Gen Z Value Score to GLOBE Polish Country Value Score	Diff. GLOBE Gen Z Value Score to GLOBE Polish Country Practice Score
Performance Orientation	6.12	3.89	4.74	-1.38	0.85
Future Orientation	5.2	3.11	5.02	-0.18	1.91
Humane Orientation	5.3	3.61	5.33	0.03	1.72
Institutional Collectivism	4.22	4.53	4.58	0.36	0.05
In-group Collectivism	5.74	5.52	5.57	-0.17	0.05
Gender Egalitarianism	4.52	4.02	5.54	1.02	1.52
Power Distance	3.12	5.1	3.79	0.67	-1.31
Uncertainty Avoidance	4.71	3.62	5.21	0.5	1.59

workplace bonds and communal goals over individualism. In management, respondents prefer a mentoring leadership style and flat structures. Strategically, they reject short-termism in favour of long-term stability, seeking a balance between formal procedures and innovative freedom. These atomistic data points reinforce the cohort's humanistic orientation and their expectation of subjective treatment within organisations.

An individual analysis of the items originally intended for the Assertiveness dimension clarifies the communication style of the group. The highest score was recorded for problem-solving through direct discussion (5.75), establishing open confrontation as a generational standard. Respondents value the active communication of needs (4.55) over traditional modesty, suggesting a meritocratic model where the right to be heard is derived from competence rather than hierarchy. Furthermore, a strong preference for compromise (5.08) and moderate acceptance of "tough"

communication (4.17) indicate that for the surveyed cohort, team harmony is a higher priority than individual dominance in a dispute.

The verification of hypothesis H1 required an analysis of the cumulative absolute differences between the respective profiles.

The analysis provided strong arguments for accepting this hypothesis. It was demonstrated that:

- The total deviation index of the GLOBE Generation Z Value profile relative to the GLOBE Polish Country Values was 4.31.
- The total deviation index of the GLOBE Generation Z Value profile relative to the GLOBE Polish Country Practices was significantly higher, reaching 9.00.

Considering the statistical data, hypothesis H1 is confirmed. Generation Z enters the labour market with an ethos shaped by the declarative values of society, thereby becoming a group that exerts strong pressure to change existing organisational practices toward a more humanistic and egalitarian model.

To verify the relationship predicted in Hypothesis H2, the surveyed sample was divided into five seniority groups. For each group, the cumulative distance relative to the baseline GLOBE Polish Country Practices scores was calculated (Table 2).

Empirical data analysis did not reveal the downward trend necessary to confirm the stated assumption. The cumulative distance across all groups remains at a nearly identical, very high level (oscillating around a value of 9.15). Notably, the highest discrepancy between expectations and practice was recorded in the group with 1-3 years of seniority (9.31), which directly contradicts the assumption of gradual adaptation to market realities.

The lack of significant differences in the distance level, with a maximum range between groups of only 0.30, suggests that Generation Z exhibits a very strong resistance to traditional organisational socialisation mechanisms. Professional experience, even exceeding six years, does not lead respondents to abandon their core values or significantly adjust them toward established management practices.

To verify hypothesis H2, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for the cumulative distance variable (the discrepancy between expectations and practice) across groups categorised by work seniority. The analysis yielded the following statistical parameters: F-statistic: 0.121, p-value: 0.975. Consequently, no statistically significant differences were found in the level of cumulative distance between groups with varying lengths of professional experience. This result necessitates the rejection of the hypothesis regarding the influence of professional experience on the reduction of the gap between expectations and practice.

The verification of hypothesis H3 confirmed a radical shift of Generation Z toward egalitarian attitudes. The obtained score (5.54) significantly exceeds both the GLOBE Polish Country Value (4.52) and GLOBE Polish Country Practices (4.02). This distance, amounting to 1.02 points and 1.52 points, respectively, proves that for the youngest cohort, meritocracy and gender neutrality have become a non-negotiable foundation of organisational culture, standing in stark contrast to established gender role paradigms.

The synthesis of the results from all three hypotheses allows for the portrayal of Generation Z as a group characterised by high axiological stability. Their value system, shaped by idealistic societal patterns, does not undergo erosion under the influence of direct market experiences. The fact that work seniority does not mitigate the distance between expectations and organisational practice suggests that this generation possesses the potential for the active transformation of professional structures rather than passive adaptation to them. These findings serve as a critical starting point for further analysis of the causes of cultural misalignment presented in the discussion section.

Table 2. Cumulative distance of Generation Z expectations relative to market practices by work seniority (Source: own elaboration).

Work Experience	Total Distance: GLOBE Gen Z Score to GLOBE Polish Country Practice Score
None	9.01
<1 year	9.12
1-3 years	9.31
4-6 years	9.19
>6 years	9.11

Conclusions

The conducted research demonstrates a paradigm shift in how Generation Z perceives the work environment. A key finding is the identification of a persistent discrepancy between the aspirations of the youngest employees and organisational reality, combined with the group's notable resistance to traditional mechanisms of professional socialisation.

The confirmation of hypothesis H1 indicates that this cohort value system is more closely aligned with GLOBE Polish Country Values than with GLOBE Polish Country Practices. The cumulative distance suggests that Polish organisations are perceived as structures misaligned with the ethical and emotional needs of young employees. This result proves that many companies continue to operate within hierarchical management models, whereas Generation Z seeks inclusivity and partnership.

Of particular importance is the confirmation of hypothesis H3 regarding Gender Egalitarianism. The results define this cohort as a group with historically high aspirations for equality, treated as a fundamental pillar of organisational justice. This approach is strictly meritocratic; the low score on the item regarding quotas proves that respondents expect equality of opportunity rather than the favouritism of specific groups. This necessitates a revision of promotion systems by managers toward full transparency.

A significant finding of the study is the rejection of hypothesis H2. The lack of statistically significant differences in the distance level between inexperienced employees and those with over six years of seniority challenges classical theories of professional accommodation. Generation Z exhibits strong axiological stability; rather than adapting to anachronistic structures, they maintain a distance from them or adopt a withdrawal strategy. This phenomenon can be interpreted as an effect of global digital socialisation, which promotes work standards resistant to local conditions as a topic requiring further exploration in future research.

The data analysis also allows for a redefinition of the concept of effectiveness. The results indicate the primacy of cooperation and well-being over internal competition, while maintaining a high orientation toward goals. Generation Z expects a fear-free environment based on relational stability and the replacement of formal authority with substantive authority. The right to subjectivity and to be heard is becoming a defining feature of the ideal workplace.

The identified cultural profile poses a significant challenge for contemporary leaders. Talent attraction strategies based solely on brand prestige or material benefits may prove insufficient without a deep organisational transformation toward an egalitarian and relational culture.

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