

THE DYNAMICS OF INTERGENERATIONAL COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION IN THE YOGYAKARTA REGIONAL POLICE AND ITS IMPACT ON WORK EFFICIENCY (A CASE STUDY OF MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z MEMBERS)



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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of collaboration and communication between the Millennial Generation and Generation Z at the Polda DIY, as well as to recommend strategies for improving work efficiency. The method used is qualitative with a case study approach. The results show that intergenerational collaboration occurs synergistically and is mutually complementary (mutualistic symbiosis). Millennials act as directors and rule-keepers based on their experience, while Generation Z functions as technical executors who excel in speed and technological proficiency. Differences in communication styles where Millennials tend to be more formal, while Gen Z adopts a more direct (to-the-point) manner have the potential to create misunderstandings. However, these can be mitigated through intensive communication and informal activities. The recommended strategies include strengthening togetherness programs, fostering openness, increasing responsiveness, and promoting mutual care and respect to create a collaborative work environment in order to achieve optimal work efficiency.

Keywords: Collaboration, Communication, Work Efficiency, Millennials, Generation Z

INTRODUCTION

Team dynamics and inter-divisional collaboration are crucial for the sustainability and performance of an organization. Efficient collaboration among teams not only enhances operational efficiency but also fosters innovation, accelerates decision-making, and builds a solid and adaptive organizational culture. Epistemologically, the term *collaboration* originates from the English word “co-labour,” meaning to work together. In the 19th century, the term began to be widely used as industrialization developed, making organizations increasingly complex. Divisions within organizational structures were established to facilitate the distribution of tasks among the workforce. With well-established synergy, organizations are better equipped to face challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve strategic goals sustainably.

According to Nainggolan et al. (2022, in Harmen et al., 2024), maintaining and improving company performance requires collaboration between managerial parties and employees, both of whom must exert their best efforts in daily work. Similarly, research by Alshemmari (2023) shows that active involvement in decision-making and team activities creates a collaborative work environment that promotes innovation and faster problem-solving. In addition, Majumder & Kunte (2022) highlight that team collaboration improves work efficiency through clear leadership, structured communication, and knowledge sharing. These three factors help overcome challenges such as technical barriers, strengthen coordination, accelerate task completion, and increase productivity. Thus, collaboration among team members, supported by active participation in decision-making and team activities, drives innovation and faster problem resolution, ultimately improving overall company performance.

Research by Ong Hee et al. (2019) involving 120 employees in a property company in Malaysia shows that effective internal communication particularly downward vertical communication and horizontal communication significantly improves employee performance, which in turn impacts work efficiency. Clear and informative communication from supervisors ensures that subordinates understand goals and job expectations, thereby reducing errors and speeding up work processes. Meanwhile, strong horizontal communication among colleagues enhances collaboration and coordination, ultimately reducing operational barriers and increasing team productivity. Therefore, strengthening these two communication channels can be a key strategy for creating a more efficient work environment.

Based on Duarte & Silva (2023), a study of hotel employees in Portugal found that effective internal communication improves work efficiency by increasing satisfaction with communication, which strengthens perceptions of organizational support, enhances job satisfaction, and reduces employees' intention to leave. According to Mardani Eka, N (2013, in Mukti, 2025), good internal communication—characterized by clarity of information, openness, and efficient communication channels—has a significant influence on team coordination within an organization. Furthermore, Roszak (2019) shows that poor internal communication not only reduces employee satisfaction but also directly damages operational efficiency, leading to resource wastage, internal conflicts, and loss of talent. Conversely, effective communication improves coordination, motivation, and productivity, ultimately strengthening a company's competitiveness.

The digital era and rapid social changes have given rise to unique characteristics in each generation, particularly the Millennial Generation (Gen Y) and Generation Z (Gen Z),

who now dominate the workforce. Millennials, born approximately between 1977 and 1995, grew up during the transition from analog to digital technology, making them relatively adaptive to technological developments. Meanwhile, Generation Z, born between 1996 and 2010, has grown up entirely in a highly advanced digital era, making them highly familiar with the internet and social media, and capable of multitasking. According to Dimock (2018), Generation Z, having grown up in a fully digital world, prioritizes speed, creativity, and authenticity. In contrast, Millennials, who experienced a technological transition era, tend to emphasize work-life balance, seek meaning in their work, and encourage organizations to be more flexible, inclusive, and socially and environmentally responsible.

Effective collaboration, supported by clear communication, proper role distribution, and the use of appropriate tools, enables teams to complete tasks more quickly, reduce work overlap, and optimize resource utilization. Conversely, poor collaboration often leads to miscommunication, duplication of effort, and time wastage, thereby hindering overall efficiency. Research by Wahyu (2023) indicates a strong relationship between team dynamics and work efficiency. Teams that collaborate effectively tend to perform tasks more efficiently, whereas teams experiencing conflict or unclear communication are more likely to face efficiency barriers. Based on data analysis by Sara & Putri (2021), organizational communication flow has a significant positive effect on employee performance, contributing 85.8% to performance improvement.

Work efficiency is a critical factor in public organizations, including law enforcement institutions such as the Polda DIY. Based on interview results with personnel from both the Millennial and Gen Z generations, it was revealed that the work environment in the institution is characterized by complex intergenerational collaboration and communication dynamics. As expressed by IM, a Millennial staff member: *"When it comes to working with Generation Z, they are usually quick and responsive, but they often need repeated instructions because they don't always understand immediately."* This reflects the existence of collaboration in the workplace. Another example is collaboration in the use of digital tools, as stated by IM: *"It's not only for spreadsheets, but also for presentations. The designs are better."* This indicates that Generation Z brings added value in terms of aesthetics and digital tool usage.

In terms of communication, Generation Z also highlighted differences in communication styles that can lead to misunderstandings. As stated by RA, a Gen Z staff member: *"Misunderstandings can happen because older generations tend to use more formal and polite language, while our generation is more neutral and direct. What we consider normal might be perceived as impolite by older generations."* If not managed strategically, these dynamics may hinder work efficiency, ranging from slow innovation adoption to suboptimal coordination.

This study was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Polda DIY personnel regarding intergenerational collaboration and internal communication dynamics, as well as how they interpret their implications for work efficiency. The findings are expected not only to provide practical recommendations but also to offer rich theoretical contributions, particularly in the fields of organizational collaboration and communication within hierarchical government institutions such as the police.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Collaboration

Etymologically, the term collaborative derives from the words co and labor, which imply the unification of effort or the enhancement of capabilities utilized to achieve predetermined or mutually agreed goals. Furthermore, the term collaboration is often used to describe processes of task completion that are cross-boundary, cross-sectoral, cross-relational, or even cross-organizational and international (O'Leary, 2010, in Saleh, 2020). According to Dillenbourg (1999, in Saleh, 2020), terminologically, collaboration carries a broad and general meaning, describing situations in which two or more individuals or institutions work together, mutually understand each other's problems, and attempt to solve them collectively. More specifically, collaboration refers to intensive cooperation aimed at addressing shared problems simultaneously (Saleh, 2020). In addition, collaboration is a mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties (Wati et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Litelnoni et al. (2025) define collaboration as a social process involving specific activities aimed at achieving common goals through mutual assistance and understanding of each other's roles.

Organizational Communication

Intergenerational dynamics in relation to work efficiency require a strong theoretical foundation, particularly in understanding the process of organizational communication. The term communication originates from the Latin word *communicatus*, meaning to share or to become common property. Its adjective *communis* means common or shared (Morrisan, 2013, in Zamzami & Sahana, 2021). Thus, according to lexicographers, communication refers to an effort aimed at sharing in order to achieve mutual understanding. Communication is a fundamental human activity, as it serves as the basis for building social relationships and sustaining life. It also aims to achieve optimal interaction with others, communities, and organizations to influence one another and achieve effective goals (Muspawi et al., 2023). An organization is defined as a consciously coordinated social unit consisting of two or more individuals, functioning on a relatively continuous basis to achieve shared goals (Ira Fatmawati, 2022).

Millennial Generation

Differences between Millennials and Generation Z in the workplace reflect the evolution of work culture alongside technological advancements and social changes. The term Millennial generation was first introduced by American researchers William Strauss and Neil Howe in 1991. Over time, the definition has evolved, particularly regarding birth years. Millennials (Generation Y) are individuals born between 1977 and 1995 (Morah, 2022). They grew up during a period of rapid technological transition, witnessing the rise of the internet, personal computers, and social media (Azzuhri et al., 2024). In terms of workplace innovation, Millennials prioritize skill development to enhance their careers (Finindi et al., 2024). According to Parengkuan (2020), their characteristics include a tendency toward leadership, a focus on competency development, multitasking ability, and a preference for challenges.

Generation Z

Generation Z refers to individuals born after 1996 until the mid-2010s. They have grown up in an era where digital technology is deeply embedded in everyday life. As a result, they are highly skilled in using technology, constantly connected online, and have unlimited access to information (Azzuhri et al., 2024). According to Sari & Pitaloka (2024), Generation Z is particularly adept at multitasking, often combining daily activities with other engagements, as they are accustomed to using technology as a medium for productivity and meaningful activities. Meanwhile, Parry (2020, in Wibowo & Ayuningtyas, 2024) states that Generation Z naturally integrates technology into their lives, values collaborative consumption, and expresses their identity through appearance, hobbies, and interests. Merriam (2015, in Nasa et al., 2022) explains that their high dependence on the internet allows them to access information quickly and easily. However, this ease of access may lead to a reduced reliance on deep analytical thinking (brain logic) in problem-solving processes. In fact, such logical reasoning is crucial for addressing challenges in the workplace.

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. According to John W. Creswell (2003, in Fiantika et al., 2022), a qualitative approach is a method for developing knowledge claims based on a constructivist perspective (for example, meanings derived from individual experiences, as well as social and historical values, with the aim of building specific theories or patterns of knowledge) or based on a participatory perspective (for example, an orientation toward politics, issues, collaboration, or change), or a combination of both.

The informants in this study are members of the Polda DIY, consisting of two personnel from the Millennial generation (born 1977–1995) and two personnel from Generation Z (born 1996–2010). The involvement of these two generations is intended to obtain a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of intergenerational collaboration and communication within the police work environment, as well as how these dynamics affect work efficiency in carrying out organizational duties and responsibilities.

All informants were selected based on the following criteria:

1. They are active police officers serving at Polda DIY,
2. They have experience working and interacting across generations in the execution of duties, and
3. They are directly involved in work activities that require collaboration and communication among personnel.

With this experience, the informants are considered to have a deep understanding of communication dynamics and collaboration patterns in daily police duties, enabling them to provide relevant and data-rich information for this study. They not only understand the theoretical challenges of intergenerational communication but have also experienced them directly in the field. This makes the data obtained authentic and reflective of real conditions faced by police personnel in building coordination and collaboration across generations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Intergenerational Collaboration

In the dynamics of the modern workplace, intergenerational collaboration is an inevitable phenomenon. Every organization, whether a private company or a government institution, must face this reality. When different generations with diverse backgrounds, values, and ways of working come together in one workplace, interactions naturally occur and form certain patterns. In the context of task implementation at the Polda DIY, collaboration between Millennials and Generation Z shows distinctive characteristics. Based on interviews with informants, this study identified dominant patterns of collaboration between these two generations. The emerging pattern is formal, task-oriented collaboration. This is reflected in the statement of Informant 4 (Millennial):

“For operators, we prioritize younger personnel. However, for responsibilities related to rules, we still rely on the older generation who better understand the regulations.”

This statement indicates a generational role division, where Gen Z is positioned as technical executors (especially in technology-related tasks), while Millennials and older generations dominate supervisory and strategic decision-making roles. Referring to Saleh (2020), collaboration is a mutually beneficial reciprocal relationship. This pattern fulfills the basic principle of collaboration, although it tends to be functional, as it is based on generational stereotypes.

Brečko (2021) found that despite age-related stereotypes in the workplace, intergenerational collaboration can still be effective because all generations share similar values and work motivations. In the context of Polda DIY, these values relate to achieving organizational goals according to each role and function.

Another pattern identified is mutually beneficial collaboration. This is reflected in Informant 1 (Gen Z):

“Older people can teach us their experience, while younger people can teach about new technologies. So, we collaborate and the work becomes more efficient.”

This demonstrates a process of mutual learning, which is the essence of ideal collaboration. Millennials transfer procedural knowledge and field experience, while Gen Z contributes technological expertise and digital work approaches. This reflects the *reverse mentoring* strategy proposed by Singh & Bahl (2025), where knowledge exchange enhances collaboration and innovation. This synergy aligns with Mercader et al. (2021), who found that teamwork significantly improves efficiency when based on shared values. At Polda DIY, this is reflected in the use of technology such as Google Forms and spreadsheets to accelerate administrative tasks. However, challenges remain, particularly differences in work pace:

“Young people are fast-paced, but we older ones prefer to go slower and be more careful.”

Intergenerational Communication

Differences in communication styles across generations represent a major dynamic in today’s workplace. These differences affect how messages are delivered, communication media are used, and responses are given. As expressed by Informant 1 (Gen Z):

“Older generations tend to use *toto kromo* (polite Javanese), while Gen Z is more neutral and direct. Sometimes we are seen as impolite.”

This reflects a fundamental conflict in communication norms. Senior generations maintain formal and hierarchical communication, while Gen Z prefers direct, egalitarian

styles. This supports Iqbal (2024), who found that such differences can hinder work efficiency. Using organizational communication theory (Everett, 1997), these differences include:

1. Verbal communication (language choice and formality),
2. Nonverbal communication (tone, gestures),
3. Direction of communication (hierarchical vs. two-way communication).

Singh & Bahl (2025) also found that differences in communication preferences often lead to misunderstandings. For example:

“Gen Z is quick and responsive, but instructions often need to be repeated.”

This reflects Gen Z’s learning style, which relies on feedback and coaching (Rachmawati, 2019). Gen Z also tends to learn independently:

“If we don’t know Excel, we search on Google first.”

This indicates a self-directed, digital-based learning approach. Despite these challenges, both generations recognize the need for adaptation. Overall, awareness and adaptation are key to overcoming communication barriers and building an inclusive work environment.

Work Efficiency

Positive Impacts (Efficiency Improvement)

Intergenerational communication and collaboration significantly improve efficiency in several ways:

1. Faster task completion through technology
2. Improved quality of work output
3. Two-way knowledge transfer

Negative Impacts (Efficiency Barriers)

1. Practical miscommunication
2. Repetition of instructions
3. Linguistic communication burden

Strategies to Improve Efficiency

Based on the findings, several strategies are recommended:

1. **Two-Way Mentoring Program.** Mutual knowledge exchange between Millennials and Gen Z.
2. **Intergenerational Communication Training.** Workshops to develop adaptive communication skills.
3. **Structured Cross-Generational Communication Forums.** Regular discussions and informal activities (e.g., sports, gatherings).
4. **Optimization of Collaborative Technology.** Use of platforms like Google Workspace and digital knowledge systems.
5. **Flexible Role Distribution.** Avoid rigid generational roles through task rotation and mixed teams.
6. **Adaptive Internal Communication Guidelines.** Clear communication standards combining flexibility and organizational values.

These strategies aim to bridge generational gaps, enhance collaboration, and ultimately improve work efficiency within the Polda DIY.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis presented in the previous chapter and referring to the research problem formulation, several conclusions can be drawn from this study as follows:

1. The dynamics of collaboration and communication between Millennials and Generation Z at the Polda DIY occur synergistically and complement each other (mutualistic symbiosis). Millennials act as directors and rule-keepers based on experience, while Gen Z contributes as technical executors with speed and technological proficiency. Collaboration is realized through functional role division supported by clear hierarchical structures and standard operating procedures (SOPs). However, it is also characterized by challenges such as the need for repeated guidance from Millennials to Gen Z and differences in communication styles—where senior generations tend to be formal (*toto kromo*), while Gen Z is more neutral and direct—which may lead to misunderstandings but are generally resolved through intensive communication and informal activities that strengthen relationships.
2. Strategies that can be implemented to improve work efficiency through intergenerational collaboration and communication at the Polda DIY include strengthening togetherness programs outside of work such as family gatherings or joint sports activities to enhance intergenerational relationships, fostering openness in expressing work-related challenges, increasing responsiveness while avoiding apathetic attitudes toward information, and reinforcing mutual support roles—where senior generations provide guidance and younger generations show respect. These efforts aim to create a comfortable and collaborative work environment, ultimately supporting the achievement of optimal work efficiency.

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