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Navigating Generational Conflicts in the Workplace and the Role of Responsible Leadership in Fostering Inclusivity

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Abstract

Title: “Navigating Generational Conflicts in the Workplace and the Role of Responsible Leadership in Fostering Inclusivity”

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This thesis explores the challenges leaders face in navigating generational conflicts within teams and fostering inclusivity through a responsible leadership approach. As workplaces become more diverse, with employees from varying age groups, communication styles and leadership expectations often clash, creating friction. This study aims to identify effective strategies to manage these conflicts and promote inclusivity. Through a combination of literature review and qualitative interviews, key findings highlight that mentoring programs, deliberate team mixing, and non-work activities are practical solutions for addressing generational divides. These initiatives not only help reduce tensions but also enhance team cohesion by fostering mutual respect and understanding across different age groups. However, generational differences in work ethics, especially concerning commitment and work-life balance, remain significant challenges. The thesis also underscores that while responsible leadership is crucial in promoting inclusivity and collaboration, it may not fully resolve conflicts arising from deeply ingrained values. As organizations scale and expand globally, maintaining inclusivity requires ongoing efforts and the integration of new strategies such as community engagement and social responsibility initiatives. This research provides valuable insights into managing generational diversity in teams and emphasize the evolving role of responsible leadership in creating more inclusive work environments.

Keywords: Generational Conflicts, Responsible Leadership, Team Inclusivity, Leadership Strategies, Workplace Diversity, Team Dynamics, Qualitative Research, Organizational Cohesion

Resumo

Título: "Navegando Conflitos Geracionais no Local de Trabalho e o Papel da Liderança Responsável na Promoção da Inclusão"

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Esta tese explora os desafios que os líderes enfrentam na resolução de conflitos geracionais nas equipas e na promoção da inclusão através de uma liderança responsável. À medida que os locais de trabalho se tornam mais diversificados, com trabalhadores de diferentes faixas etárias, os estilos de comunicação e as expectativas de liderança entram em conflito, criando fricção. Este estudo visa identificar estratégias eficazes para gerir esses conflitos e promover a inclusão. Através de uma revisão da literatura e entrevistas qualitativas, as principais conclusões sublinham que programas de tutoria, mistura deliberada de equipas e atividades não profissionais são soluções práticas para lidar com divisões geracionais. Estas iniciativas ajudam a reduzir tensões e aumentam a coesão da equipa, promovendo respeito mútuo e compreensão entre grupos etários diferentes. Contudo, as diferenças na ética de trabalho, especialmente no que respeita ao empenho e ao equilíbrio entre vida profissional e pessoal, permanecem como desafios significativos. A tese também destaca que, embora a liderança responsável seja crucial para promover inclusão e colaboração, ela pode não resolver completamente os conflitos decorrentes de valores profundamente enraizados. À medida que as organizações crescem globalmente, manter a inclusão requer esforços contínuos e a integração de novas estratégias, como o envolvimento da comunidade e iniciativas de responsabilidade social. Esta pesquisa oferece informações valiosas sobre a gestão da diversidade geracional nas equipas e ressalta o papel evolutivo da liderança responsável na criação de ambientes de trabalho mais inclusivos.

Palavras-chave: Conflitos Geracionais, Liderança Responsável, Inclusão de Equipas, Estratégias de Liderança, Diversidade no Local de Trabalho, Dinâmica de Equipas, Pesquisa Qualitativa, Coesão Organizacional

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List of Abbreviations

CARL	Competency Assessment for Responsible Leadership
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology

1 Introduction

In today's evolving workplaces, leaders are faced with the challenge of effectively managing generational differences, fostering team diversity, and adapting to changing work environments. As globalization brings together individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, ages, and genders, organizations are placing a greater emphasis on fostering inclusivity and embracing diversity. While research highlights the productivity benefits associated with higher diversity levels, it also underscores the potential for conflicts to arise within teams. (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 9–10).

Addressing these conflicts is essential for maintaining team harmony and ensuring that all members feel a sense of belonging and purpose. Each generation contributes distinct perspectives, work ethics, and communication styles, and without proper management, these differences can cause misunderstandings and create tension within teams. (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 110).

The Leadership style plays a pivotal role in this process, influencing not only the resolution of conflicts but also the overall cohesion and effectiveness of the team (Urick et al., 2016, p. 170).

The concept of responsible leadership has gained traction in this context, emphasizing the importance of balancing diverse stakeholder needs and adhering to ethical principles (Habermas 1996, Voegtlin et al., 2010, as cited in Voegtlin et al., 2012a, pp. 4–5). This leadership style emphasizes the cultivation of long-term, trust-based relationships with stakeholders, with the overarching aim of fostering sustainable development within both the corporate sphere and broader society (Freeman et al., 2004, as cited in Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 102).

Building on this foundation, the aim of this research paper is to explore two critical research questions:

1. *What strategies can leaders employ to navigate generational conflicts within a team?*
2. *How does a responsible leadership approach influence team inclusivity?*

The research topic is highly relevant as it addresses critical challenges faced by leaders in today's dynamic and diverse workplaces, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership in driving organizational success. Additionally, the relevance of this study is

highlighted through its ability to bridge theoretical concepts with real-world applications, generating value for various stakeholders, including organizations, leaders, employees, and society at large.

This thesis will first review existing literature on generational conflicts and responsible leadership, followed by qualitative research findings using the Gioia method to answer these questions. To address the research questions, the review initiates with a comprehensive literature review, exploring generational dynamics, the responsible leadership style and the connection between it and team inclusivity. This is followed by the methodology chapter, which explains the qualitative approach used, including expert interviews to gather real-world insights. By applying the Gioia method, this study seeks to provide insights into these questions, offering practical strategies for leaders to enhance team cohesion and inclusivity in today's dynamic work environments. The findings chapter then presents key findings from the interviews, highlighting practical strategies for leaders. These strategies are designed to help leaders strengthen team cohesion and foster a sense of belonging, ultimately benefiting both employees and the organization as a whole.

In the discussion, these findings are critically analyzed, reflecting on their implications for workplace dynamics by comparing existing literature with insights gathered through interviews. The comparison explores how leadership strategies, particularly responsible leadership, are applied in different organizational contexts, while also acknowledging the study's limitations and suggesting directions for further research. This analysis not only emphasizes the practical importance of understanding which strategies are most effective in managing generational conflicts but also underscores the need to foster inclusivity and align leadership approaches with the evolving dynamics of today's diverse workplaces (Maak & Pless, 2006, pp. 110–112; Voegtlin et al., 2012, p. 4–5).

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the research, answers the key questions, and offers recommendations for future research.

2 Literature Review

The following chapter explains the theoretical foundation for generational conflicts in the teams in workplaces. Theories and models are presented which aim to explain the conflicts, such as specific challenges that are encountered in that context. Finally, existing strategies that aim to prevent and mitigate generational conflicts are presented.

2.1 Generational Conflicts in the Workplace

Generational conflicts in the workplace arise from differences in communication styles, values, and expectations among employees of different age groups. This chapter explores the theoretical foundation of these conflicts, the challenges they pose, and the strategies leaders use to manage and mitigate generational tensions effectively.

2.1.1 Theoretical Foundation of Generational Conflicts in the Workplace

Definition of Generation

There is not one specific definition of the term generation, therefore, so the following section will explore multiple interpretations. Strauss and Howe (1991) defined the term “generation” as a group of people that are born in the timespan of 20 years (Strauss and Howe, 1991, as cited in Karashchuk et al., 2020, p. 2). Additionally, Shamis and Nikonov (2017) describe a generation as a group of people that share the same values, have been born in the same period and have had similar experienced in life and were raised in as similar manner (Shamis and Nikonov, 2017, as cited in Karashchuk et al., 2020, p. 2). A generational group is an “identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages” (Kupperschmidt (2000), as cited in Macky et al., 2008, p. 858). The following section provides an overview of the various generational groups, along with different definitions. For the purposes of this thesis, the definition by Zemke et al. (2000) will be used (as cited in Széchenyi István University in Győr et al., 2016, p. 92). According to Zemke et al. (2000), the generations are clustered as follows: Veteran Generation (1925-1946), Baby Boom Generation (1946-1960), Generation X (1960-1980), Generation Y (1980-1995), Generation Z (1995-2010), and Alfa Generation (2010 onwards) (Zemke et al, 2000, as cited in Széchenyi István University in Győr et al., 2016, p. 92). This classification, as depicted in the table on the next page helps in understanding generational differences, particularly in the workplace context.

Timeline of Generations	
Generation	Birth Years
Veteran Generation	1925 -1946
Baby Boom Generation	1946 – 1960
X Generation	1960 – 1980
Y Generation	1980 – 1995
Z Generation	1995 – 2010
Alfa Generation	2010 onwards

Table 1: Timeline of Generations. Source: Author's construction (Zemke et al., (2000), as cited in Széchenyi István University in Győr et al., 2016, p. 92)

Definition of Conflict

Just as there are various definitions to generations, conflict also has multiple interpretations. Thomas (1992) stated that while there is no single definition of conflict, all definitions share three core elements: “interaction between parties, the possibility of interference by an opposing party, and perceptions of incompatibility between parties” (Thomas, 1992, as cited in Urick et al., 2016, p. 170). Additionally, Stohl and Cheney (2001) argue that conflicts make the involved parties do not feel comfortable when approaching conflict and therefore these conflicts need to be managed (Stohl and Cheney, 2001, as cited in Urick et al., 2016, p. 170).

Generational Conflicts in the Workplace

Following the definitions of 'generation' and 'conflict,' attention now turns to the specific types of conflicts that emerge because of generational differences. Conflicts stemming from generational differences can be described as variations in communication preferences (such as technology use versus in-person meetings), work values and attitudes (a focus on work versus a balanced approach), career goals (advancement opportunities versus the desire to make an impact), and the distribution of power and influence across generations (Harris, 2015, as cited in Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 7). Since each generation is defined by different characteristics, frictions are caused, which managers have to approach individually (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 7).

Historical context of Generational Conflicts

Although generational conflicts have often been viewed negatively as they have evolved over time, they can also result in positive outcomes, such as fostering collaboration or enhancing visibility (Urick et al., 2016, p. 170). Furthermore, “Generational conflict has grown within

organizations as more generations than ever have entered the workforce and are working together.” (Urick et al., 2016, p. 170).

The literature indicates that generational conflicts are not static but rather dynamic and constantly evolving. As new generations join the workforce and older ones retire, the dynamics of these conflicts shift accordingly. This ongoing change highlights the need for continuous research, allowing managers to adapt and effectively address the evolving challenges that arise between different generations (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 12).

2.1.2 Challenges associated with Generational Conflicts

Generational conflicts can arise for multiple reasons. The most prominent ones are listed below and clustered into behavior-, value-, and identity-based conflicts (Urick et al., 2016, p. 170).

Behavior-based Conflicts

Tension rooted in behavior occurs when someone interprets another's actions as being linked to their generational group. When the behavior typically associated with that generation clashes with the observer's own expectations or actions, it creates friction (Urick et al., 2016, p. 173).

Appelbaum et al. (2022) explain that communication problems are a significant source of behavior-based tensions, particularly since different generations often struggle to communicate effectively with one another. Previous studies have highlighted that each generation tends to prefer specific communication channels, and these differences contribute to breakdowns in communication, reduced collaboration, and conflicts between generations. (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 9).

Another common generational conflict is associated with feedback. In accordance with Aggarwal et al., (2020), people from younger generations need more regular feedback sessions, as they are still learning and developing at the job. This difference, for example, could cause conflict between a manager and an employee from different generations, particularly regarding how often feedback is expected. (Aggarwal et al., 2020, as cited in Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 9).

Another example of a behavior-based conflict relates to leadership techniques. „Management techniques that were effective for young workers 20 years ago may not work now“ (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1122). Cox, Hannif, and Rowley (2014) conducted a study where they

identified that the oldest generational group in an organization prefers a hierarchical leadership approach while the youngest was highly individualistic and willing to question the decision the leaders take (Cox, Hannif, and Rowley 2014, as cited in Rudolph et al., 2018, p. 28).

Value-based Conflicts

As another cluster of conflicts, value-based conflicts may arise within different generations. Different generations have a divergent expectation of what they value and expect regarding work. For instance, the expectations concerning work-life balance differs. (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1121). Lancaster & Stillman (2003) state that Generation X and Millennials “work to live,” whereas Boomers “live to work” (Lancaster & Stillman, 2003, as cited in Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1122). Furthermore, Twenge et al. (2010) emphasize that “Boomers put a high priority on their careers when they were young, but today’s youngest workers are more interested in making their jobs accommodate their family and personal lives” (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1123).

Another value-based conflict that is mentioned in current literature deriving around the topic are challenges regarding challenging the status quo. Younger generations are perceived as more likely to ‘think outside the box’, while older generations tend to keep things as they are. This can pose conflict and have a negative effect on collaboration. (Urick et al., 2016, p. 170).

Identity-based Conflicts

The last main theme of conflict are identity-based conflicts. Identity-based conflict occurs when there are differences between how one generation perceives its own identity and how it views the identities of other generations. (Urick et al., 2016, p. 168).

When multiple generations work together, it can create diversity within teams, which sometimes leads to tension. This tension can result in issues like higher turnover rates or lower productivity. Conflicts often arise because people naturally want to belong to a group or compare themselves to others. Generational stereotypes can be a problem because people often mimic the behaviors of their peers to fit in. But these broad generalizations can be misleading since not everyone in a generation shares the same traits. (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 9–10).

2.1.3 Existing Strategies that leaders use to navigate generational Conflicts

In the following section, various strategies used by leaders to navigate generational conflicts, including the Theory of Cooperation and Competition, communication-based approaches, mentorship, knowledge sharing, and collaboration strategies, will be elaborated.

Theory of Cooperation and Competition

Once organizations have understood the main challenges between generations, suitable strategies and measures to mitigate them can be applied. In this context, the theory of cooperation and competition offers a valuable framework for resolving generational conflicts (Deutsch 1994, Lewis, 2013, as cited in Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 11). As per Deutsch (1994), conflicts can be handled cooperatively or competitively, and their outcomes can be either constructive or destructive. The mentioned theory suggests that based off the nature of the conflict, solutions should be developed. The strategies that are chosen strongly depended on the experiences the manager has made in the past. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the application of the theory relies on the outcome of the balance between competitive and cooperative interests within the conflict. Understanding these dynamics helps organizations navigate and resolving generational conflicts. (Deutsch, 1994, as cited in Lewis, 2013, as cited in Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 11).

Communication-Based Strategies

Another often mentioned strategy to overcome generational conflicts is to foster an open and transparent way to communicate the generational tensions. Organizations need to promote open dialogue to tackle the underlying causes of identity-based conflicts, ensuring that employees from all generations feel appreciated and heard in the workplace (Malik & Shahid, 2024, p. 12). Intergenerational misunderstandings can be mitigated though utilizing open communication since for instance conversations addressing the tensions reveal each generations' "perspective and strengths" (Foley et al., 2012, as cited in Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 11). In the case that a generational conflict cannot be handled between the respective parties by themselves, a third party can be included that helps to moderate between the two. The moderator can for instance be the "higher leadership from the organization or the interdepartmental people, such as HR." (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 11–12).

Mentorship and Knowledge Sharing Strategies

As per current literature, mentoring programs are mentioned as one of the most effective ways to overcome generational conflicts. So called “reverse mentoring” programs are a special form of mentoring programs, where older employees are mentored by younger employees, for instance on topics concerning new methods. (Malik & Shahid, 2024, p. 12). Mentoring programs that bring together employees from various generations can encourage the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and expertise (Malik & Shahid, 2024, p. 12).

As per Appelbaum et al., (2022), mentoring programs fosters the development of strong relationships within teams. Additionally, the benefits of this approach are explained as it enhances the connections between employees, fostering a culture of acceptance. A mentoring environment involves both emotional and transitional interactions, where employees from different generations show genuine care for one another and cultivate mutual respect. (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 11).

Collaboration-Based Strategies

Another measure that can be taken to mitigate generational conflicts is to promote cross-generational collaboration. Organizations can intentionally design opportunities for employees from various generations to collaborate on projects and assignments. (Malik & Shahid, 2024, p. 12). The result of mixing generations within teams or projects is that they can make use of different skillsets and therefore achieve the best possible outcome (Malik & Shahid, 2024, p. 12).

Additionally, it is important for organizations to recognize that group formations are inevitable, regardless of their actions. To address this, they should focus on integrating these groups and fostering interactions among them. By doing so, organizations can help prevent the use of stereotypes as a basis for conflict. A deeper understanding of generational conflicts and how different generations influence conflict management styles is essential in managing these dynamics effectively. (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 10).

2.2 Responsible Leadership and Inclusivity

Building on the strategies for navigating generational conflicts, responsible leadership is essential for fostering inclusivity within teams. The next chapter presents the theoretical foundation of responsible leadership and inclusivity, along with key attributes of responsible leadership, such as its impact on inclusivity.

2.2.1 Theoretical Foundation of Responsible Leadership

In this section, the theoretical foundation of responsible leadership will be explored, covering its historical context, definition, the roles model, and the Competency Assessment for Responsible Leadership (CARL).

Historical context of Responsible Leadership

The need to reevaluate current leadership styles and explore new perspectives is driven by changing environmental and social dynamics (Voegtlin et al., 2012, p. 6). The term Responsible Leadership has emerged as a promising framework in response to these challenges. Responsible Leadership has been around since ancient times. The idea that leaders should be ethical, and moral exists since humanity began. Thinkers like Socrates, Plato, and Xenophon were already discussing the importance of good leadership way back in 400 BC. (Idowu et al., 2013, p. 2055). Despite its ancient origins, academically, responsible leadership is still in its early stages of development, with limited literature dedicated to it (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 102).

The modern idea of responsible leadership is built upon stakeholder theory, which emphasizes that values are an integral part of business operations. It encourages managers to define the value they generate and the factors that unite their stakeholders. Furthermore, it encourages managers to clarify their approach to business, particularly in terms of the relationships they aim to establish and maintain with stakeholders to fulfill their organizational objectives. (Freeman et al., 2004, p. 64, as cited in Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 102).

Definiton of Responsible Leadership

Responsible leadership is seen by its supporters as a growing concept that combines elements of ethics, leadership, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Ciulla, 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Doh and Stumpf, 2005a; Maak, 2007; Maak and Pless, 2006a; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Waldman and Siegel, 2008, as cited in Voegtlin et al., 2012, p. 3). As one associated proponent, one way to define ethics is that it involves learning what is right or wrong, and then doing the right thing consequently (Krishnamurthy, 2011, p. 3). This idea ties directly into leadership, where understanding what's right helps in guiding others toward shared goals. Leadership has been defined in several ways, but a widely accepted definition

describes it as a process in which an individual guides a group toward the achievement of a shared goal (Gutterman, 2023, p. 5).

Next, CSR will be elaborated, which is as explained before also tied to responsible leadership. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) involves a company's duties toward its stakeholders, encompassing individuals impacted by its policies and operations. These responsibilities extend beyond legal obligations and shareholder interests, aiming to reduce harm and enhance the firm's long-term positive effects on society. (Smith 2001, p. 142, as cited in Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019, p. 10). In this thesis, responsible leadership refers to an awareness of how one's actions affect all stakeholders, along with fostering their involvement through active dialogue. Responsible leaders aim to carefully balance the interests of various stakeholders while promoting open discussions and facilitating public engagement. (Voegtlin, 2011, as cited in Voegtlin et al., 2012 p. 6).

Leadership research has largely neglected the significance of leadership roles, especially their ethical aspects and diversity in a stakeholder environment, focusing more on traits and personality attributes instead (Bass, 1990, Black et al., 1999, as cited in Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 106). However, Responsible Leadership, rooted in stakeholder theory, distinguishes itself by including all stakeholders in decision-making, grounding itself on a normative framework that provides a strong ethical basis, its view of the leader's virtues as precursors to responsible behavior, and its emphasis on reaching consensual solutions that are accepted by all stakeholders (Habermas 1996, Voegtlin et al., 2010, as cited in Voegtlin et al., 2012, p. 4–5).

The roles model of responsible leadership

To gain a deeper insight into how responsible leadership can be practically applied, it is essential to examine the specific roles that leaders must embody. Maak and Pless developed 'The Roles Model of Responsible Leadership', which explains the different roles, responsible leaders embody to engage effectively with their stakeholders. (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 107).

At the core of responsible leadership are the fundamental qualities the leader should possess. Surrounding this core, leaders must adopt roles like visionary, servant, citizen, steward, architect, change agent, coach, and storyteller. As a visionary, the leader inspires and focuses on balanced values for sustainable practices, ensuring both economic success and societal well-being. (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 109). The servant role involves being attentive, humble, and modest, as well as genuinely willing to support and care for others' interests and needs

(Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 110). Furthermore, the citizen role indicates the leader has a duty to act as a responsible and engaged member of the organization's community, involving both public and private life (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 108). Stewardship is another function that a responsible leader undertakes, requiring the leader to protect moral principles, uphold their own and their organization's integrity, and guide the company through any difficulties in a responsible manner (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 108). For all employees to reach their fullest potential, both ethically and commercially, an inclusive culture that values diversity and treats them with respect and inclusion is an essential responsibility of a responsible leader in the role of an architect (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 111). In a stakeholder society, a responsible leader additionally serves the role of a change agent, driving and facilitating the transition to a sustainable and ethical business model. As change agents, leaders need to mobilize the cooperation of stakeholders, promote involvement, reduce uncertainty and complexity, and offer direction and stability through transitional times (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 112).

In times of ongoing change within an organization, it is essential that every employee receives the necessary development to thrive. In the role as a coach, the leader plays a vital role in supporting both individual and team growth by fostering an inclusive environment that encourages open communication and constructive conflict resolution. As a coach, it is especially important to understand and respect cultural differences. The coach helps individuals reach their full potential and provides guidance in navigating conflicts and moral dilemmas, all while serving as a strong role model. (Maak & Pless, 2006, pp. 110–111). The last role a responsible leader holds is the of the storyteller & meaning enabler. By telling stories and creating narratives, leaders can influence follower behavior within the organization, including feelings and values (Auvinen et al., 2013, p. 497).

In addition to the roles outlined, the weaver function is central to responsible leadership. The roles model highlights that a leader's role goes beyond managing different stakeholders to intertwining their diverse perspectives into the organization, ensuring that everyone is connected and aligned towards common goals. (Plato, 1971, as cited in Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 104). This comprehensive approach underscores the significance of traits, character, and stakeholder involvement in achieving successful leadership.

Competency Assessment for Responsible Leadership (CARL)

The ‘Competency Assessment for Responsible Leadership’ (CARL) is a model that evolved from the Responsible Leadership Grid, initially conceptualized by Anna Liechti and later further developed by Muff and her colleagues (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2257). The assessment tool can be used by managers to develop and evaluate their level of responsible leadership competencies. The model is organized into essential competency areas, including stakeholder engagement, ethical principles and values, self-reflection, systemic thinking, and adaptability to change and innovation. Each of which falls under three categories of action: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude. (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2254–2274).

Three elements are provided for each "Domain of Action" in the framework. For illustrative purposes, in this thesis, only one is named for each category (knowledge, skills, and attitude). The dimension of stakeholder relationships showcases the competence of a leader to effectively establish and maintain relationships with stakeholders. Examples of domains of actions include the ability to identify and integrate relevant stakeholders (knowledge), build long-term relationships (skills), and appreciate diversity (attitudes) (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2258).

Moreover, ethics and values dimension underscore the manager's need to follow moral principles and to integrate these values into their management style and decision-making processes. Domains of actions include understanding dilemmas (knowledge), acting as a role model (skills) as well as being responsible towards society and sustainability (attitude) (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2258). The self-awareness of a leader is essential for efficient leadership. This dimension involves recognizing the value of reflection in learning (knowledge), gaining insights from past errors (skills), and practicing self-reflection (attitude) (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2258).

Furthermore, systems thinking focuses on managers being able to identify complex connections and make long-term decisions. This entails grasping the functioning of systems and their interconnections (knowledge), handling complexity (skills), and offering a multi-generational outlook (attitude) (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2258). Lastly, the change and innovation dimension focus on the ability of managers to actively shape change and develop new innovative solutions. Fostering a forward-thinking and adaptable mindset (attitude) is key, alongside understanding the value of a compelling vision and the dynamic nature of change (knowledge), and the ability to generate and implement innovative solutions (skills) (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2258–2259)

2.2.2 Theoretical Foundation of Inclusivity

To transition into the theoretical foundation of inclusivity and view it in the context of responsible leadership, it is important to first understand what inclusivity stands for.

Historical context of Generational Inclusivity

According to Plato (1971), a fundamental responsibility of a leader is to cultivate inclusivity. Plato further stressed that a leader should function as a weaver, effectively bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds (Plato, 1971, as cited in Shore & Chung, 2022, p. 2). This approach underscores the leader's responsibility to foster inclusivity and collaboration, weaving together the social and organizational threads that make up a successful and ethical stakeholder society.

Definition of Inclusivity

Inclusivity is understood as providing equal opportunities for marginalized groups to actively participate and contribute, while also offering opportunities to non-marginalized groups. It aims to support all employees in being fully engaged and authentic within all levels of the organization. (Shore et al., 2018, p. 177, as cited in Mukupa et al., 2023, p. 62).

As the strategies for mitigating generational conflicts and enhancing team inclusivity are closely related, they can be applied in this context as well. For further details, please refer to section 2.1.3.

2.2.3 Connecting Responsible Leadership and Inclusivity

After conducting the theoretical foundation and historical context of responsible leadership and inclusivity, it is crucial to explore how they are intertwined. As responsible leadership is fundamentally rooted in stakeholder theory, a review of the previously discussed frameworks highlights that stakeholder orientation is a key focus area for responsible leaders. Within the roles of responsible leadership framework, especially in the roles of the architect, change agent, and coach, an emphasis is set on promoting inclusivity and cooperation amongst the team. (Maak & Pless, 2006, pp. 110–112).

Furthermore, the CARL framework indicates that a significant aspect of responsible leadership competency, particularly regarding fostering inclusivity, is the establishment and maintenance of positive stakeholder relationships, adherence to ethical and moral principles, and the capacity for systems thinking. This is because these competencies are primarily

concerned with fostering mindful and responsible collaboration within the team. (Muff et al., 2020, p. 2258).

Based on the current literature, it is evident that inclusivity is a central focus in responsible leadership. Implementing the practices outlined in these leadership models significantly enhances inclusivity within teams and organizations. For example, by focusing on stakeholder engagement and ethical decision-making, leaders ensure that all employees' perspectives are considered, which is a core aspect of inclusivity. Additionally, the concept of the leader as a "weaver," inspired by Plato and integrated into modern leadership theories, emphasizes the importance of blending diverse viewpoints to create a unified and inclusive organizational culture (Plato, 1971, as cited in Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 104).

However, there remains a need to explore whether these theoretical models of responsible leadership truly impact inclusivity in real-world scenarios and to what extent this influence is felt within organizations (Shi & Ye, 2016, p. 882).

It remains uncertain what specific actions leaders should take to promote inclusivity, and how certain well-meaning leadership behaviors or styles might unintentionally hinder inclusion instead of fostering it (Shore & Chung, 2022, p. 2). Therefore this thesis aims to answer the effect that the responsible leadership style has on inclusivity.

3 Methodology and Research

In this chapter of this thesis, the methodological approach is presented. First, the methodology and approach used for this work are discussed. Subsequently, the method of conducting interviews is explained in detail, including the creation of the interview guide, the definition and selection of experts, and the conduct of the expert interviews. Finally, the evaluation method is explained.

3.1 Research Design

The current literature on generational conflicts and team inclusivity lacks a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence how organizations scale and maintain inclusivity, especially in the context of growth and internationalization. This highlights the need for research that explores the decision-making processes and practices within companies to address these challenges. Thus, a qualitative research method is well-suited to uncover the perspectives and strategies of managers and executives that have not yet been fully examined. It is crucial to consider both the successful implementation of inclusivity measures and the barriers that prevent them, as both are equally significant. Additionally, drawing parallels to challenges encountered in other organizational practices without in-depth investigation is insufficient at this stage.

The existing knowledge on inclusivity practices often relies on literature reviews and the synthesis of existing research. This novel qualitative approach provides deeper insights and contributes to the academic discourse by capturing the real-world experiences and strategies used by leaders to foster and scale inclusivity within organizations.

3.2 Data Collection

Conducting expert interviews requires thorough preparation. To understand the influences, interviews were conducted on a semi-structured basis. Semi-structured interviews offer the benefit of allowing the conversation to explore topics flexibly, rather than strictly following a set of predefined questions as in a standard survey. This approach also enables the discussion to touch upon unexpected issues. (Adams, 2015, p. 493).

Semi-structured interviews are highly flexible, allowing conversations to shift naturally between topics. If the discussion moves unexpectedly, it's easy to adjust and revisit skipped

topics later without adhering to a strict sequence. This format also provides space for interviewees to share their knowledge and experiences more freely, making it an effective tool for gathering in-depth insights. (Adams, 2015, p. 498).

In collaboration with Professor Moreira da Cruz, four key criteria were established for selecting the interviewees:

1. The participants should be from at least three different countries.
2. The interviewees should represent at least three different industries.
3. Each interviewee should have at least 10 years of professional experience.
4. The group should be evenly balanced between male and female participants.

Following the establishment of these criteria, one interviewee was identified through the professor’s network, while the other candidates were approached and invited to participate via LinkedIn. A total of 26 potential candidates were contacted, of whom seven agreed to participate in the interviews, resulting in a total of eight interviews. As depicted below, a total of eight interviews were conducted, fulfilling the defined criteria.

Sample Selection of Interview Participants						
#	Name	Industry	Role	Country	Gender	Experience
1.	Interviewee A	Legal Service Industry	Senior Partner, Chairman	Portugal	Male	30 years
2.	Interviewee B	Retail Sector	Store Operations Director	Germany	Female	15 years
3.	Interviewee C	Consulting	IT Director	Germany	Male	12 years
4.	Interviewee D	Consulting	HR Director	Germany	Female	30 years
5.	Interviewee E	IT-Start-up	Founder and CEO	Germany	Male	11 years
6.	Interviewee F	Energy	Business Development Manager	United Arab Emirates	Male	22 years
7.	Interviewee G	Consulting	Head of Learning and Development	United States of America	Female	17 years
8.	Interviewee H	Manufacturing	Teaming Specialist	Canada	Female	19 years

Table 2: Sample Selection of Interview Participant, Source: Author’s construction

To ensure the smooth running of the interviews, a guideline was established based on the theory of interviews and the comprehensive literature review from the previous chapter. Before the conduction of the eight interviews, three test-runs were conducted with fellow students to assure that all questions are understandable and were adjusted accordingly. The objective of the formulated questions was to address the research questions defined in advance. Moreover, the use of an interview guide ensures that the same information is obtained across multiple interviews and that all defined topics are covered in each session, as outlined in the table below. (Adams, 2015, pp. 496–498)

Interview Guideline	
Research Question 1: What strategies can leaders employ to navigate generational conflicts within a team?	1. What specific challenges have you encountered in the past due to generational differences within your team?
	2. What strategies or measures has your leader implemented to address these generational conflicts?
	3. What have you noticed as positive or negative aspects of the strategies your leader has implemented to address these generational conflicts?
Research Question 2: How does a responsible leadership approach influence team inclusivity?	4. Are you familiar with the concept of responsible leadership as described? If so, how have you encountered or practiced it in your role?
	5. Can you provide specific examples of responsible leadership actions that have successfully enhanced team inclusivity?
	6. Have you observed any differences in team inclusivity when a responsible leadership approach is applied or not?

Table 3: Interview Guideline, Source: Author's construction

The questions are constructed in an open ended manner, so that the participants can share their ideas and experiences openly (Gioia et al., 2013 p. 17).

As depicted in the overview above, Questions one to three are focused on the challenges that arise due to generational conflicts, strategic measures that mitigate them and respectively the evaluation of its application. Furthermore, questions four to six are about the interviewee's familiarity of the topic of responsible leader, specific actions they have applied in that sense and observations on the differences on inclusivity if the leadership style is approached or not. At the beginning of the interviews, key concepts were explained to all participants to ensure they were familiar with the terms and context. The eight expert interviews were held virtually on Teams between July 4th and August 21st, with the length of each interview varying between 30 and 45

minutes, depending on the length of the participants' responses. With the consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed with the support of AI-based tools. Since four interviews were conducted in German and four in English, the German interviews were translated into English using the translation tool DeepL to ensure consistency across all responses. The individual interview transcripts can be made available upon request, allowing for greater transparency and enabling the validation of the research outcomes.

3.3 Data Analysis

To analyze the conducted interviews, the Gioia Method was chosen. Since the main aim of the concept is to give an adequate account of the informants' experience, this approach is appropriate to gather the information necessary to answer the established research questions (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17). The Gioia-Method is designed to derive new theories and concepts inductively. This inductive approach means that data is gathered and then patterns are identified and then hypothesis are formulated based on the findings. (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17). In the following three steps, the interview transcripts were analyzed in the following way:

1st-Order Concepts

First, interviews were read repeatedly, and then open coding was used, conceptualizing the participants' direct quotes. These quotes represent the 1st order concepts. The aim of the first step of the Gioia Method is to categorize the data by forming coding units which are equal to single statements (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20).

2nd-Order Themes

The following step in the analysis involves identifying patterns and grouping the 1st-Order Concepts into more abstract categories. In this stage, multiple 1st-Order concepts are combined and transformed into themes using the author's own language, drawing parallels to Strauss and Corbin's 1998 idea of axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, as cited in Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20). Moreover, in the 2nd-order analysis, the focus shifts to the theoretical level, considering whether the emerging themes point to concepts that could aid in explaining the observed phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, as cited in Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20).

Aggregate Dimensions

In the end, the identified 2nd-Order themes are consolidated again by the researcher. That is done through the examination if the identified 2nd-Order themes can be further refined into broader, 2nd-Order aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20).

The summarized data structure represents the model that explains the research questions explored in this study: *what strategies can leaders employ to navigate generational conflicts within a team, and how does a responsible leadership approach influence team inclusivity?*

4 Findings

This chapter outlines the findings from the comprehensive analysis of the expert interviews conducted in this study. The findings are structured according to the Gioia method. They are individual representations of opinions and experiences. Through the interviews, a total of 104 direct quotes from the eight participants were identified and subsequently grouped into 35 1st-order concepts. These represent literal quotes from all eight interviews. After that, the 1-st order items were analyzed, to see if a pattern in the answers had occurred. The first-order items were consolidated into abstract 2nd order themes. In total, 14 Second-order themes were identified. These 2nd order themes were then consolidated again, resulting into five aggregate dimensions, explaining the research questions of what strategies leaders can employ to navigate generational conflicts within a team and how a responsible leadership approach influences team inclusivity. The five aggregate dimensions are the following: *Generational Dynamic Differences, Change Management, Values and Priorities at Work, Team Inclusivity Measures and Responsible Practices and Inclusivity*. A detailed overview of the data structure is presented in Figure 1 on page 25. Appendix A contains an excel file, displaying the analysis conducted, assuring additional external validity. Furthermore, it is important to mention that in the interviews, participants consistently referred to ‘younger’ and ‘older’ generations. In this context, ‘younger’ was defined as those in their 20s and early 30s, while ‘older’ referred to those in their late 40s, 50s, and beyond.

4.1 Generational Dynamic Differences

Generational dynamic differences form the first aggregate dimension. The interview participants mentioned the varying preferences regarding communication, divergent leadership expectations such as the cultural influences on generational conflicts.

Generational Communication Challenges

Through the conducted interviews, interviewees such as A and F have mentioned generational communication challenges. These for one seem to arise since younger generations seem to favor digital communication whilst older employees prefer face-to-face interaction. According to the interviews this is a very present issue, since different communication preferences lead to misunderstandings and conflict (Interviewees A, B). Additionally, interviewee A mentioned that often the objectives align, however, the way in which the

objective is communicated and addressed differs. Interviewee F pointed out that these issues are not always major, but they can cause significant conflicts in teams, if not handled correctly.

Divergent Leadership Expectations

In addition to communication challenges, the interviewees often mentioned that the leadership expectations each generation holds deviate strongly, which hinder effective collaboration. Furthermore, in the interviews it was described multiple times that younger employees seem to prefer a collaborative and relaxed leadership, while older generations expect an authoritarian and hierarchical leadership approach (Interviewees A, B, C, G). However, interviewee C also pointed out that this is not always the case, as leadership styles can vary within generations. For instance, while younger employees may generally prefer collaborative leadership, there are older employees who also value this style, and vice versa. Interviewees A and G mentioned that therefore, “leadership must adapt to diverse generational expectations”. Moreover, some interviewees empathized that the aim of a leader should be to provide direction, whilst allowing autonomy, recognizing that multiple approaches are valued differently across generations (Interviewees A, G).

Cultural Influences on Generation Conflicts

The cultural backgrounds of each colleague heavily influence how generational conflicts are addressed in a team. For instance, interviewee F mentioned that in a conflict, due to cultural differences, his Asian colleagues prefer to maintain silent instead of raising an argument with American colleagues. A further example provided in the interviews is in whether a conflict is handled indirectly or directly. Interviewee G mentioned, that in her experience Americans like to face conflicts rather directly, whereas Asians tend to be more indirect. Interviewees F, G and H, all agreed that the cultural background and culture impacts the way team members deal with conflicts. Also, interviewee F mentioned, that it depends strongly on the personality of the employee, how conflicts are dealt with and that it is essential to act careful towards different cultures when it comes to conflicts with different cultures to minimize misunderstandings.

4.2 Change-Management

Next, Change Management, which summarizes the challenges and strategies that relate to changes, taken by a team or organization, is portrayed. Interview partners primary mentioned the topics of Technological and Process Adaptation and Resistance.

Technological Adaptation and Resistance

The interviewees raised concern about change management regarding technological changes as a conflict that occurs. Interviewee B mentioned how in his team, the introduction of new technical solutions often makes “older generations feel overwhelmed by the pace of tech changes”. Furthermore, it has been mentioned that especially, if these changes are pushed by younger colleagues, it causes distress amongst older employees (Interviewee C). Moreover, multiple participants mentioned, that older employees often resist the adaption of new systems and „younger employees see older colleagues as stuck in their old ways, while older ones view them as too tech-reliant” (Interviewees B, C, D). As an example, Interviewee D elaborated that the adjustment to new working methods such as communicating virtually via Teams has been accepted differently amongst generations, which has led to conflict and frustration. Lastly, the candidates mentioned that new technical solutions need to be implemented whilst keeping all employees on board (Interviewee H).

Process Adaptation and Resistance

According to the interviews, changes regarding the organization and teams often lead to challenges (Interviewee A, Interviewee B, Interviewee G). In the interviews the participants described that especially older employees resist change regarding new processes and that the adoption to new working methods lead to varied acceptance across generations (Interviewees B, E, H). “Mature colleagues often resist change regarding new processes” (Interviewee D). Unmanaged conflict leads to frustration, group formation, and exclusion, emphasized interviewee G. Consequently, “Managing change requires understanding generational expectations” (Interviewee A).

4.3 Values and Priorities at Work

The third aggregate dimension resulting from the analysis of the conducted interviews summarizes the values and priorities of work. The data shows that the dimension of values and priorities at work, discussing divergent work-life balance expectations and perceptions of work ethics such as balancing experience and innovation, weighs into the formation of generational conflicts formation.

Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations

Interviewee D and Interviewee B state that in their perception, younger employees prefer flexibility and an integration of work and their private life, while older employees value stability and a clear separation of the two. Additionally, it is mentioned, that "younger generations value work-life balance more "(Interviewee H). These differing expectations around work-life balance display potential for conflict regarding collaboration, if not all employees prioritize the same aspects in life (Interviewee D).

Divergent Perceptions of Work Ethics

The participants expressed divergent perceptions of work ethics, highlighting notable differences in work ethic across generations (Interviewees C, D, F).

Interviewee G stated, "Generational work ethic clashes: older employees seek structure, younger one's value flexibility, causing workplace tensions". Additionally, Interviewee C commented that often stereotypes are present regarding work ethics, older generations are generally perceived as more ambitious than the younger generations. The participant however also mentioned that stereotypes are not always accurate, however that they are very present in people's minds. Interviewee D said that the expectation regarding the performance and level of fulfillment the job brings is different between the younger and older generations. He mentioned that no matter which age group one of his employees belongs to, he expects the same performance: "You can pull your weight for eight hours and then drop the shift. But in those eight hours you have to work towards the team's goals." Furthermore, in one of the interviews it has been stated that the expectation of "how long and how hard" is being worked is different for all age groups and that it is important that these differences are noted to mitigate conflicts and misunderstandings (Interviewee C).

Balancing Experience and Innovation

In the interviews, it was noted multiple times that maintaining a balance between the drive to innovate—primarily driven by younger generations—and the experience and established know-how of older generations is crucial. It's essential to leverage both the creative, fresh ideas that younger generations bring and the deep-rooted knowledge of the more experienced generations (Interviewees C, G).

Interviewee C indicated this by stating, “The challenge is balancing this dynamic while ensuring mutual respect and appreciation between generations.” Interviewee D added that older generations sometimes feel their experience is undervalued, which can create tension in a multigenerational team. Managing this balance, particularly through knowledge management tools that preserve the collective expertise, is a significant challenge. According to Interviewee A, this can be supported through workshops and specific initiatives.

4.4 Team Inclusivity Measures

The following discusses Team Inclusivity Measures addressing generational conflicts and promoting cohesion, with a focus on mentorship programs, non-work activities, and most importantly, deliberate team mixing, as illustrated in the data mapping interpretation.

Mentoring Programs

Five out of eight interview partners highlighted mentoring programs in an organization or team as an effective way to bridge generational gaps in skills and perspectives (Interviewees A, B, F, G, H). Interviewee A emphasized the importance of mentoring, particularly in sustaining know-how within the company and providing younger colleagues with valuable insights. In Interviewee B's discussion, it was noted that mentoring programs play a crucial role in fostering team cohesion, especially for new colleagues, as they help them network and avoid feeling isolated. Additionally, Interviewee G mentioned that implementing mentoring programs helps employees adjust more easily to organizational changes, such as new processes and technology. As a specific form of mentoring, two participants mentioned their experience with reverse mentoring as a method that fosters mutual learning and inclusivity across generations (Interviewees F, G). Interviewee F stated, “Reverse mentoring not only keeps more mature colleagues up to date regarding technologies and trends, but it also

enhances inclusivity and lowers hierarchical barriers, paving the way for an atmosphere of continuous learning and mutual respect.” Below, an overview of the conducted Gioia analysis can be found, explaining the key insights that emerged from the interviews.



Figure 1: Data Mapping and Interpretation Using the Gioia Framework, Source: Author's construction (see Appendix A)

Non-Work-Related Team Activities and Events

Interviewees A, B, C, and D pointed out that non-work-related team activities and events positively impact team inclusivity and cohesion. Interviewee A mentioned, "Social events, like team dinners or weekend retreats, help build personal connections among team members." The participants emphasized that it is crucial for these activities to be non-work-related because, in their opinion, only in this setting can team members truly get to know each other's characters and build personal connections, which is beneficial for professional collaboration (Interviewees D, F, G, H).

All participants noted that they regularly conduct team activities and events, such as team dinners or festive parties like Christmas celebrations. Another aspect that was underscored is that the social and personal nature of these events helps to break down barriers and stigmas between age groups, fostering an inclusive and supportive team culture (Interviewees F, G, H). Interviewee E added that these team-building events are especially crucial for maintaining inclusivity and cohesion when a new team member joins. Besides the already mentioned positive effects, Interviewee A stated that these activities and events reduced turnover rates, attracted more candidates to the company, and improved its overall reputation.

Deliberate Team Mixing

In total, five out of eight participants stated that they have faced the issue of group formations within age groups (Interviewees A, B, C, G, H). Four of the eight interview partners pointed out that through the deliberate mixing of colleagues from different generations with different backgrounds and levels of experiences, mitigates the issue of isolated groups forming (Interviewees B, C, G, H). "Integration is fostered through shared projects and initiatives" stated interviewee G. In addition, interviewee G provided an example of a project where deliberate team mixing was implemented: "The team, composed of members from different generations and backgrounds, was able to deliver innovative solutions that exceeded expectations, highlighting the value of diverse perspectives." However, Interviewee H acknowledged that there was initial resistance to mixing teams, especially from older employees who were used to working within their familiar constellations. She also added: "But in the end, after seeing the positive outcomes of increased innovation and improved team dynamics, the resistance vanished, and the practice became more widely accepted."

4.5 Responsible Practices and Inclusivity

The last dimension encompasses responsible practices that influence team inclusivity, including the themes of responsible leadership, scaling inclusivity, and social engagement.

Responsible Leadership promotes Inclusivity

Four of the eight interviewees mentioned their familiarity with the term “responsible leadership” (Interviewees A, G, H, F). Interviewee C stated that she is familiar with “inclusive leadership,” such as “humanized leadership” and “servant leadership,” and noted that the concept of responsible leadership seems to be defined by similar attributes. Regarding how the application of responsible leadership influences inclusivity, Interviewee H stated, “Responsible leadership enhances team inclusivity by involving everyone in decision-making, fostering loyalty and collaboration.” Furthermore, it was emphasized that responsible leadership is key to building a strong and successful team (Interviewees G, H). Additionally, one participant noted that, in his experience, a responsible leader fosters a culture of loyalty and connectivity among team members (Interviewee F). Interviewee G stressed that in her current company, responsible leadership practices still need to be developed. She also showcased the importance of integrity and transparency for building trust and team cohesion. A different perspective on the effect of responsible leadership on team inclusivity was offered by interviewee D: “No matter what leadership style is applied, if the work ethic varies significantly between older and younger employees, achieving true inclusivity becomes difficult. These differences hinder the creation of an inclusive culture, especially when younger employees are perceived as less committed or structured.”

Scaling Inclusivity

The following section addresses the scalability of inclusivity measures mentioned in the conducted interviews. This was viewed as a relevant theme by four interviewees (Interviewees A, E, F, G). Interviewees A and C highlighted that as a company grows, it becomes significantly more difficult to maintain an integrative environment across the organization. One participant noted, “As the company grows, it becomes increasingly challenging to maintain personal connections due to cultural differences and physical distance.” Interviewee C shared an example from her company, which is expanding across continents, noting the challenge of integrating everyone and maintaining the sense of being one cohesive company. Interviewee G emphasized that maintaining inclusivity as an organization expands requires

ongoing adaptation and development, stating, "Scaling and diversifying requires evolving inclusivity to sustain cohesion." This theme was noted as a challenge, particularly in the context of organizational growth and international expansion.

Social engagement promotes Inclusivity

The third aspect predominantly mentioned throughout the interviews that promote inclusivity is responsible practices. Four interviewees stressed that social engagement promotes inclusivity within teams and organizations (Interviewees A, C, F, G). Interviewee A provided the example that in his company, they host community dinners where they invite people in need. Through this initiative, inclusivity within the team and the community is promoted, while also fostering a sense of responsibility and sensitivity toward these individuals, according to him. In addition, Interviewee C mentioned that at her company, they conduct regular social responsibility initiatives in their free time, such as picking up trash along the Rhine River. She stressed that this activity helps bring together people who might not normally interact, regardless of their position in the hierarchy. She noted that sometimes a managing director will do an activity like this alongside an intern. The impact of these programs was summarized by Interviewee F: "When leadership prioritizes social responsibility, inclusivity thrives, creating a sense of belonging for all."

5 Discussion

This chapter discusses the comparison of interview findings with the literature review, explores practical implications and strategic recommendations, addresses the study's limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

5.1 Comparison of findings of conducted interviews with the literature review

This thesis aims to uncover how leaders navigate conflicts within a team and how the application of a responsible leadership style the team inclusivity influences. Using a qualitative approach and the Gioia method, five key dimensions emerged: Generational Dynamic Differences, Change Management, Values and Priorities at Work, Team Inclusivity Measures, and Responsible Practices and Inclusivity. These dimensions answer the research questions and accentuate the complex interconnectivity between them. The conducted interviews provide an in-depth insight into these topics. The findings from the interviews are hereafter compared with the current literature.

Generational Dynamic Differences

When comparing these findings with the literature, it's clear that differences in communication preferences and leadership expectations are commonly identified as sources of conflict between generations. Literature indicates that younger generations tend to prefer digital communication, while older generations favor face-to-face interactions. (Lewis, 2013, as cited in Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 9). This observation was confirmed in the interviews, where participants showcased similar communication challenges. Both the literature and the interviews pointed out that younger employees generally prefer a more collaborative leadership style, while older generations lean towards a hierarchical approach (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1122).

However, one notable point that emerged from the interviews concerns leaders that are significantly younger than their employees. The age gap can lead to potential conflicts, a nuance that isn't explicitly addressed in the reviewed literature.

Furthermore, one aspect that stood out in the literature but didn't receive as much attention in the interviews is the expectation of feedback as a common source of generational conflict. While the literature frequently mentions this issue, it was only pointed out in one of the eight interviews, suggesting that its relevance might be overstated in this context.

Moreover, the interviews unexpectedly highlighted the significant impact of cultural differences on generational conflicts, an issue that wasn't as prominently addressed in the existing literature. This suggests that cultural influences may play a larger role in generational dynamics than previously recognized. Considering that the study is based on a small sample size of only eight interviews, the deviations observed may be attributed to random variation rather than a significant trend (Flyvbjerg, 2006, as cited in Soelberg et al., 2023, p. 60).

Change Management

The findings on change management, particularly regarding technological adaptation and process changes, align with the literature's discussion on the challenges organizations and teams face when new technologies and processes are introduced. Literature notes that older generations often resist technological changes while younger employees embrace them (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 11). This was echoed by the interview participants, who elaborated that older employees oftentimes feel overwhelmed by the pace of changes regarding technological changes, especially if they are driven by younger colleagues. As suggested in the literature, leaders must make sure that transitional periods of change are managed carefully, to avoid the emergence of conflicts (Rudolph et al., 2018, p. 13). The findings from the conducted interviews support this and further indicate that poor change management can lead to frustration, groups formation and exclusion, as pointed out by interview partner G. This underscores the practical relevance of the theoretical concepts discussed in the literature review and points out the importance of effective change management in maintaining intergenerational harmony within teams.

Values and Priorities at Work

The differences in work-life balance expectations and perceptions of work ethics among generations, as discussed in the findings, align closely with the literature. The literature highlighted that younger generations prioritize work-life balance more than older generations, who tend to place a higher value on job stability and long-term career growth (Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1121). The findings of the interviews also recognize that younger employees value flexibility and an integration of work and private life whilst older employees value stability and a clear differentiation of the two. Furthermore, the literature mentions that generation differences in work ethics can lead to workplace tensions (Urick et al., 2016, p. 170).

The findings of the interviews confirm that stereotypes about work ethic exist in the workplace and can lead to conflicts, with older generations seen as more ambitious and younger generations valuing flexibility. While this has been mentioned in the literature, the interviews revealed the extent of these conflicts, as emphasized by several interview partners.

Additionally, both, the literature review and the interviews show that group formation is a source of conflict that arises between generations. However, as mentioned in the interviews, it is natural for groups to form within teams. The challenge lies in managing these group dynamics to prevent them from leading to exclusion or conflict (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 10). The interviews also revealed the importance of balancing innovation, often driven by younger colleagues, with the experience of older employee, an area that wasn't deeply explored in the literature review.

While the literature acknowledges that younger generations are more likely to question the status quo and introduce innovations and older generations offer valuable experience, the interviews showcased the practical challenges of merging these strengths as a generational challenge. Participants argued that older employees sometimes feel undervalued when their experience is not recognized, while younger employees may feel restricted if their innovative ideas are not appreciated. This comparison emphasizes that leaders must carefully find a way to embrace both strengths of the generational groups ensuring that both complemented effectively (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 10; Twenge et al., 2010, p. 1122). These findings highlight the ongoing relevance of the concepts discussed in the literature, suggesting that these generational differences are deeply ingrained and continue to impact workplace dynamics.

Team Inclusivity Measures

Next, the literature will be compared with the findings regarding strategies leaders can employ to overcome conflicts and foster inclusivity within teams. When comparing both literature and the interview respondents, it becomes clear that the suggested measure of mentoring programs and deliberate mixing theoretically and practically effective in addressing generational conflicts and promoting inclusivity with the teams. The literature review underscores the importance of mentoring programs in bridging generational gaps and the findings confirmed that these programs are effective in promoting team cohesion and inclusivity (Malik & Shahid, 2024, p. 12). Similarly, the deliberate mixing of team members from different generations, as

a strategy to prevent group formation and promote integration, was discussed in the literature and validated by your interviewees (Appelbaum et al., 2022, p. 10).

However, a strategy not explicitly mentioned in the literature but stressed as highly effective in the interviews is the implementation of non-work-related team activities and events. In the interviews the participants emphasize that it is essential for a team to get to know each other outside of the work environment in order to work together effectively. The findings from the interview indicate that these activities are among the most effective ways to overcome generation conflict and stigmas and promote team cohesion and inclusivity within teams. It is important to note that the extent to which these activities are implemented varies depending on the company's strategy and the value placed on interpersonal connections. For instance, interviewee A, from a lawyer firm said that their company organizes annual vacations to foster team spirit, reflecting a strong commitment to this approach. In contrast, interviewee B, from a discounter retailer mentioned that their budget for such events is limited, and therefore, the emphasis on these activities is not as strong. This variation highlights that the prioritization of inclusivity strategies often depends on the company's overall strategic direction and available resources. This finding provides a starting point for future research, exploring how different organizations balance these strategies, depending on their specific circumstances and objectives.

Responsible Practices and Inclusivity

The discussion around responsible leadership practices in the findings aligns well with the literature's emphasis on the role of responsible leadership in promoting inclusivity. The literature highlighted that responsible leadership, which includes elements like ethical decision-making and stakeholder engagement, is crucial for fostering an inclusive workplace environment (Maak & Pless, 2006, pp. 110–112). The findings of this thesis supported this, with interviewees noting that practices, such as involving everyone in decision-making and fostering loyalty and collaboration, indeed enhance team inclusivity.

However, the findings also revealed some challenges not fully explored in the literature. For instance, Interviewee D mentioned that regardless of leadership style, if the work ethic varies significantly between older and younger employees, achieving true inclusivity becomes difficult. This suggests that while responsible leadership is important, it may not be sufficient on its own to address all the challenges related to inclusivity, particularly those stemming from deep-seated generational differences in work ethic.

Additionally, one interviewee noted that not everyone desires the same level of inclusion. Some employees simply want to perform their tasks and then leave work. Thus, it is important for a company to define how much inclusivity they wish to foster, as discussed earlier.

The findings on scaling inclusivity also add a new dimension to the discussion, pointing out the challenges of maintaining an inclusive environment as organizations grow and expand internationally. This was less emphasized in the literature minorly, suggesting a potential area for further research.

Furthermore, social engagement, activities like those highlighted by Interviewee D, such as organizing community events, promote inclusivity by uniting team members across generational and hierarchical lines. These activities foster a shared sense of purpose and community, helping to break down barriers and build stronger, more inclusive teams. However, this aspect of social engagement is not as prominently addressed in the current literature. While the literature review emphasizes more traditional strategies, such as mentoring programs and non-work-related activities for building team cohesion, it does not extensively cover the role of social responsibility initiatives in enhancing inclusivity. This suggests a gap in the existing research, pinpointing an area where practical, community-oriented actions could play a significant role in fostering inclusivity within organizations.

Summary to answer Research Question 1: What strategies can leaders employ to navigate generational conflicts within a team?

After comparing the current literature with real-world scenarios gathered through diverse interviews across various industries, age groups, and backgrounds, it can be concluded that leaders can navigate generational conflicts predominantly by blending communication methods, implementing mentoring programs, and organizing non-work activities. These strategies help to strengthen team cohesion and address generational differences.

Summary to answer Research Question 2: How does a responsible leadership approach influence team inclusivity?

The comparison also showed that a responsible leadership approach supports team inclusivity by involving everyone in decision-making and fostering collaboration. However, the findings suggest that this approach may not fully resolve issues when significant differences in work ethics exist across generations, highlighting the need to adapt strategies as organizations grow to maintain inclusivity.

5.2 Practical Implications and Strategic Recommendations

The findings of this thesis offer several practical implications for organizations seeking to navigate generational conflicts and foster inclusivity within their teams. First, leaders should be aware of the diverse communication preferences and leadership expectations across different generations.

To bridge these gaps, it is recommended that organizations implement a blended communication strategy that accommodates both digital and face-to-face interactions, as supported by interview findings. Practical steps could include organizing regular team meetings that combine virtual and in-person formats and encouraging mentorship programs or buddy systems to promote interaction between different generations. This ensures smoother collaboration and reduces potential conflicts, as discussed in the interviews, where deliberate team mixing, and mentorship were showcased as effective strategies.

Furthermore, mentoring programs have proven to be an effective strategy for bridging generational gaps. Organizations should consider formalizing these programs, encouraging both traditional and reverse mentoring, where younger employees can also mentor older colleagues, particularly in areas such as technology. This approach not only enhances skill transfer but also strengthens team cohesion and mutual respect among team members.

Additionally, deliberate team mixing, and non-work-related activities have emerged as powerful tools for fostering inclusivity. Leaders are encouraged to promote cross-generational collaboration by intentionally creating mixed teams for projects. Moreover, investing in non-work-related activities, such as social events or community service projects, can help break down generational barriers and create a more inclusive and cohesive work environment (Eshete & Amentie, 2024, p. 18). However, the extent to which these activities are implemented may vary based on the company's strategic priorities and available resources. Strategically, it is crucial for organizations to clearly define their approach to inclusivity. As the findings suggest, not all employees may seek the same level of inclusion. Therefore, companies should tailor their strategies to balance the need for inclusivity with respect for individual preferences. For instance, allowing some degree of flexibility in participation in team-building activities can accommodate different comfort levels while still promoting a unified team culture.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This study is based on semi-structured interviews with participants from different industries and backgrounds. Consequently, the results are inherently subjective and reflect the specific experiences and perceptions of the participants involved. Additionally, it is crucial to take into account that the research offers a brief overview of how teams are presently managing generational conflicts and how effective leadership impacts team inclusion.

The diversity in industries and roles among the participants, from legal services to retail, consulting, IT startups, energy, and manufacturing—adds richness to the data but also introduces variability that might not be representative of all sectors. Additionally, the geographic spread, ranging from Germany and Portugal to the United States, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates, while offering broad perspectives, might limit the applicability of the findings in other cultural contexts.

Further, the study is based on eight interviews with individuals who have at least 10 years of experience in their respective fields. While this provides a solid foundation of insights from professionals, it also means that the perspectives captured might be more reflective of those with significant career experience, potentially overlooking insights from younger professionals. Moreover, these findings might not be generalized, as what works for some organizations and teams may not apply universally. The findings also represent a specific point in time, generational dynamics and leadership practices can evolve, so what's relevant today might shift as workplace cultures and societal norms change.

Moreover, in qualitative research, outliers, individuals whose perspectives and experiences differ from the majority, may emerge. With only eight interviews conducted, this relatively small sample size underscores a common limitation of qualitative analysis, where the findings may not be as robust or generalizable. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, as cited in Soelberg et al., 2023, p. 60). Ideally, a much larger sample, perhaps 100 interviews or more, would be needed to strengthen the validity of the results, though this is often impractical in such research (Flyvbjerg, 2006, as cited in Soelberg et al., 2023, p. 60).

Furthermore, it is important to consider the possibility of interviewer bias and the reliance on self-reported data, as both elements may have the ability to impact the overall findings (Soelberg et al., 2023, p. 151). To summarize, although this study provides compelling insights, it is important to consider these limitations when applying the findings to wider situations.

5.4 Directions for Future Research

Given the limitations discussed, future research could explore several key areas. First, expanding studies to include a broader range of cultural and organizational contexts, especially in non-Western countries, could offer valuable insights. This would help determine whether the strategies identified, including those related to responsible leadership, are universally applicable or need adaptation to fit different cultural norms. Understanding how responsible leadership influences inclusivity across diverse settings could provide globally relevant recommendations.

Another important area is the role of technology in generational conflicts and inclusivity. As digital tools evolve, examining how different generations adapt and how this affects team dynamics could yield deeper insights into effective change management. Research could also investigate how responsible leadership can facilitate smoother technological transitions, ensuring inclusivity across generations. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in these dynamics over time would offer valuable perspectives on how they evolve with organizational and technological shifts. Additionally, future research should examine the impact of social responsibility initiatives on team inclusivity, particularly with the guidance of responsible leadership. While this study highlighted the importance of community engagement, this area is underexplored in the literature. Exploring how responsible leadership drives these initiatives and how they help break down generational barriers could provide practical guidance for enhancing inclusivity. Lastly, addressing the challenges of maintaining inclusivity as organizations grow and expand internationally could be a focus, particularly within the framework of responsible leadership. Investigating how large, multinational organizations can sustain an inclusive environment across diverse contexts would be a valuable contribution. Further exploration into managing significant differences in work ethics across generations, within the context of responsible leadership, could offer more tailored solutions for fostering inclusivity in diverse teams.

6 Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore two key research questions: *What strategies can leaders employ to navigate generational conflicts within a team, and how does a responsible leadership approach influence team inclusivity?* By combining a thorough literature review with qualitative interviews, the research aimed to provide practical insights into these questions and offer strategies for leaders in today's dynamic workplace environments. The conducted interviews encompassing the topics delivered valuable insights, presenting those generational differences, particularly in communication styles and leadership expectations, represent significant sources of conflict within teams. Younger generations tend to favor digital communication and a more collaborative leadership style, while older generations often prefer face-to-face interactions and lean towards hierarchical structures. This divergence creates friction, as team members struggle to align their expectations and working methods. A specific conflict arises when younger leaders manage older employees, a dynamic that can lead to tensions due to differences in leadership expectations, an issue not thoroughly explored in existing literature. The discussion also underscores that the strategies aimed at resolving generational conflicts, such as mentoring programs, deliberate team-mixing, and non-work activities, not only help mitigate tensions but also enhance inclusivity within teams. By facilitating knowledge sharing across generations and encouraging collaboration, these initiatives help bridge divides between younger and older employees, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect. For example, mentoring programs, particularly reverse mentoring allow younger employees to share insights on technology, while older employees contribute their experience, thus balancing innovation and expertise.

Despite these strategies, generational differences in work ethics remain a point of contention, as older and younger employees often hold contrasting views on commitment and work-life balance. Responsible leadership, which promotes inclusivity and collaboration, can improve team dynamics, yet it may not be sufficient to fully resolve conflicts rooted in deeply ingrained work values. Additionally, while inclusivity can be strengthened through responsible leadership, maintaining it as organizations scale and expand internationally presents new challenges. Non-work activities and social engagement emerged as effective ways to bridge generational gaps, fostering stronger cohesion and reducing tensions, though these strategies are less prominent in the existing literature. These insights offer a clearer understanding of the complexities involved in managing generational conflicts while fostering an inclusive work environment.

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8 Appendix A

Data Mapping and Interpretation Using the Gioia Framework			
Quote	1st Order Concept	2nd Order Theme	Aggregate Dimension
"Difference in communication preferences; younger employees prefer digital communication, while older employees prefer face-to-face." (Regina)	Younger employees favor digital communication; older employees prefer face-to-face interaction	Generational Communication Challenges	Generational Dynamic Differences
"There's a clear difference in communication preferences—older colleagues value face-to-face meetings, while the younger generation prefers quick chats via digital platforms." (Milena)	Younger employees favor digital communication; older employees prefer face-to-face interaction	Generational Communication Challenges	Generational Dynamic Differences
"We've noticed that younger employees lean more toward email and instant messaging, while older staff members still prefer to discuss matters in person." (Joao)	Younger employees favor digital communication; older employees prefer face-to-face interaction	Generational Communication Challenges	Generational Dynamic Differences

<p>"Sometimes what younger employees think is a quick message turns into a misunderstanding because older colleagues prefer more formal communication." (Robert)</p>	<p>Different Communication preferences lead to misunderstandings</p>	<p>Generational Communication Challenges</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Communication preferences differ significantly across generations, leading to misunderstandings." (Regina)</p>	<p>Different Communication preferences lead to misunderstandings</p>	<p>Generational Communication Challenges</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"The objectives are sometimes the same but the way people communicate that is quite different." (Mujeer)</p>	<p>Objectives align, but communication styles differ</p>	<p>Generational Communication Challenges</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Everyone agrees on the direction, but how we get there is often debated because communication styles differ."(Joao)</p>	<p>Objectives align, but communication styles differ</p>	<p>Generational Communication Challenges</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Leadership style differences often lead to conflicts when managing a multi-generational team." (Robert)</p>	<p>Differing leadership styles hinder effective collaboration</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Leadership style differences can make collaboration difficult." (Milena)</p>	<p>Differing leadership styles hinder effective collaboration</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>

<p>"When leadership styles don't align with generational expectations, team collaboration becomes challenging, especially when managing multi-generational teams." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Differing leadership styles hinder effective collaboration</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Older employees are used to a more authoritarian leadership style, while younger employees prefer a partnership-based approach." (Milena)</p>	<p>Younger employees prefer collaborative and relaxed leadership; older generations expect authoritarian and hierarchical leadership</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Older employees are used to different leadership styles, and then a younger person comes in who leads in a much more relaxed way. That can be challenging." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>Younger employees prefer collaborative and relaxed leadership; older generations expect authoritarian and hierarchical leadership</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>

<p>"Younger employees prefer a more flexible and less hierarchical approach, where they have a say in decisions and are encouraged to be innovative, while older employees might expect a more structured environment with clearly defined roles." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Younger employees prefer collaborative and relaxed leadership; older generations expect authoritarian and hierarchical leadership</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Younger employees expect more involvement in decisions and a less hierarchical approach, which can clash with the more directive style older employees are familiar with." (Joao)</p>	<p>Younger employees prefer collaborative and relaxed leadership; older generations expect authoritarian and hierarchical leadership</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"The challenge is in finding a leadership style that works for both younger and older employees." (Robert)</p>	<p>Leadership must adapt to diverse generational expectations</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Leadership must adapt to the diverse expectations of different generations." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Leadership must adapt to diverse generational expectations</p>	<p>Divergent Leadership Expectations</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>

"Younger employees want to be led differently than those who are 50-60 years old." (Milena)	Leadership must adapt to diverse generational expectations	Divergent Leadership Expectations	Generational Dynamic Differences
"Finding the right leadership approach is crucial for team success." (Benedikt)	Leadership must adapt to diverse generational expectations	Divergent Leadership Expectations	Generational Dynamic Differences
"Cultural background plays a role in how generational conflicts are addressed within the team." (Mujeer)	Cultural background influences how generational conflicts are addressed in teams	Cultural Influences on Generational Conflicts	Generational Dynamic Differences
"Generational differences are often influenced by cultural perspectives on work and leadership." (Joao)	Cultural background influences how generational conflicts are addressed in teams	Cultural Influences on Generational Conflicts	Generational Dynamic Differences
"Cultural perspectives shape the way each generation deals with conflict, as some approaches may work better in one culture but not in others." (Samantha)	Cultural background influences how generational conflicts are addressed in teams	Cultural Influences on Generational Conflicts	Generational Dynamic Differences
"Different layers of culture, personality, and generation influence how conflicts are handled." (Regina)	Culture, personality, and generation shape conflict resolution	Cultural Influences on Generational Conflicts	Generational Dynamic Differences

<p>"Personality, culture, and generational differences can create different perspectives, which can complicate collaboration efforts." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Culture, personality, and generation shape conflict resolution</p>	<p>Cultural Influences on Generational Conflicts</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Certain cultures are more susceptible to solving problems within the team itself or in the open, whereas others do it in the background. So there are many different layers—there's culture, personality, and then there are the generations." (Mujeer)</p>	<p>Culture, personality, and generation shape conflict resolution</p>	<p>Cultural Influences on Generational Conflicts</p>	<p>Generational Dynamic Differences</p>
<p>"Some older employees occasionally feel overwhelmed by the pace of technological change driven by younger team members." (Regina)</p>	<p>Older employees feel overwhelmed by the pace of tech changes</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Younger team members assume older colleagues are not as good with tech, and some older employees feel left behind by the rapid shifts." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Older employees feel overwhelmed by the pace of tech changes</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>

<p>"There is often initial resistance from older employees when new systems are introduced." (Milena)</p>	<p>Older employees often resist the adaption of new systems</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Older employees often resist new methods introduced by younger employees." (Milena)</p>	<p>Older employees often resist the adaption of new systems</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Technological adaptation remains a challenge, especially when younger employees push for rapid changes."(Regina)</p>	<p>Technological adaptation displays a challenge, especially when younger employees push for rapid changes</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Resistance to change is a common challenge when introducing new technologies or processes." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Technological adaptation displays a challenge, especially when younger employees push for rapid changes</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Younger team members might assume that older colleagues are stuck in their ways or not as good with tech, while older employees might think the younger ones lack experience or rely too much on digital tools." (Robert)</p>	<p>Younger employees see older colleagues as stuck in their old ways, while older ones view them as too tech-reliant</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>

<p>"The challenge comes when different generations assume things about each other. Younger employees view older ones as resistant to change, while the older generation sees them as overly dependent on tech." (Milena)</p>	<p>Younger employees see older colleagues as stuck in their old ways, while older ones view them as too tech-reliant</p>	<p>Technological Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Adapting to new ways of working can be a significant challenge." (Milena)</p>	<p>Adapting to new working methods leads to varied adoption and acceptance</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Workplace adaptation is often challenging when there is resistance to new methods introduced by younger employees." (Regina)</p>	<p>Adapting to new working methods leads to varied adoption and acceptance</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Resistance to change is a common challenge when introducing new technologies or processes." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Adapting to new working methods leads to varied adoption and acceptance</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"When conflicts aren't addressed, it often leads to smaller groups forming within the team, making collaboration more difficult." (Robert)</p>	<p>Unmanaged conflict leads to frustration, group formation, and exclusion</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>

<p>"If issues go unresolved, employees start to distance themselves, leading to a lack of cohesion and trust." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>Unmanaged conflict leads to frustration, group formation, and exclusion</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"When conflicts are left unchecked, it not only frustrates those involved but also creates divisions in the team, which can lead to feelings of exclusion." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Unmanaged conflict leads to frustration, group formation, and exclusion</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Managing resistance to change requires clear communication and understanding of generational expectations." (Milena)</p>	<p>Managing change requires understanding generational expectations</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"It's about understanding the language you can communicate with them. Once you figure that out, there's always room for compromise and finding a solution that works for everyone." (Mujeer)</p>	<p>Managing change requires understanding generational expectations</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>

<p>"Regardless of whether it's about generational differences or not, it's always important to clarify expectations about roles—what the tasks are, how collaboration should work, and what kind of communication is necessary."</p>	<p>Managing change requires understanding generational expectations</p>	<p>Process Adaptation and Resistance</p>	<p>Change Management</p>
<p>"Younger employees often expect a more flexible and less hierarchical approach, where they have a say in decisions and are encouraged to be innovative, while older employees might expect a more structured environment with clearly defined roles." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Younger employees seek flexibility; older ones value stability</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"Difference in attitudes towards work-life balance; younger employees seek more flexibility, older employees value job security and stability." (Regina)</p>	<p>Younger employees seek flexibility; older ones value stability</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>

<p>"There will be employees who just want to do their job and earn their salary, and for them, inclusivity might not have the same significance." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>Younger employees prefer work-life integration; older generations favor clear separation</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"Younger employees often have different expectations regarding work-life balance and communication styles compared to their older colleagues." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Younger employees prefer work-life integration; older generations favor clear separation</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"Younger employees often blur the lines between work and personal life, finding ways to integrate both. Older employees, however, prefer to keep a clear boundary between the two." (Milena)</p>	<p>Younger employees prefer work-life integration; older generations favor clear separation</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>

<p>"Younger employees often have different expectations regarding work-life balance and communication styles compared to their older colleagues." (Regina)</p>	<p>Younger generations value work-life balance more</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"The work ethic of the younger generation like what do I know this Generation Z. The whole 'woke' thing now really gets on my nerves. I mean I'm a family person too. I have four kids and I can fully understand the need for work-life balance. But sometimes you just have to prioritize work, and life is not just having three-quarters of your day off and working a little bit here and there." (Robert)</p>	<p>Younger generations value work-life balance more</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>

<p>"Younger employees emphasize maintaining a strong work-life balance, and they expect flexibility from their employers to achieve that." (Milena)</p>	<p>Younger generations value work-life balance more</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"For the younger generation, work-life balance isn't just a buzzword; it's a priority, and they're less likely to compromise on it compared to the older generation." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Younger generations value work-life balance more</p>	<p>Divergent Work-Life Balance Expectations</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"There's a big divide when it comes to work ethic. The older employees are used to structure and rigid processes, whereas the younger ones thrive on flexibility and want the freedom to approach work on their own terms." (Robert)</p>	<p>Generational work ethic clashes: older employees seek structure, younger ones value flexibility, causing workplace tensions</p>	<p>Divergent Perceptions of Work Ethics</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"Older employees often value job security and stability, preferring a more structured environment with clearly defined roles." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Generational work ethic clashes: older employees seek structure, younger ones value flexibility, causing workplace tensions</p>	<p>Divergent Perceptions of Work Ethics</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>

<p>"There's a general problem when there are different expectations regarding work ethic. But it's more pronounced with the younger ones, who may not value the same structure." (Robert)</p>	<p>Generational work ethic clashes: older employees seek structure, younger ones value flexibility, causing workplace tensions</p>	<p>Divergent Perceptions of Work Ethics</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"It's a generational shift where older colleagues see work as a duty, but younger employees are more about achieving personal satisfaction and aligning their values with their job." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>Older employees value responsibility, while younger ones value personal fulfillment</p>	<p>Divergent Perceptions of Work Ethics</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"Older employees have been in the company long enough to understand the weight of responsibility, while the younger employees are more focused on finding personal fulfillment in their roles." (Joao)</p>	<p>Older employees value responsibility, while younger ones value personal fulfillment</p>	<p>Divergent Perceptions of Work Ethics</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>

<p>"I've noticed that the younger generation seeks a sense of purpose and personal growth, while the older employees prioritize their responsibilities within the team and the company."</p>	<p>Older employees value responsibility, while younger ones value personal fulfillment</p>	<p>Divergent Perceptions of Work Ethics</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"Younger employees bring fresh ideas, but older employees provide valuable experience that anchors the team."(Samantha)</p>	<p>Younger employees innovate, older employees bring experience</p>	<p>Balancing Experience and Innovation</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"The younger employees can bring their tech skills to the table while the older ones share their practical knowledge and experience. It's a give-and-take situation that benefits everyone." (Milena)</p>	<p>Younger employees innovate, older employees bring experience</p>	<p>Balancing Experience and Innovation</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"The older generation offers us deep-rooted knowledge and stability, whereas the younger generation pushes innovation and creativity forward. Both are essential for success." (Joao)</p>	<p>Younger employees innovate, older employees bring experience</p>	<p>Balancing Experience and Innovation</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>

<p>"Younger employees need to recognize the value of the experience and knowledge that older employees bring." (Joao)</p>	<p>The challenge is balancing this dynamic while ensuring mutual respect and appreciation between generations</p>	<p>Balancing Experience and Innovation</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"The key to success is understanding the different perspectives and showing mutual respect for the contributions of each generation." (Milena)</p>	<p>The challenge is balancing this dynamic while ensuring mutual respect and appreciation between generations</p>	<p>Balancing Experience and Innovation</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"The balance comes when the younger employees push for change and innovation, and the older employees help ensure that decisions are grounded in experience." (Joao)</p>	<p>The challenge is balancing this dynamic while ensuring mutual respect and appreciation between generations</p>	<p>Balancing Experience and Innovation</p>	<p>Values and Priorities at Work</p>
<p>"The whole idea of mentoring programs is that when someone leaves, what they've learned stays in the firm." (Joao)</p>	<p>Mentoring preserves the company's know-how</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Legacy programs where senior employees share their knowledge are crucial in passing down experience." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Mentoring preserves the company's know-how</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>

<p>"When senior members leave, through mentoring programs their knowledge and experience stay with the firm, which is invaluable." (Joao)</p>	<p>Mentoring preserves the company's know-how</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"We have a knowledge-sharing platform and reverse mentoring to help bridge generational gaps in skills and knowledge." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Mentoring preserves the company's know-how</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Reverse mentoring has been great for fostering inclusivity. I've seen older employees become more comfortable with new technology, and younger employees gain confidence from being in a mentor role." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Reverse mentoring fosters mutual learning and inclusivity across generations</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"We're using reverse mentoring to bridge the value gap between experienced and new employees." (Mujeer)</p>	<p>Reverse mentoring fosters mutual learning and inclusivity across generations</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>

<p>"Mentoring programs are great at bridging gaps between different generations, allowing skills and perspectives to flow both ways." (Regina)</p>	<p>Mentoring bridges generational gaps in skills and perspectives</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Pairing younger employees with older mentors helps bridge gaps in experience and perspective." (Milena)</p>	<p>Mentoring bridges generational gaps in skills and perspectives</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"The mentoring program has been particularly successful in fostering cross-generational understanding." (Regina)</p>	<p>Mentoring bridges generational gaps in skills and perspectives</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Mentorship programs play a crucial role in integrating new employees." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>Mentoring bridges generational gaps in skills and perspectives</p>	<p>Mentoring Programs</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"We always have a Christmas party and a summer event. These are practical ways to bring everyone together, and activities like Escape Rooms are great for team bonding." (Milena)</p>	<p>Regular team-building events, like Christmas parties, enhance unity and purpose</p>	<p>Non-Work-Related Team Activities and Events</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>

<p>"Regular team-building events foster a sense of unity and purpose within the team." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Regular team-building events, like Christmas parties, enhance unity and purpose</p>	<p>Non-Work-Related Team Activities and Events</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Social events, like team dinners or weekend retreats, help build personal connections among team members." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Social events, like team dinners or weekend retreats, help build personal connections among team members</p>	<p>Non-Work-Related Team Activities and Events</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"We've added regular team coffee breaks or casual social events to our schedule specifically designed to encourage conversation across age groups. These less formal settings have helped a lot in breaking down barriers and building a stronger team dynamic." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Social events, like team dinners or weekend retreats, help build personal connections among team members</p>	<p>Non-Work-Related Team Activities and Events</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Taking all 550 employees on a three-day trip. This fosters a strong sense of unity and purpose." (Joao)</p>	<p>Social events, like team dinners or weekend retreats, help build personal connections among team members</p>	<p>Non-Work-Related Team Activities and Events</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>

<p>"Mixing ages in projects and events prevents cliques, fostering better collaboration across generations." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Mixing ages in projects and events prevents cliques</p>	<p>Deliberate Team Mixing</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"We've started organizing more informal opportunities for different generations to connect. These less formal settings have helped break down barriers and prevent cliques from forming." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Mixing ages in projects and events prevents cliques</p>	<p>Deliberate Team Mixing</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Bringing different generations together in shared projects or social events breaks the usual cliques and encourages collaboration between all ages." (Milena)</p>	<p>Mixing ages in projects and events prevents cliques</p>	<p>Deliberate Team Mixing</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"It's important to mix people of different ages and backgrounds in projects so they get to know each other better and learn to collaborate." (Joao)</p>	<p>Integration is fostered through shared projects and initiatives</p>	<p>Deliberate Team Mixing</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Activities that mix younger and older employees help strengthen team cohesion." (Joao)</p>	<p>Integration is fostered through shared projects and initiatives</p>	<p>Deliberate Team Mixing</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>

<p>"Mixing people together on various projects allows for more collaboration and understanding across generations."(Joao)</p>	<p>Integration is fostered through shared projects and initiatives</p>	<p>Deliberate Team Mixing</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"By working together on shared tasks, team members naturally build stronger bonds and mutual respect."(Regina)</p>	<p>Integration is fostered through shared projects and initiatives</p>	<p>Deliberate Team Mixing</p>	<p>Team Inclusivity Measures</p>
<p>"Inclusive decision-making is a hallmark of responsible leadership. It keeps everyone engaged and ensures all voices are heard." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Responsible leadership enhances team inclusivity by involving everyone in decision-making, fostering loyalty and collaboration</p>	<p>Responsible Leadership promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"When responsible leadership practices are in place, teams become more engaged and collaborative, and there's a stronger sense of trust." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Responsible leadership enhances team inclusivity by involving everyone in decision-making, fostering loyalty and collaboration</p>	<p>Responsible Leadership promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Responsible leadership impacts team inclusivity... It's not just about giving orders but about motivating the team and sharing the same goals." (Robert)</p>	<p>Responsible leadership enhances team inclusivity by involving everyone in decision-making, fostering loyalty and collaboration</p>	<p>Responsible Leadership promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>

<p>"Responsible leadership is essentially the ideal leadership style... empathetic, considering feelings, involving employees in processes." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>Responsible leadership is key to building a strong and successful team</p>	<p>Responsible Leadership promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Responsible leadership practices are key to fostering a strong team culture where people feel valued and motivated." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Responsible leadership is key to building a strong and successful team</p>	<p>Responsible Leadership promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Without responsible leadership, teams often see disengagement and a lack of collaboration, leading to lower performance." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Responsible leadership is key to building a strong and successful team</p>	<p>Responsible Leadership promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"As we grow internationally, maintaining inclusivity becomes challenging. Diverse cultures and physical distance make it harder to foster the same connection and cohesion we had when smaller and localized." (Samantha)</p>	<p>As the company grows, maintaining personal connections becomes more challenging due to cultural differences and physical distance</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>

<p>"As the company grows, maintaining personal touchpoints with everyone will become more challenging, but for now, it's still manageable." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>As the company grows, maintaining personal connections becomes more challenging due to cultural differences and physical distance</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Scaling inclusivity across diverse cultures and remote teams is a challenge, especially when physical distance makes regular face-to-face interactions more difficult." (Audrey)</p>	<p>As the company grows, maintaining personal connections becomes more challenging due to cultural differences and physical distance</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"When we expanded globally, we had to work harder to ensure that people didn't feel left out due to the lack of in-person interactions and cultural differences." (Regina)</p>	<p>As the company grows, maintaining personal connections becomes more challenging due to cultural differences and physical distance</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"As we scale and diversify, maintaining cohesion requires evolving our inclusivity practices to meet the needs of a growing team." (Samantha)</p>	<p>Scaling and diversifying requires evolving inclusivity to sustain cohesion</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>

<p>"With more people working remotely and from different regions, it's become essential to adjust our inclusivity strategies to ensure everyone still feels part of the team." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Scaling and diversifying requires evolving inclusivity to sustain cohesion</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"As our company expands, it's crucial that we continually adapt how we include everyone, or we risk losing the tight-knit culture we had when smaller." (Benedikt)</p>	<p>Scaling and diversifying requires evolving inclusivity to sustain cohesion</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Diverse teams bring different perspectives, and that's great for innovation, but it also means we need more intentional inclusivity efforts to keep everyone aligned and connected." (Audrey)</p>	<p>Scaling and diversifying requires evolving inclusivity to sustain cohesion</p>	<p>Scaling Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>

<p>"Without responsible leadership, teams often see increased disengagement, less collaboration, and higher turnover, particularly among younger employees." (Samantha)</p>	<p>When leadership prioritizes social responsibility, inclusivity thrives, creating a sense of belonging for all</p>	<p>Social engagement promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Our founder has been deeply involved in social issues since the firm's inception, and that has fostered a culture of inclusivity." (Joao)</p>	<p>When leadership prioritizes social responsibility, inclusivity thrives, creating a sense of belonging for all</p>	<p>Social engagement promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Social responsibility initiatives don't just improve the brand; they also create a sense of belonging among employees." (Milena)</p>	<p>When leadership prioritizes social responsibility, inclusivity thrives, creating a sense of belonging for all</p>	<p>Social engagement promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"We organized a trash-collecting event in the city. Everyone, from interns to senior employees, participated, which really created a sense of shared purpose and team bonding." (Regina)</p>	<p>When leadership prioritizes social responsibility, inclusivity thrives, creating a sense of belonging for all</p>	<p>Social engagement promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>

<p>"Our social responsibility initiatives resonate strongly with younger generations and help build a strong brand and culture." (Joao)</p>	<p>Responsible initiatives strengthen the company's culture</p>	<p>Social engagement promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>
<p>"Social responsibility efforts have played a key role in shaping our inclusive culture, ensuring that everyone feels part of the bigger picture." (Regina)</p>	<p>Responsible initiatives strengthen the company's culture</p>	<p>Social engagement promotes Inclusivity</p>	<p>Responsible Practices and Inclusivity</p>