ОБЩЕСТВЕНИ КОМУНИКАЦИИ И ИНФОРМАЦИОННИ HAYKU PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SCIENCES

GENERATION ALPHA AND THE FUTURE WORKFORCE: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Gina Wrede

University of Library Studies and Information Technologies

Abstract: The rise of the new Generation Alpha, individuals born between the year 2010 and 2024, will essentially impact the workforce dynamics. This generation consists of digital natives who grow up in a highly connected environment. They are expected to introduce new expectations for leadership and organizational structures. This paper investigates a theoretical framework based on leadership approaches. It examines how to best accommodate Generation Alpha's workplace needs. This theoretical study is based on contemporary literature and generational analysis. The study offers insights into the leadership and organizational strategies that are important for supporting engagement, productivity, and innovation in the changing work environment.

Keywords: Generation Alpha, future workforce, leadership, workplace innovation, theoretical framework

INTRODUCTION

The idea of generational shifts in the workforce has been a subject of academic and corporate discussion for decades (Delulis & Saylor 2021, p. 2). This paper takes a theoretical approach and examine the evolving leadership expectations. These are influenced by the emergence of Generation Alpha. Each generation develops unique characteristics shaped by technological advancements, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural changes. The rise of Generation Alpha, born between 2010 and 2024, represents an important transformation in workforce dynamics and expectations (Kohli & Arora 2024, pp. 2–3). This generation is the first to be raised entirely in a digital world. Their constant exposure to artificial intelligence, automation, and hyper-connectivity sets them fundamentally different from previous generations (Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 7). Research indicates that Generation Alpha will be the most technologically literate workforce to date (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.). From an early age, they have engaged with intelligent systems, virtual environments, and data-driven decision-making (Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 7). This early exposure to technology shapes Generation Alpha's learning preferences and important impacts. These are cognitive development, problem-solving skills, and expectations for leadership and workplace environments (Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 7; Höfrová 2024, n.pag.). To adapt to this generational shift, organizational must critically rethink conventional hierarchical structures. Additionally, they must adopt agile, tech-driven, and personalized work models. These changes meet the expectations of the future workforce (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.). A defining characteristic of Generation Alpha is their reduced attention span and preference for ondemand, interactive, and highly immersive content (Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 9). This behavioral shift needs a fundamental transformation in organizational communication strategies, training methodologies, and leadership approaches (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.). The new and modern workplace must evolve from traditional long-form content and rigid corporate policies to a dynamic, real-time engagement models. These models leverage AI-driven insights to optimize performance and learning experiences. These are customized by individuals' needs (Claassen et al. 2021, p. 3; Tigre et al. 2022, pp. 40-41). Generation Alpha is expected to prioritize sustainability, ethical leadership, and corporate social responsibility. Previous generations often viewed environmental responsibility and ethics as external factors. This new generation will integrate environmental and ethical considerations into their professional decision-making (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.; Kohli & Arora 2024, pp. 7–8). Companies that ignore green initiatives, diversity policies, and transparent governance will struggle to attract and retain top talent (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.; Chang 2021, p. 13). Leadership theories must evolve to fit the distinct cognitive, technological, and social characteristics of this generation (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.; Bass & Riggio 2006, p. XI). Traditional leadership models with rigid hierarchies

and authoritative decision-making will likely fail to effectively motivate Generation Alpha (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 224–225). Organizations must adopt transformational leadership to foster cultivates innovation and purpose-driven work. Servant leadership emphasizes empathy and collaboration. Adaptive leadership highlights technological adaptability and learning agility (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 224–226). This paper combines existing research, industry insights, and theoretical frameworks. It provides a clear analysis of the leadership styles essential for integrating Generation Alpha into the workforce. This paper seeks to provide a foundation for businesses and policymakers to navigate this generational shift successfully (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag). The discussion will center on key themes such as digital workspaces, flexible work models, continuous learning, and sustainability. Additionally, this paper offers a comprehensive framework for future leadership and workforce development (Claassen et al. 2021, p. 2).

Characteristics of Generation Alpha

Generation Alpha differs from previous generations due to its deep connection with technology, education, and evolving social values (WDR Zukunftsreport 2024, p. 6). These characteristics influence their workplace expectations and behaviors:

- **Digital natives and hyper-connectivity:** Generation Alpha grows in an AI-driven world. They are the first to experience digital full digital integration from early childhood (WDR Zukunftsreport 2021, p. 6). They expect seamless interactions with AI and automation in all areas of life. This makes AI-powered collaboration tools and virtual environments important in workplaces. These tools play a key role in them engagement (Beule & Zauner 2022, p. 161).
- Personalized learning and adaptability: Generation Alpha benefits from smart learning platforms and AI-powered educational tools. They value personal career growth and skill building (Bozak 2021, p. 119). Organizations need to move from static training programs to flexible, real-time learning systems. This approach is important to sustaining and developing this workforce (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.).
- Multitasking and shortened attention spans: Generation Alpha cognitive processing is shaped by constant exposure to fast digital content. Research shows they prefer short, interactive engagement over traditional, long-form communication (Bonchiş 2022, pp. 124–132). This requires a shift to flexible, modular work structures. Organization must focus goal-driven performance metrics instead fixed time allocations (Höfrová et al. 2024, n.pag.).
- Ethical and socially conscious workforce: Generation Alpha views environmental and social responsibility as a natural part of their work (Kring et al. 2024, pp. 30–31). They expect organizations to align with environmental-social-governance principles. Businesses that prioritize ethical practices and environmental impact will have a stronger influence on their employment choices and retention (Kring et al. 2024, pp. 30–31).
- Technology-dependent yet socially fragmented: Generation Alpha is highly skilled in AI and automation. There are concerns existing about their interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence (Drugaş 2022, pp. 1, 6–7). They are fully connected but engage less in face-to-face interactions. despite digital connectivity, this increases the risk of loneliness (Beule & Zauner 2022, p. 161).
- Comfort with AI and automation: Generation Alpha expects automation to handle routine tasks. They do not need to adapt to digital. This enables them to focus on creativity, problem-solving, and strategic roles. Companies must change from traditional control structures to AI-enhanced, dynamic decision-making models (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.).
- Entrepreneurial and autonomous mindset: Generation Alpha is influenced by digital content creation, freelancing platforms, and online business opportunities. This promotes adopting a gigeonomy mindset (Ziatdinov & Cilliers 2021, 5–6).

Companies must adapt their Human Resources strategies to support flexible work models. This includes short-term and high-impact projects instead of traditional career paths (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.). To attract and keep this workforce, organizations must undergo structural, technological, and cultural adaptations. Leadership paradigms must shift toward adaptive, AI-enhanced models, and focusing on clear values. The

next section explores how leadership theories must evolve to fit these generational traits.

Theoretical leadership approaches for Generation Alpha

The leadership approaches for Generation Alpha must differ from those used for previous generations. They need to be adapted to their unique skills and expectations. Generation Alpha is digitally fluent, adaptable and values autonomy. They will thrive under leadership that promotes flexibility, ethics, and technological integration. Several important theoretical leadership methods will be important.

Hierarchical leadership and its limitations

Traditional hierarchical leadership models rely on top-down decision-making and clear authority structures. They have proven effective, in controlled corporate environments (Bass & Riggio 2006, p. 108). These structures create well-defined chains of command, ensuring stability and efficiency. This makes it particularly suitable for industries that require strict compliance and structured workflows (Codding & Goldberg 2024, pp. 16–17). Studies suggest that this model may be less effective for Generation Alpha. This generation prefers team-oriented and adaptable work environments (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.). Research suggests that hierarchical leadership models often fail to engage younger employees. Younger employees prioritize autonomy, rapid feedback loops, and purpose-driven work (DeIuliis & Saylor 2021, p. 4). This shift challenges traditional leadership norms. It forces organizations to restructure their frameworks. This fosters innovation, inclusivity, and collaboration (Codding & Goldberg 2024, p. 35). Hierarchical leadership can hamper innovation and creativity by restricting communication between employees to management. It limits employee-driven problem-solving Further, it recues opportunities for new ideas- problem-solving (Codding & Goldberg 2024, pp. 18–19). Decision-making is concentrated at the top. Employees at lower levels may feel disempowered and hesitant to share new ideas. Organizations struggle to adapt quickly to market changes and technological advancements (Codding & Goldberg 2024, pp. 18-19). Hierarchical leadership preserves its value in highly regulated sectors. Organizations must select decentralized, participatory frameworks to align with Generation Alpha's demands and collaborative innovation (Bass & Riggio 2006, p. 108; Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.). Companies that do not adapt their leadership strategies may struggle with employee retention. This can also lead to a higher risk of reduced employee retention, lower productivity, and limited innovation capacity (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 84-85). To maintain a competitive edge, organizations should adopt hybrid leadership models. These can balance the structure of hierarchical leadership with the flexibility of participatory and flexible leadership approaches (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 87-88).

Adaptive leadership for a dynamic workforce

Adaptive leadership provides a flexible and responsive framework. This is well-suited for the unpredictable nature of modern work environments (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 80–86). It dies not rely on strict authority structures and top-down decision-making. Instead, it helps organizations respond flexible to change. It also fosters a culture of continuous innovation (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 81–87). This leadership model prioritizes the following:

- Promoting a culture of lifelong learning and quick skill adaption. This helps organization keep up with evolving technological landscapes (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 85–89).
- Encouraging employees to develop solutions through experimentation. This fosters agility and resilience (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 85–89).
- Facilitating a cross-functional teamwork. This enables teams to tackle challenges in real-time (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 85–88).

Recent studies highlight that adaptive leadership goes beyond reacting to change. It fosters a proactive learning environment. This strengthens employees' ability to navigate uncertainty (Naim 2024, pp. 2099–2105). Adaptive leadership integrates emotional intelligence, psychological dynamics, and inclusive leadership strategies. This supports long-term organizational success (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 88–90; Naim 2024, pp. 2099–2102; Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 173–175). Leaders must balance stability with the need of flexibility. Organizations can only thrive in volatile environments by adopting hybrid leadership

models. These models combine structured decision-making with collaborative and responsive leadership approaches (Naim 2024, p. 2095; Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 81–84). Companies can use AI-enhanced structures, and continuous learning to build a strong workforce. This helps employees adapt flexible and drive long-term innovation (Tigre et al. 2023, p. 60; Claassen et al. 2021, p. 2; Naim 2024, p. 2094–2095). Generation Alpha grows up in AI-driven and rapidly evolving digital environments. Adaptive leadership gives them the flexibility to handle uncertainty. It keeps them highly engaged (Höfrová et al. 2024, n.pag.; Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.). Traditional leadership models rely on strict authority and fixed decision-making. These are less effective in engaging younger employees. Studies show that these models are less effective for younger employees. They prefer more independence, meaningful work, and quick feedback (Deluliis & Saylor 2021, p. 4–5; Claassen et al. 2021, p. 3). Adaptive leadership enables businesses to adjust to challenges in real time. This keeps organizations agile and strong in a digital-first economy (Naim 2024, pp. 2100–2101; Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 87–88; Tigre et al. 2023, pp. 58–59). Companies can better manage generational shift by using when AI-enhanced, decentralized teams, and continuous learning initiatives. This helps them stay innovation in the long run (Naim 2024, p. 2102–2104; Claassen et al. 2021, p. 2; Tigre et al. 2023, pp. 58–59).

Transformational leadership: Inspiring innovation

Transformational leadership is highly effective in creating highly motivated and purpose-driven employees (Bass & Riggio 2006, p. 4; Givens 2008, pp. 9–10). This leadership style cultivates a dynamic and innovative work environment. This is emphasized by prioritizing key principles that align well with the expectations of Generation Alpha (Boerner et al. 2008, p. 1439; Nana et al. 2024, pp. 5301–5302). This emerging workforce is defined by technological fluency, a preference for autonomy, and a focus on meaningful work. Transformational leadership provides a valuable framework for managing and inspiring this new workforce (Grzegorczyk et al. 2021, pp. 20–22; Kring et al. 2024, p. 27, Heyna & Fittkau 2021, pp. 6–8). The core elements of transformational leadership are:

- 1. **Charismatic influence:** Transformational leaders inspire employees with a clear and motivating vision that aligns with their intrinsic motivations. They build trust and commitment with the team. Leaders can create an environment where employees feel empowered to innovate and take initiative (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 44–46; Givens 2008, pp. 9–10).
- 2. **Intellectual stimulation:** Transformational leaders motivate employees to think critically, find new solutions, and challenge the status quo. Generation Alpha has grown up with fast-changing technological and digital learning. They enjoy problem-solving and constant innovation (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 7, 77–79; Boerner et al. 2009, p. 1439).
- 3. **Individualized consideration:** Transformational leaders mentor employees and provide tailored career development opportunities. This is important for Generation Alpha, who expect personalized learning experiences and flexible career paths. These are tailored to their evolving skill sets (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 7, 135–136).
- 4. **Inspirational motivation:** Leaders connect organizational goals with employees' values. This creates a sense of purpose and long-term commitment. Generation Alpha is more engaged in workplaces that prioritize corporate social responsibility and sustainability into their mission (Bass & Riggio 2006, p. 6; 131; Givens 2008, pp. 8–10).

Generation Alpha responds well to transformational leadership. This leadership style must complement their entrepreneurial mindset. This includes their demand for meaningful work, and preference for collaborative and flexible work environments (Höfrová et al. 2024, n.pag.; Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 6–7; 135–136). Generation Alpha seeks active participation in decision-making. They expect organizations to encourage innovation rather than impose rigid corporate structures (Claassen et al. 2021, p. 3; Höfrová et al. 2024, n.pag.). Transformational leaders who offer mentorship programs are more likely to retain top talent. Supporting decentralized innovation also increases retention. These are more likely to be successful in retaining top talent from this generation (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 127–128, 135–136). The increasing integration of AI and automation in the workplace requires leadership approaches. It balances technological advancements with human-centric management (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, pp. 16–17, 31–32). Generation

Alpha expects leaders to use digital transformation strategies. This approach selects employee engagement, continuous learning, and ethical decision-making (Claassen et al. 2021, p. 3; Kohli & Arora 2024, pp. 1–2). Companies that fail to adapt may struggle challenges such as lower retention rates, employee disengagement, and an inability. This foster creativity in a rapidly evolving economy (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 137–138; Antonopoulou et al. 2021, p. 406).

Servant leadership: Aligning with ethical and social values

Servant leadership focuses supporting employees. It emphasizes on their development, well-being, and personal growth (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 11–20; Hartono 2024, p. n.pag). This leadership style empowers individuals by creating a sense of community. It shared decision-making, and promotes ethical responsibility (Codding et al. 2023, p. 9; Hartono 2024, p. n.pag). The core elements of servant leadership:

- Empathy and emotional intelligence: Servant leaders actively listen to employees. They understand their concerns and create an inclusive workplace (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 26; Dörr et al. 2018, pp. 45–48).
- Commitment to ethical decision-making: Ethical responsibility is key part of servant leadership. Leaders act with integrity, transparency, and fairness (Liden et al. 2014, p. 10).
- **Employee empowerment and development:** This leadership style emphasizes mentorship and skill-building. It also promotes long-term employee engagement (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 26).
- **Community orientation:** Servant leaders focus on the well-being of the wider community. They ensure their organizations contribute positively to society and the workplace (Liden et al. 2014, p. 17).

Generation Alpha grew up in a connected and socially aware world. They are likely to react well to servant leadership. This leadership style matches their values of fairness, inclusion, and responsibility in business (Hartono 2024, n.pag.; Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, p. 10). Research shows that younger employees are more engaged when leaders show social responsibility. This promotes diversity, and enforce fair workplace policies (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, p. 6). Organizations that apply servant leadership are more likely to attract and retain top talent from this generation. These practices help purpose-driven work environments (Liden et al. 2014, p. 17). Servant leadership influences more than just employee satisfaction. Companies that embrace this approach often experience higher commitment. This leads to greater innovation, and long-term sustainability (Liden et al. 2014, p. 27). Businesses are adapting to digitalization and changing workforce expectations. Servant leadership helps foster a culture of trust, collaboration, and ethical governance (Liden et al. 2014, p. 10). In conclusion, servant leadership is an effective model for managing Generation Alpha. It aligns organizational practices with their core values. This leadership approach emphasizes ethics, inclusivity, and employee empowerment. Companies can build an engaged workforce that thrives in a time of social and technological change (Liden et al. 2014, p. 14; Hartono 2024, n.pag).

The future of leadership: A hybrid model

Workforce dynamics changes rapidly. Leadership models must adapt to new advanced technologies and shifting generational expectations. Strong leadership ensures organizational resilience. This also drives sustained innovation (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, pp. 25–26; Ebojoh 2023, pp. 3305–3306). Generation Alpha will change workplace engagement. Leadership must combine technological acumen with ethical and human-centered management (Kohli & Arora 2024, pp. 7–8; Astapenko et al., 2024, pp. 1–2). This study introduces a hybrid leadership framework that combines key theoretical models. It provides a foundation for leading the workforce of the future. A hybrid leadership model integrates established frameworks. This approach helps to address the complex needs of modern organizations (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 31; Ebojoh 2023, p. 3305). The integration of multiple leadership approaches enables businesses stay agile and uphold ethically standards. It promotes a culture of innovation (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 28–39; Ebojoh 2023, p. 3305). The three primary components of this hybrid method are:

• Adaptive leadership: Adaptive leadership offers a flexible framework. This supports the unpredictable nature of modern work environments (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 80–86). This leadership enables organizations to respond dynamically to change and adopt continuous innovation (Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 81–87).

- Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership effectively engages highly motivated and purpose-driven employees (Bass & Riggio 2006, p. 4; Givens 2008, pp. 9–10). It achieves this by focusing principles that match with Generation Alpha's expectations. These include technological fluency, autonomy, and purpose-driven work. This approach creates a dynamic and innovative work environment (Boerner et al. 2009, p. 1439; Nana et al. 2024, pp. 5301–5302).
- **Servant leadership:** Servant leadership is a leadership style that underlines serving employees. It focuses on their development, well-being, and personal growth (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 11–20, Hartono 2024, p. n.pag). This leadership empowers individuals by fostering a strong sense of community. It encourages shared decision-making and promotes ethical responsibility (Codding et al. 2024, p. 9; Hartono 2024, n.pag.).

The growing use of artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and decentralized work structures requires leadership models that balance both technological and human complexities (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 31; Ebojoh 2023, p. 3305). A hybrid leadership framework is well-suited to this challenge. It combines transformational, adaptive, and servant leadership principles. This approach provides a multi-dimensional strategy for managing emerging workforce expectations (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 30). Leaders who effectively and efficiently implement this method must exhibit:

- **Technological fluency:** Leaders must have a deep understanding of AI-driven decision-making, data analytics, and digital collaboration tools. This optimizes workforce productivity while ensuring ethical oversight (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 26; Antonopoulou 2021, p. 406).
- Emotional intelligence and ethical governance: Generation Alpha prioritizes purpose-driven work and ethical transparency. Leaders must cultivate environments that highlight inclusivity, fairness, and accountability (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, pp. 31–32; WDR Zukunftsreport 2021, p. 4).
- Strategic agility: Organizations must prepare for volatility and complexity. They should adopt leadership practices that focus problem-solving and continuous learning (Bürkle 2023, pp. 15–16; Unkrig 2020, pp. 1–3).

Traditional leadership development models are based on hierarchical and rigid management systems (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 224–225). These are insufficient for preparing future leaders to navigate the digital-first economy (Naim 2024, p. 2100–2101; Yukl & Mahsud 2010, pp. 87–88, Tigre et al. 2023, pp. 58–59). Leadership development programs must include key elements to prepare leaders with the skills required to manage Generation Alpha effectively (Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 10; Melchor et al. 2023, p. 42). Leadership development programs must incorporate:

- Interdisciplinary learning and continuous education: Organizations should prepare leaders for complex challenges by integrating technological literacy, behavioral sciences insights, and ethical leadership principles into their training programs (Ebojoh 2023, p. 3307; Antonopoulou 2021, p. 406).
- Reverse mentorship and collaborative learning: Encouraging knowledge exchange between experienced professionals and younger employees helps bridge generational gaps. It promotes innovative problem-solving approaches (Hoffmann 2018, pp. 158–160; Grzegorczyk 2021, p. 16).
- AI-driven simulations and scenario-based training: By using advanced simulations, leaders can improve their decision-making skills. These simulations expose them to real-world challenges in controlled environments (Melchor et al. 2023, p. 41; Antonopoulou 2021, p. 426).

Critical discussion and future directions

Theoretical frameworks present valuable opportunities for successfully integrating Generation Alpha into the workforce (Kohli & Arora 2024, pp. 6–7). Several key challenges must be addressed to ensure a transition (Codding et al. 2024, p. 7; Grzegorczyk et al. 2021, pp. 11–12). These challenges include organizational structures, ethical considerations, intergenerational dynamics, and technological integration (Codding et al. 2024, pp. 33–34; Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 25). Addressing these complexities is essential for building a resilient and innovative workforce (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 29; Ebojoh 2023, pp. 3306–3307). This promotes a future of work that is innovative, and resilient (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 29; Codding et al. 2024, pp. 32–33).

A major challenge is existing organizational structures must be prepared to meet Generation Alpha's

unique expectations (Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 6; Melchor 2023, p. 42). Many organizations still rely on hierarchical leadership. These are defined by top-down decision-making and rigid authority structures (Codding et al. 2023, p. 3). Traditional leadership models may clash with Generation Alpha's preference for participatory and decentralized leadership. This generation values collaboration, autonomy, and rapid feedback loops (Codding et al. 2023, p. 9; Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 9). To meet these expectations, organizations must undergo major cultural and structural changes. Agile work models, cross-functional teams, and flat hierarchies will become an increasingly important (Codding et al. 2023, pp. 9–10). Leadership development programs should focus on fostering adaptive, transformational, and servant leadership qualities. This aligns with Generation Alpha's values of ethical governance, technological integration, and continuous learning (Waddell 2006, p. 2; Kohli & Arora 2024, pp. 7-8). The growing dependence on artificial intelligence and automation in the workplace presents a range of ethical concerns (Melchor 2023, pp. 41–42; Ebojoh & Högberg, 2024, p. 24). These concerns include employment stability, data privacy, algorithmic bias and the risk of dehumanization processes (Grzegorczyk 2021, p. 19). Generation Alpha is expected to be highly comfortable with AI-driven environments. The ethical implications of these technologies must be carefully managed (Melchor et al. 2023, p. 42; Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 7). Organizations must ensure transparency in AI applications, implement data privacy protections and address algorithmic biases. Ethical leadership models that prioritize fairness, accountability, and social responsibility are essential for the workforce engagement and preserving organizational integrity (Melchor et al. 2023, p. 42; Chang et al. 2021, p. 2). Generation Alpha will enter a diverse workforce with multiple generations. These include Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z (Jaiswal 2023, n.pag.; Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 1; Höfrová 2024, n.pag.). Each generation brings unique values, communication styles and technological skills. This can lead to tensions and misunderstandings (DeIuliis & Saylor 2021, p. 2; Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, p. 25). Managing intergenerational dynamics requires inclusive communication strategies. Leaders must promote mutual respect and encourage knowledge that is shared across age groups (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, pp. 20–22). Reverse mentorship programs can help bridge generational gaps. Younger employees share technological insights with senior staff that can foster a collaborative innovation (Bozak 2021, p. 122). Generation Alpha's technological fluency creates many opportunities for innovation. It also raises concerns about social fragmentation and emotional intelligence. Growing up in hyper-connected digital environments may reduce face-to-face interactions. This can lead to weakened interpersonal skills (Höfrová et al. 2024, n.pag.; Kohli & Arora 2024, p. 7). Leaders must balance technology use to improve productivity. Work environments should prioritize emotional intelligence, empathy, and community-building (Ebojoh & Högberg 2024, pp. 24–26). Servant leadership should focus on ethical decision-making, employee empowerment, and social responsibility. This approach can help achieve the right balance (Chang 2021, pp. 2-4). The hybrid leadership model combines adaptive, transformational, and servant leadership. This approach addresses the evolving expectations of Generation Alpha. Implementing this model presents several challenges. It requires a careful balance between flexibility and structure. This balance is not always practical for organizations (Krajcík 2023, p. 12; Schwehn 2025, p. 766). Hybrid leadership demands that leaders integrate multiple leadership styles. They must transition between transformational inspiration, adaptive flexibility, and servant leadership principles (Schwehn 2025, p. 763; Foulkrod & Lin 2024, pp. 80-81). Balancing these different approaches can be difficult:

- Leaders may struggle to decide when to use adaptive decision-making and when a more structured leadership approach is necessary (Foulkrod & Lin 2024, pp. 80–81; Schwehn 2025, p. 766).
- Not all managers possess the adaptability required to shift between leadership styles (Foulkrod & Lin 2024, p. 86; Schwehn 2025, p. 770).
- Organizations with rigid hierarchical structures may find it difficult to achieve the level of agility that hybrid leadership requires (Schwehn 2025, p. 766; Krajcík 2023, p. 12).

Without a clear framework, the hybrid model can become inconsistencies. This may lead to employee confusion. It reduces overall organizational effectiveness (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 766; Krajcík et al. 2023, p. 13). Each element of the hybrid leadership model serves a unique purpose:

• Adaptive leadership: This approach focuses on flexibility and responsiveness (Foulkrod & Lin 2024, p. 80).

- Transformational leadership: This approach emphasizes vision, motivation, and innovation (Krajcík et al. 2023, p. 12).
- **Servant leadership:** This approach centers on empathy, ethical responsibility, and employee wellbeing (Foulkrod & Lin 2024, pp. 80–81; Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 11–12).

These approaches complement each other in theory. They might create contradictions in practice. For example:

- Employees used to transformational leadership might expect clear vision and strategy, while adaptive leadership focuses on flexibility and quick decision-making. This leadership encourages decision-making and quick experimentation (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 11–12; Foulkrod & Lin 2024, pp. 80–81).
- Too much on servant leadership increases employee expectations for personal attention. This can reduce efficiency in fast-paced environments (Foulkrod & Lin 2024, pp. 80–81).
- Leaders may feel pressured to be both authoritative and participatory. This can cause inconsistencies in decision-making processes (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 770).

Without a clear strategy, hybrid leadership can create unrealistic expectations for leaders and employees (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 764). Hybrid leadership requires important investment in leadership development. It also needs digital systems improvements, and ongoing training employees (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 770). Organizations must:

- Organization must train managers to develop the skills needed to navigate the complexities of a hybrid model (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 764).
- Companies should promote a culture of teamwork and flexibility. Continuous engagement strategies and change management initiatives are essential (Krajcík et al. 2023, p. 12).
- Businesses should use advanced AI tools to support make quick decision-making and manage performance (Krajcík et al. 2023, pp. 12–13).

Small and medium-sized enterprises may struggle to allocate resources for hybrid leadership initiatives. Large corporations with greater financial and technological capabilities are better equipped to implement this model (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 770). Hybrid leadership is designed to meet Generation Alpha's expectations. It must address the account for the needs of a multigenerational workforce (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 4; 9).

- Baby Boomers and Generation X prefer structured leadership with clear chains of command (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 6–7).
- Millennials and Generation Z favor transformational and adaptive leadership. They still value guidance and mentorship (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 7–9, 12–13).
- Generation Alpha emphasizes self-directed learning, technology-driven collaboration, and a strong focus on ethical leadership (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 8–9).

Managing diverse expectations within a hybrid framework can lead to tensions. Younger employees prefer digital and flexible work environments, while older employees resist rapid organizational changes (Ramírez-Herrero et al. 2024, pp. 14–15). Hybrid leadership is still an emerging concept. Its long-term effects on workforce engagement, productivity, and organizational stability are insufficiently documented (Schwehn et al. 2025, pp. 763, 770). Most research focuses on individual leadership models, such as adaptive or transformational leadership, rather than their integration (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 762). This raises several concerns, including:

- The long-term viability of hybrid leadership strategies over extended periods remains uncertain (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 764).
- The impact of hybrid on leadership effectiveness is unclear. Especially unclear in industries that emphasize stability and compliance (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 763).
- Employees may become disengaged if leadership transitions are not effectively communicated and managed (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 763, 770).

Further research is essential to assess the impact of hybrid leadership across different industries and organizational structures (Schwehn et al. 2025, p. 763, 765).

Future research directions

Theoretical approaches and current literature underline key areas for integrating Generation Alpha into the workforce:

- 1. **Longitudinal studies on leadership adaptations:** Empirical research is needed to evaluate adaptive, transformational, and servant leadership across industries. These studies will offer key insights best practices for managing Generation Alpha. They should evaluate the long-term impact on engagement, productivity, and organizational resilience.
- 2. **Intergenerational collaboration models:** Research is needed on innovative approaches like reverse mentorship and cross-generational teams. These models can strengthen workplace cohesion and improve knowledge sharing. Studies should evaluate their impact on organizational innovation and employee satisfaction.
- 3. **Ethical AI integration:** Research must explore the ethical impact of AI and automation in the workplace. It should focus on reducing algorithmic bias and ensuring data privacy. They should also examine how to balance technological efficiency with human-centric values.
- 4. **Workplace design and digital well-being:** Research should examine how workplace design and digital well-being initiatives that impact Generation Alpha. Studies should focus on mental health, social connections, and work-life balance. Flexible work models, virtual collaboration tools, and wellness programs play a key role in fostering a healthy and engaged workforce.
- 5. **Impact of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR):** Generation Alpha values sustainability and ethical leadership. Organizations can align with environmental and social values. Future research should examine how initiatives influence talent retention and organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Generation Alpha into the workforce brings major changes to workplace culture, leadership expectations and workplace structures. This generation has grown up as digital natives in highly connected world. Their experiences have shaped unique values, strong technological skills, and a preference for ethical, purpose-driven work. Organization must adopt flexible, adaptive, and human-centric leadership models to unlock the full potential of the rising generation. Traditional hierarchical structures trust on authority and top-down decision-making. Those approaches are becoming less effective in connecting with Generation Alpha. Adaptive leadership promotes continuous learning and innovation. Transformational leadership fosters purpose and creativity. Servant leadership aligns with Generation Alpha's emphasis on ethical governance and social responsibility. This shift brings challenges such as intergenerational differences and the ethical concerns related to AI. The need for new technological integration adds to the complexity of this shift. Hybrid leadership is not a universal solution. It has the potential to address the needs of Generation Alpha. Implementing hybrid leadership presents several challenges. These challenges include complexity, different leadership expectations, limited resources, generational differences. A lack of research data further complicates implementation. Organizations need clear guidelines to effectively apply hybrid leadership. Organization must invest in leadership development. They should create structured systems to balance flexibility with stability. Future research should examine how hybrid leadership evolves over time. It should assess its impact on workforce dynamics in an AI-driven economy. Organizations must address these challenges through inclusive communication. They must ensure ethical AI practices. They need to balance technological advancements with human-centric leadership. Future research should examine the long-term effects of leadership changes. It should also explore the ethical use of AI. Sustainability plays an important key role in workforce engagement. Businesses and policymakers must create resilient and innovative workplaces. These workplaces should be inclusive and align with Generation Alpha. Hybrid leadership is essential for managing this generational shift. It combines adaptive, transformational, and servant leadership. This approach supports long-term organizational growth and innovation.

REFERENCES

ANTONOPOULOU, H., C. HALKIOPOULOS, O. BARLOU & G. N. BELIGIANNIS, 2021. Associations Between Traditional and Digital Leadership in Academic Environment: During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Emerging Science Journal*, 5(4), pp. 405–416. Accessed: 1 Feb. 2025 under 10.28991/esj-2021-01286.

BASS, B. M. & R. E. RIGGIO, 2006. *Transformational Leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 4–226. BEULE, V. & L. ZAUNER, 2022. Generation Alpha – eine neue Nutzergeneration. *Media Perspektiven*, 4/2022, pp. 160–165. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.ard-media.de/fileadmin/user_upload/media-perspektiven/pdf/2022/2204_Beule_Zauner.pdf.

BOERNER, S., S. A. EISENBEISS & D. van KNIPPENBERG, 2008. Transformational leadership and team innovation: Integrating team climate principles. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93 (6), pp. 1438–1446. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://kops.uni-konstanz.de/entities/publication/f135eb77-6c91-46f5-af9e-3b7f79ec463e.

BONCHIŞ, E., 2022. Generația Alpha. O mare provocare pentru părinți și cadre didactice. Generation Alpha. A great challenge for parents and teachers. In: G. PÂNIŞOARĂ (ed.). *Parenting de la A la Z. 83 de teme provocatoare pentru părinții de azi.* [Parenting from A to Z. 83 challenging themes for today's parents]. Iași: Polirom, pp. 124–132.

BONCHIŞ, E., 2022. Screenagers or "Screamagers"? Current Perspectives on Generation Alpha. *Psychological Thought*, 15(1), p. 5.

BOZAK, A., 2021. Instructional Reverse Mentoring: A Practice Proposal for Teachers. Understanding the "Z" and "Alpha" Generations. Learning Perspectives. *International Journal of Eurasia Social Sciences (IJOESS)*, 12(43), p. 119.

BÜRKLE, M., 2023. Generation Z und die Führung: Generationsspezifische Führung der Generation Z – das Mittel zum Erfolg? CHSP Working Paper No. 19. Weingarten: Ravensburg-Weingarten University, pp. 15–16. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.rwu.de/sites/default/files/2023-04/2023_02_22%20CHPS%20Working%20Paper%20No%2019_Generation%20Z_Magnus%20Bürkle.pdf.

CHANG, S. M., P. BUDHWAR & J. CRAWSHAW, 2021. The Emergence of Value-Based Leadership Behavior at the Frontline of Management: A Role Theory Perspective and Future Research Agenda. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, pp. 2–13. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.635106.

CLAASSEN, K., D. RODIL DOS ANJOS, J. KETTSCHAU & H. C. BRODING, 2021. How to evaluate digital leadership: a cross-sectional study. *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology*, 16 (44), pp. 2–3. [viewed 2 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://occup-med.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12995-021-00335-x.

CODDING, D. & B. B. GOLDBERG, 2023. *The Clash of Academic Hierarchy and Inclusive Leadership: Evolution of Leadership in a Nationwide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative*. Northwestern University, pp. 1–33. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369211226_The_Clash_of_Academic_Hierarchy_and_Inclusive_Leadership_Evolution of Leadership in a Nationwide Diversity Equity and Inclusion Initiative.

CODDING, D. & B. B. GOLDBERG, 2024. *The Clash of Academic Hierarchy and Inclusive Leadership: Evolution of Leadership in a Nationwide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative*. Northwestern University, pp. 16–35. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369211226_The_Clash_of_Academic_Hierarchy_and_Inclusive_Leadership_Evolution_of_Leadership_in_a_Nationwide_Diversity_Equity_and_Inclusion_Initiative.

DEIULIIS, E. D. & E. SAYLOR, 2021. Bridging the Gap: Three Strategies to Optimize Professional Relationships with Generation Y and Z. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 9(1), pp. 1–13. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: 10.15453/2168-6408.1748.

DEIULIIS, E. D. & E. SAYLOR, 2021. Bridging the gap: Three strategies to optimize professional relationships with Generation Y and Z. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 9(1), pp. 1–13. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1748&context=ojot.

DÖRR, S., P. ALBO, B. MONASTRIDIS, 2018. Digital Leadership – Erfolgreich führen in der digitalen Welt. In: S. GROTE, R. GOYK (Hrsg.). Führungsinstrumente aus dem Silicon Valley. Konzepte und Kompetenzen. Berlin: Springer Verlag GmbH Deutschland, pp. 45–48. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-662-54885-1.

DRUGAŞ, M., 2022. Screenagers or "Screamagers"? Current perspectives on Generation Alpha. *Psychological Thought*, 15(1), pp. 1–7. [viewed 2 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.37708/psyct.v15i1.732.

EBOJOH, S., 2023. *Leadership and learning in hybrid work teams: What do we know?* INTED 2023 Conference Paper, pp. 3305–3307. [viewed 2 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.21125/inted.2023.0906.

EBOJOH, S. & K. HÖGBERG, 2024. Exploring Leadership in the Hybrid Workplace. *International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning (iJAC)*, 17(4), pp. 16–32. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.3991/ijac.v17i4.50857.

FOULKROD, M. K. & P. L. LIN, 2024. Global Leadership Adaptability Through Servant Leadership and Cultural Humility: A Conceptual Framework. Aρετή (Arete) Journal of Excellence in Global Leadership, 2(1), pp. 76–95. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.59319/arete.v2i1.824.

GIVENS, R. J., 2008. Transformational leadership: The impact on organizational and personal outcomes. *Emerging Leadership Journeys*, 1(1), pp. 8–10. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.regent.edu/journal/emerging-leadership-journeys/transformational-leadership-the-impact-on-organizational-and-personal-outcomes/.

GRZEGORCZYK, M., M. MARINIELLO, L. NURSKI & T. SCHRAEPEN, 2021. Blending the physical and virtual: A hybrid model for the future of work. *Bruegel Policy Contribution*, 14/2021, pp. 11–22. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://hdl.handle.net/10419/251067.

HARTONO, H. W., 2024. The gap contradiction of concept essences between resonant leadership and servant leadership among intergeneration: From baby boomers, millennials, Z, and alpha generations. Surabaya: Surabaya Bible College, n.pag. [viewed]

- 9 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380970697.
- HEYNA, P., K. H. FITTKAU, 2021. *Transformationale Führung kompakt. Genese, Theorie, Empirie, Kritik.* Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, pp. 6–8. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-33421-5.
- HOFFMANN, E., 2018. Personalentwicklung und -controlling. Strategien für den Mittelstand. In: Becker, W., Ulrich, P. (Hrsg.). *Management und Controlling im Mittelstand*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, pp. 158–160. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-15551-3.
- HÖFROVÁ, A., V. BALIDEMAJ & M. A. SMALL, 2024. A systematic literature review of education for Generation Alpha. *Discover Education*, 3(125), pp. n.pag. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00218-3.
- JAISWAL, R., 2023. HR Strategies. For Generation ALPHA: What Would It Look Like? *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, Volume 11, Issue 7, n.pag. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372345498.
- KOHLI, A. & S. ARORA, 2024. An Unconventional Education Landscape for Unconventional Generation Alpha. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)*, 6(5), pp. 1–9. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.ijfmr.com/research-paper.php?id=28938.
- KRAJČÍK, M., D. ALSHATTI SCHMIDT & M. BARÁTH, 2023. Hybrid Work Model: An Approach to Work-Life Flexibility in a Changing Environment. *Administrative Sciences*, 13(150), pp. 12–13. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13060150.
- KRING, W., K. HURRELMANN & H. CHAMBERS, 2024. *Die Generationen Z und Alpha gewinnen, führen, binden.* Herne: NWB Verlag, pp. 30–31.
- LIDEN, R. C., S. J. WAYNE, C. LIAO & J. D. MEUSER, 2014. The impact of servant leadership and a serving culture on both individual and unit-level performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(6), pp. 10–27. [viewed 9 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/amj.2013.0034.
- MELCHOR, P. J. M., L. S. Lomibao & J. O. Parcutilo, 2023. Exploring the Potential of AI Integration in Mathematics Education for Generation Alpha Approaches, Challenges, and Readiness of Philippine Tertiary Classrooms: A Literature Review. *Journal of Innovations in Teaching and Learning*, 3(1), pp. 40–44. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372769988_Exploring_the_Potential_of_AI_Integration_in_Mathematics_Education_for_Generation_Alpha_Approaches_Challenges_and_Readiness_of_Philippine_Tertiary_Classrooms_A_Literature_Review.
- NAIM, S., 2024. Adaptive leadership in the era of disruption: Managing team with flexibility. *International Journal of Society Reviews (INJOSER)*, 2(8), pp. 2094–2105. [viewed 9 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://injoser.joln.org/index.php/123/article/download/234/279/695&ved=2ahUKEwjaiZTD riLAxWAefEDHQIIO8UQFnoECBsQAQ&usg=AOvVaw0MQolEeAWJrW8vChltFPZq.
- NANA, L. & S. R. MOHAMED ZAINAL, 2024. Transformational Leadership and Innovation Work Behavior: The Role of Perceived Organizational Support and Knowledge Sharing. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(2), pp. 5301–5312. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://ecohumanism.co.uk/joe/ecohumanism/article/view/4639.
- RAMÍREZ-HERRERO, V., M. ORTIZ-DE-URBINA-CRIADO & J.-A. MEDINA-MERODIO, 2024. Intergenerational Leadership: A Leadership Style Proposal for Managing Diversity and New Technologies. *Systems*, 12(50), pp. 6–15. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.3390/systems12020050.
- TIGRE, F. B., C. CURADO & P. L. HENRIQUES, 2022. Digital Leadership: A Bibliometric Analysis. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 30(1), pp. 40–60. [viewed 9 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/15480518221123132. UNKRIG, E., 2020. *Mandate der Führung 4.0.* Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH, pp. 1–3. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-28492-3.
- WADDELL, J. T., 2006. *Servant Leadership*. Servant Leadership Research Roundtable August 2006. Regent University, p. 2. Available from: http://sandbox.harmonywks.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/RD-artcile-servant-leadership-wadell.pdf.
- WDR Innovation Hub, 2021. Generation Alpha Zukunftsreport: Zukünfte einer neuen Ära von Nutzer:innen. WDR Zukunftsreport, pp. 1–8. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://zukunft.wdr.de/assets/pdf/WDR-Zukunftsreport_GenAlpha.pdf.
- YUKL, G. & R. MAHSUD, 2010. Why flexible and adaptive leadership is essential. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 62(2), pp. 80–90. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fa0019835. SCHWEHN, T.-J., F. J. MEIER & S. LAUMER, 2025. *Hybrid Leadership as a Balancing Act Qualitative Insights from a Financial Institution*. Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, pp. 762–771. [viewed 1 Feb. 2025]. Available from: https://cris.fau.de/publications/331148706/.

ПОКОЛЕНИЕ АЛФА И БЪДЕЩАТА РАБОТНА СИЛА: ТЕОРЕТИЧНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА КЪМ ОЧАКВАНИЯТА ЗА ЛИДЕРСТВО

Резюме: Нарастването на новото поколение Алфа, родените между 2010 и 2024 г., ще окаже съществено влияние върху динамиката на работната сила. Това поколение се състои от дигитални аборигени, които израстват в силно свързана среда. Очаква се те да въведат нови очаквания към лидерството и организационните структури. В настоящата статия се изследва теоретична рамка, основана на подходите към лидерството. В нея се изследва как най-добре да се адаптират нуждите на работното място на поколението Алфа. Това теоретично изследване се основава на съвременна литература и анализ на поколенията. Изследването предлага прозрения за лидерските и организационните стратегии, които са важни за подпомагане на ангажираността, производителността и иновациите в променящата се работна среда.

Ключови думи: поколение Алфа, бъдеща работна сила, лидерство, иновации на работното място, теоретична рамка

Джина Вреде, докторант

Университет по библиотекознание и информационни технологии E-mail: ginawrede@icloud.com