

THE RELUCTANCE OF GEN Y TO EMBRACE LEADERSHIP ROLES: INSIGHTS INTO MODERN WORKPLACE DYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper examines Generation Y's reluctance to assume leadership roles in contemporary workplaces, emphasizing the interplay between personal values, organizational culture, self-efficacy perceptions, and motivation to lead. Generation Y emphasizes the importance of work-life balance and stability, frequently viewing leadership positions as incompatible with these principles. Incredibly hierarchical structures and unclear promotion systems within organizational culture have a substantial impact on self-efficacy and leadership motivation. The perception of self-efficacy acts as a mediating variable that connects personal values and organizational culture to leadership aspirations. Enhancing self-efficacy through customized leadership programs, mentorship, and constructive feedback can help organizations address Generation Y's reluctance to assume leadership roles. The findings establish a basis for future research to investigate the influence of generational and cultural contexts on leadership motivations and to develop strategies for fostering effective leaders from Generation Y.

Keywords: Gen Y, Leadership Roles, Modern Workplace Dynamics

INTRODUCTION

Generation Y, known as Millennials, is expected to comprise 75% of the global workforce by 2025. (Peters, 2021). This cohort exhibits technological proficiency, prioritizes work-life balance, and maintains elevated expectations for career development opportunities. Although Millennials possess the potential to drive innovation and organizational transformation, they frequently exhibit reluctance in assuming leadership positions. This reluctance is linked to values that prioritize work-life balance and the expectation of flexibility in the workplace (Ng et al., 2019; Galdames & Guihen, 2020).

Moreover, difficulties in engaging and retaining Millennial leaders arise when their specific needs are not adequately met. Empowering and transformative leadership styles have demonstrated a good impact on this generation, enhancing trust and job satisfaction (Galdames & Guihen, 2020; Easton &

Steyn, 2022). Nevertheless, the majority of contemporary research has predominantly focused on Western contexts, resulting in a lack of understanding of leadership dynamics within Asian cultural environments. This offers an opportunity to examine how Millennials in various locations react to leadership expectations and organizational frameworks.

The research currently in publication is severely lacking in a thorough examination of the elements that may deter Millennials from seeking leadership roles, such as self-doubt and fear of failure. Although many studies emphasize general workplace behaviors, there is a notable lack of research regarding the psychological and emotional impediments that affect leadership decisions (Ng et al., 2019). Addressing this deficiency is crucial for developing tactics that resonate with Millennials' values and inspire them to take on leadership positions.

The research titled "The Reluctance of Gen Y to Embrace Leadership Roles: Insights into Modern Workplace Dynamics" aims to address this issue by analyzing the psychological and cultural influences that shape their views on leadership within contemporary businesses. This research will inform organizations in developing leadership programs that align with the values and expectations of Millennials. Moreover, it will establish a basis for subsequent research on leadership development within a swiftly changing global workforce.

OBJECTIVE

To develop the conceptual framework, the antecedents and consequences of Gen Y's reluctance to embrace leadership roles.

Theoretical Background

1. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a fundamental concept in psychology and organizational management that examines the exchange of resources between individuals or organizations through social relationships. Resources may be physical, such as salaries, or intangible, like trust (Blau, 1964). SET asserts that relationships are sustained when the trade is regarded as equitable and advantageous for both parties (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In organizational settings, Social Exchange Theory explains how employees' motivation is influenced by procedural fairness and equitable treatment from management (Colquitt et al., 2001; Emerson, 1976). The theory is intricately connected to the concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS), which has a profound influence on employee happiness and commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

SET provides significant insights about the hesitance of Generation Y employees to embrace leadership positions. Millennials frequently emphasize the importance of work-life balance (Ng et al., 2010), and if they perceive organizational support as inadequate, such as insufficient development opportunities or inadequate rewards, their inclination to assume leadership roles declines.

It highlights the disparity in interactions between firms and employees, prompting Gen Y to eschew leadership positions that require significant resources without providing commensurate rewards.

2. The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), formulated by Hobfoll (1989), serves as a fundamental framework in organizational psychology that elucidates individuals' drive to safeguard and maintain their resources, including time, energy, mental well-being, and social support. These resources are essential for managing stress and attaining achievement (Hobfoll et al., 2018). According to COR, individuals encounter stress when they perceive a threat to their resources or experience an actual loss of resources, prompting them to avoid situations that could lead to further depletion (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

In organizational settings, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory has been utilized to understand how job demands, including elevated expectations or inequitable management practices, may lead to employee burnout or the avoidance of resource-demanding positions, such as leadership

Westman et al., 2004; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015. Moreover, inadequate resource management, including insufficient social support or work-life mismatch, intensifies fatigue and disengagement. In contrast, environments that foster resource replenishment, including adaptable corporate cultures and supportive leadership, mitigate stress and increase the propensity to embrace challenging jobs (Hobfoll, 2001; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Regarding the subject "The Reluctance of Generation Y to Assume Leadership Roles," COR explains how Generation Y may perceive leadership positions as depleting resources, particularly affecting their work-life balance and personal well-being. Strategic management that enhances resource assurance and renewal can significantly elevate their willingness to assume leadership roles.

3. Theory of Generations -Mannheim's Theory, Karl Mannheim's Theory of Generations (1952) underscores the significance of historical and cultural events during formative years (adolescence and early adulthood) in influencing the values, attitudes, and behaviors of generational cohorts. Mannheim asserted that a "generation" is not just a demographic cohort born within the same temporal context but also a social and cultural construct (Mannheim, 1952).

Subsequent research expanded this idea to include generational disparities, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, with an emphasis on workplace attitudes and management methodologies (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Parry & Urwin, 2011). Research indicates that the values of Generation Y, also known as Millennials, are influenced by significant events, including rapid technological progress and economic transformations. These experiences influence their emphasis on work-life balance (Twenge, 2010) and their inclination towards workplace flexibility and acknowledgment (Ng et al., 2010). The thesis elucidates the reasons behind Generation Y's frequent rejection of conventional organizational frameworks and the associated expectations of leadership positions (Lyons & Kuron, 2014).

The idea elucidates how Gen Y's unique beliefs influence their perception of leadership positions as damaging to personal time and a source of increased pressure. Identifying these generational disparities is crucial for formulating programs that effectively encourage Generation Y to assume leadership roles.

4. The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) elucidates the impact of the quality of relationships between leaders and team members on employee behavior and outcomes (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The theory highlights dyadic connections, classifying personnel into two categories: the In-group and the Out-group. Members of an in-group tend to enjoy more trust, support, and access to resources, which results in enhanced job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Dansereau et al., 1975). In contrast, Out-group members encounter limited opportunities and resources, leading to job dissatisfaction and reduced performance (Liden et al., 1997; Erdogan & Bauer, 2010).

LMX emphasizes that constructive leader-member connections can enhance motivation and mitigate workplace stress, particularly for younger employees, such as those in Generation Y (Anand et al., 2011). Generation Y values robust interactions with leaders, marked by acknowledgment and unwavering support, which motivate them to assume intricate tasks, including leadership (Erdogan & Liden, 2002). In contrast, inadequate leader-member connections may heighten reluctance towards roles that necessitate substantial involvement and accountability.

LMX theory posits that the quality of relationships between Generation Y and existing organizational leaders may considerably influence their hesitance to adopt leadership positions. Fostering healthy relationships and providing suitable support may encourage Generation Y to take on leadership responsibilities.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing a literature review and document analysis to construct variables and explain the relationship factors. Literature was incorporated into our study if it satisfied the following criteria. A systematic literature review was initially performed to gather

foundational theories related to Social, Resource, Generation, and Leadership pertinent to contemporary workplace dynamics. Secondly, the literature we gathered regarding leadership, human resource management, and organizational culture pertaining to Generation Y needed to be composed in either English or Thai. The literature encompassed a range of both quantitative and qualitative studies, without imposing any limitations on the geographical location or the specific industry of the research conducted. The data we gathered regarding human resource management related to Generation Y encompassed published journal articles, conference papers, master's and doctoral dissertations, among other sources. Furthermore, we gathered primarily review-based literature on empowerment and self-efficacy perception, along with some empirical studies, to enhance our understanding of Generation Y management within contemporary workplace dynamics.

RESULTS

1. Personal values refer to the enduring beliefs or principles that guide individuals' behaviors, decisions, and priorities across various aspects of life. Within the realm of leadership and workplace dynamics, personal values profoundly affect individuals' perceptions of their roles, responsibilities, and career ambitions (Schwartz, 1992). Two essential aspects of personal values pertinent to Generation Y are: **1) Work-Life Balance Preferences, which** emphasizes the importance individuals assign to balancing professional responsibilities and personal lives. For Generation Y, achieving a work-life balance is a fundamental goal that influences their professional decisions and views on leadership positions (Twenge et al., 2010). Strong desires for work-life balance may cause individuals to eschew leadership roles that are regarded as overly demanding or invasive on personal time (Ng et al., 2010). Additionally, individuals may have a desire for Stability and security, which is reflected in their preference for stable and secure conditions in both professional and personal settings. The demand for stability among Generation Y is frequently influenced by economic uncertainties and societal changes encountered during their early years, leading to their hesitance to assume leadership positions perceived as unstable or dangerous (Lyons & Kuron, 2014).

Personal values are closely associated with self-efficacy perception. When individuals prioritize work-life balance and security, their confidence in fulfilling leadership tasks may wane if these responsibilities conflict with their values. Leadership positions that demand a considerable time commitment or involve uncertainties may diminish self-efficacy among Generation Y, resulting in their reluctance to pursue such roles. Comprehending and aligning organizational frameworks with individual values may enhance self-efficacy and drive in aspiring leaders.

2. Organizational culture refers to the collective values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape the behaviors and attitudes of employees within a company. It constitutes the basis for work execution, decision-making, and relationship management inside a workplace (Schein, 2010). Two essential aspects of company culture that affect leadership dynamics, especially for Generation Y (Gen Y), are **1) Hierarchical Work Structures, which define the level of formality and hierarchical decision-making within** an organization. In conventional hierarchical frameworks, authority and responsibilities are distinctly delineated, allowing minimal employee involvement in decision-making (Hofstede, 1991). Generation Y, which prioritizes collaboration and inclusivity, may view such frameworks as constrictive and unengaging, thereby diminishing their incentive to assume leadership positions (Twenge et al., 2010). Additionally, **2) Promotion and Leadership Incentive Systems** include the methodologies and standards firms adopt to incentivize personnel and advance leadership prospects. Transparent, meritocratic systems that correspond with individual and professional development are often more attractive to Generation Y (Ng et al., 2010). Organizations that do not offer explicit pathways or incentives for leadership roles may struggle to encourage young people to assume these positions (Lyons & Kuron,

2014). "Organizational culture" refers to the pattern of behavior, values, thoughts, beliefs, and ideologies shared by the majority of people within the organization. (Mangwaen, W. 2023)

Organizational culture has a significant influence on self-efficacy perception, as it shapes individuals' confidence in executing leadership duties within the workplace environment. Hierarchical organizations may hinder self-efficacy by restricting autonomy and creativity, whereas transparent promotion systems can enhance feelings of competence and readiness. For Generation Y, organizational cultures that prioritize diversity and delineate precise career trajectories bolster their confidence in succeeding in leadership roles, alleviating their hesitance to assume such positions.

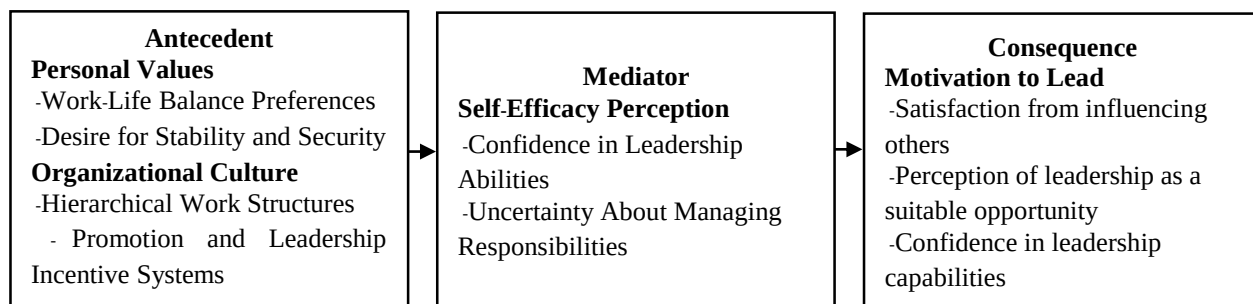
3. Self-Efficacy Perception refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to effectively execute particular duties or attain objectives, especially within leadership contexts. This idea is crucial for understanding leadership motivation, as it directly influences individuals' perceptions of their ability to assume and succeed in leadership positions (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, management techniques and inventive leadership are crucial for fostering corporate success through dynamic skills. The enhancement of management strategies and inventive leadership augments dynamic capabilities, thus contributing to the company's success (Krue-Chotekul, B., Sungkhamanee, K., Klaywong, C., & Lekapojpanich, S., 2022). Leadership self-efficacy consists of two fundamental dimensions, as follows: **1 (Confidence in Leadership Abilities)**: This dimension signifies a person's conviction in their capacity to lead proficiently. It encompasses assurance in decision-making, problem-solving, and motivating others (Paglis & Green, 2002). Elevated confidence empowers leaders to confront obstacles with perseverance and ingenuity, cultivating trust among their teams (McCormick et al., 2002), and **2 (Uncertainty About Managing Responsibilities)**: This aspect pertains to uncertainties or anxieties regarding the management of intricate leadership responsibilities, including organizational demands, interpersonal conflicts, and performance expectations (Hoyt et al., 2010). Individuals may be reluctant to undertake leadership roles, particularly in high-stakes environments, due to this uncertainty, which can erode their self-efficacy (Murphy, 2002).

Self-efficacy is a fundamental component of Motivation to Lead (MTL), especially within the affective-identity and social-normative aspects. Individuals with elevated self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate a robust intrinsic drive to assume leadership positions, perceiving them as avenues for development and accomplishment (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). In contrast, those with poor self-efficacy may eschew leadership due to perceived risks and uncertainties, paralleling the hesitance of Generation Y to assume leadership positions in contemporary workplace dynamics. Confronting these preconceptions is crucial for enhancing Gen Y's leadership involvement.

4. Motivation to Lead (MTL) Identity. Motivation to Lead (MTL) refers to an inner aspiration to undertake leadership positions, driven by an inherent propensity or personal identity associated with leadership. Individuals with elevated Affective-Identity MTL regard leadership as integral to their identity and experience a profound emotional bond with guiding others (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). This type of motivation is characterized by the pleasure derived from positively impacting others, the recognition of leadership positions as avenues that align with their objectives and principles, and a strong belief in their ability to lead effectively (Badura et al., 2020). Such individuals frequently take the initiative to pursue leadership positions, perceiving these jobs as satisfying and aligned with their self-identity (Paglis & Green, 2002). The following involves 1) **Satisfaction from influencing others**: The individual feels fulfilled and energized when they can guide, inspire, or have a positive impact on others (Goleman, 1998), 2) **Perception of leadership as a suitable opportunity**: They view leadership roles as natural fits for their skills and aspirations (Chan et al., 2020) and 3) **Confidence in leadership capabilities**: They have a strong belief in their ability to lead, make decisions, and manage others effectively (Eagly & Carli, 2003).

Consequently, the researcher has delineated the conceptual framework for the study, as illustrated in Figure 1

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This conceptual study investigates Generation Y's hesitance to assume leadership positions by analyzing the interconnections among personal values, corporate culture, self-efficacy perceptions, and motivation to lead (MTL). The results suggest that personal values, particularly preferences for work-life balance and a pursuit of stability, have a profound impact on Generation Y's perspective on leadership positions. These principles often conflict with conventional leadership expectations, leading to reluctance to accept such roles. Aligning leadership opportunities with these principles is crucial for mitigating Generation Y's hesitance. Organizational culture has a significant influence on the reinforcement or attenuation of personal values in leadership motivation. Rigid hierarchical frameworks and ambiguous promotion mechanisms can erode self-efficacy, leading Generation Y to view leadership as either unattainable or unappealing. Conversely, cultures that advocate for diversity, transparency, and meritocratic progression can foster a supportive atmosphere that bolsters self-efficacy and leadership desire.

The perception of self-efficacy acts as the mediating variable linking personal values and corporate culture to leadership motivation. High self-efficacy enhances individuals' confidence in their leadership capabilities, enabling them to surmount doubts stemming from personal values or organizational limitations. In contrast, low self-efficacy reduces motivation, especially in contexts where personal ideals conflict with cultural norms or corporate practices. The interaction of these variables highlights the need for a multifaceted approach to address Generation Y's reluctance to assume leadership positions. Organizations must recognize the importance of aligning leadership opportunities with individual values while cultivating a culture that fosters confidence and promotes leadership development. Customized programs that emphasize skill development, mentorship, and constructive criticism can significantly enhance self-efficacy and leadership motivation.

In conclusion, comprehending the intricate interplay among personal beliefs, corporate culture, and self-efficacy perception is essential for realizing Generation Y's leadership potential. Organizations can convert reluctance into readiness by creating an atmosphere that honors their values, nurtures confidence, and provides clear pathways to leadership, thereby cultivating a new generation of motivated and competent leaders.

The implications of this study underscore the need for future research to validate the proposed conceptual framework in diverse organizational contexts and cultural environments. Analyzing the impact of geographical and industry-specific characteristics on the interplay among personal values, corporate culture, and self-efficacy can yield profound insights into leadership dynamics (Lyons &

Kuron, 2014). Additionally, longitudinal studies are recommended to monitor shifts in Generation Y's leadership motivations as they progress in their careers.

In the conclusion, overcoming Generation Y's hesitance to assume leadership positions necessitates a multifaceted strategy that aligns their values with nurturing organizational cultures to improve self-efficacy. By creating an environment that meets the expectations and aspirations of Generation Y, businesses may develop a new cadre of leaders who are both motivated and equipped to lead in a swiftly changing workplace.

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