**Material 2.1.3m**

## MULTIGENERATIONAL STAFF – GENERATION'S VALUE SYSTEMS

**Shifting demographic patterns as consequence of an aging society makes it more likely that employees work in multigeneration teams.**

Around the year 2010 the awareness was rising that value systems of people are different according to their belonging to a specific generation. Youth studies have made this obvious though there is also the warning (even by authors of such studies) of an undifferentiated typification (F. Schier 2021).

Nevertheless generation-typification has become popular in the management literature and plays a role with view to employer branding (e.g. Dyhre, Anna/Parment, Anders 2013: Sustainable Employer Branding). But the specifics in the value systems of generations also may induce individualization of human resource development according to the generation background of an employee.

The most common typification distinguishes the X, Y and Z generation – generations which determine the working population of today.

**Generations X, Y, Z – overview on the concept**

Several youth studies have shown that generations stamp the spirit of a time. Cohorts with an interval of 10 to 15 years have been distinguished as being considerably divers concerning their expectations and attitudes towards (working) life. Though the variance within one generation is high, there are nevertheless differences between the cohorts which may not be neglected.

**Generation X**

They were born between 1966 and 1980. Their parents belong to the "Baby boomers", born between 1956 and 1965 and have reached a certain prosperity. The generation X have become the beneficiaries of what their parents have reached. They may be characterized by a strong consumer orientation and brand awareness. They experienced the move-in of the new digital media like e-mail and mobile phone.

The East-West conflict was emerging and brought uncertainness and a pessimistic feeling. For the generation X, job satisfaction is less important than financial security. They seek separation of private and professional life and an even work-life balance.

**Generation Y – "Millennials"**

They were born between 1981 and 1995 and have experienced the digitalization to the full. The generation Y is also called "generation-me", pursuing freedom and self-portrayal in social networks. Yet the decentralization by the internet, the interconnection of different cultures and the emerging globalization caused the definite tolerance of this generation.

Well skilled people, being grown up in a technologically mobile world come into enterprises and question the established structures. While the generation X has strictly separated work and private sphere, merges the concept of the work-life balance for the generation Y more and more to a work-life integration. They seek self-fulfilment also in the job. They are optimistic and appreciate independence but nevertheless networking and teamwork.

Environment protection and social issues are important for them and they expect of their employers an ecologically and sustainable business behaviour.

**Generation Z**

They are born after 1995. They are also called the "digital natives" who cannot imagine a world without internet. Online searching of information is a matter of course. But it also induces a reduction of the attention span. The difference between virtual and real is almost abrogated.

In a cross-linked world, political escapades, business lapses and social grievances become transparent and the generation Z is positioning against these. They are campaigning for human rights and equality of disadvantaged groups. The concept of consumption is changing. In the focus is no longer the possession of a physical good but the access to the diverse services and products.

The next generation, born after 2020, have been termed the Alpha generation. It is still open what their characteristics will be.

**Conclusions from the generation typification for company-based career work**

If you search in the literature to the X, Y, Z concept, it may happen that you find partially inconstant statements. The inconstancies are partially due to different national backgrounds but also to the belonging to a specific social group and to the level of education (F. Schier, 2021). That is why the generation typification may not be used as an apodictic tool. Yet the benefit of these attempts to typify generations after their value systems is the awareness, that there are differences between the generation groups which are to be considered. This is also true for company-based career work and gives the hint, that employee development needs an individualized approach, based on a dialogue

between the leader and his/her employees. Professional career counsellors may play the role of facilitators.