


Chapter 9


Reverse Mentoring and Knowledge Transfer: The Role of Gen Z in Upskilling Older Employees

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ABSTRACT

Reverse mentoring has emerged as a strategic tool in modern organizations to facilitate knowledge transfer and bridge the generational gap between employees. This study focuses on the role of Generation Z in upskilling older employees through reverse mentoring practices, particularly in the context of digital transformation and workplace adaptability. The research highlights how Gen Z, being technologically savvy and adaptable, contributes to enhancing digital skills, fostering intergenerational collaboration, and promoting a culture of continuous learning. The study employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression analysis to

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identify and validate key factors influencing the effectiveness of reverse mentoring, such as leadership support, organizational culture, psychological safety, and structured training frameworks. The findings underscore that reverse mentoring not only enhances technological competence among older employees but also encourages knowledge sharing, innovation, and organizational learning.

INTRODUCTION

Reverse mentoring has emerged as a transformative approach in modern workplaces, particularly as organizations grapple with rapid technological advancements and shifting workforce demographics. Traditionally, mentoring has been perceived as a top-down process in which senior employees guide and support their junior counterparts. However, with the advent of digitalization, younger employees, particularly those belonging to Generation Z, possess unique skills and knowledge that can benefit older employees. Reverse mentoring facilitates a two-way exchange where younger workers, who are often digital natives, mentor their senior colleagues in areas such as technology, digital marketing, social media, and contemporary workplace trends (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012). This dynamic fosters intergenerational collaboration, enhances knowledge transfer, and supports continuous learning, which are critical in today's fast-evolving work environments.

Generation Z, generally defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019), is the first cohort to have grown up in a fully digital world. Their familiarity with emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, social media platforms, and data-driven decision-making provides them with a distinct advantage in workplace settings. Many older employees, although experienced and knowledgeable, may lack proficiency in these new-age digital tools, creating a skills gap that organizations must address (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). Reverse mentoring helps bridge this gap by facilitating knowledge transfer from younger employees to their senior colleagues, ensuring that the workforce remains adaptable and competitive. Studies have shown that organizations implementing reverse mentoring programs benefit from improved technological adaptability, enhanced innovation, and increased collaboration across different generations (Murphy, 2012).

The role of Generation Z in upskilling older employees is particularly significant in industries where digital transformation is reshaping job roles. For instance, in finance, marketing, and human resource management, digital tools are increasingly essential for decision-making and strategic planning (Schmidt, 2020). Younger employees, through reverse mentoring, can introduce their senior colleagues to analytics software, automation tools, and digital communication platforms, thereby enhancing efficiency and productivity. Additionally, reverse mentoring contributes

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