

Organizational Culture Transformation: The Role of HRM in Bridging Generations and Improving Organizational Team Performance

Titin ^{1*}, Amelia Fatimatus Zahra ², Nur Indah Puspita Sari³

¹ Department Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Lamongan Islamic University, ² Departments International Relations · Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Airlangga University

Abstract

This study aims to examine the strategic role of human resource management (HRM) in bridging generational differences and fostering organizational culture transformation to improve team performance in cooperatives. Using an exploratory qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies in cooperatives with multigenerational work teams. The results show that differences in values, communication styles, and work preferences between generations significantly influence work dynamics. Key challenges faced by HRM include value conflicts, the digital divide, and resistance to cultural change. Through adaptive HRM strategies—such as cross-generational training, two-way mentoring, and open dialogue forums—cooperatives are able to establish an inclusive and collaborative work culture. Responsive organizational culture transformation to generational diversity has been shown to increase team synergy, productivity, and work satisfaction. This study contributes to the development of an HRM model based on inclusion and cross-generational learning in the context of cooperative institutions.

Keywords : Organizational culture transformation; HRM; multigenerational; team performance;

*Corresponding author

Email: titin@unisla.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

In the modern workplace, characterized by generational diversity, organizations face new challenges in building an inclusive, adaptive, and productive work culture. Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z now work side by side, bringing different values, communication styles, and expectations for work, leadership, and technology. These differences often create friction within teams, such as miscommunication, value conflicts, or incompatible work styles. On the other hand, generational diversity also holds great potential for innovation, cross-age learning, and performance improvement if managed appropriately. Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a strategic role in bridging generational differences through organizational culture transformation. Adaptive HRM practices can create a workplace that values the contributions of each generation, encourages collaboration, and fosters a sense of belonging. Many organizations still employ a uniform HRM approach that is less responsive to multigenerational dynamics. Organizational culture transformation is not simply a procedural change, but rather a shift in values, behaviors, and interaction patterns that must be designed systematically. Therefore, it is important to examine how HRM can be a catalyst in this process, as well as to understand the challenges and relevant strategies for improving the performance of cross-generational teams. Demographic changes in the workplace have created an increasingly complex organizational landscape. Older generations tend to value stability, loyalty, and hierarchical structures, while younger generations prioritize flexibility, meaningful work, and digital technology. This imbalance often presents challenges in building effective communication, collective decision-making, and equitable role allocation within teams. Amid the demands of globalization, digitalization, and performance pressures, organizations are required to adapt not only technically but also culturally. Organizational cultures that are unresponsive to generational differences risk creating disengagement, high turnover, and innovation stagnation. Conversely, cultures that embrace age diversity can be a source of collective strength and competitiveness.

The role of HRM is becoming increasingly crucial in managing these dynamics. HRM is no longer merely an administrative function, but rather the architect of an inclusive and sustainable work culture. Through strategic approaches such as cross-generational training, two-way mentoring, flexible work design, and empathy-based communication, HRM can bridge the generational gap and foster team synergy. This transformation does not occur automatically. It requires a deep understanding of generational characteristics, resistance to change, and contextual and data-driven managerial strategies. Therefore, this study is crucial to identify how HRM can become a driving force for the transformation of an adaptive organizational culture and orientate

the performance of cross-generational teams. Based on the above background, the research problem formulation in this study includes:

1. How do the characteristics of generational differences affect work dynamics in cooperatives?
2. What are the main challenges HRM faces in managing multigenerational teams?
3. What HRM strategies are effective in bridging the generation gap and creating an inclusive work culture?
4. How can organizational culture transformation improve cross-generational team performance and collaboration?

This study aims to identify differences in values, work styles, and expectations between generations in the workplace, analyze the strategic role of HRM in managing conflict and building multigenerational synergy, formulate strategies for transforming an adaptive and performance-oriented organizational culture, and provide practical recommendations for managers and HRM practitioners in creating a harmonious and productive work environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational culture transformation

is a systemic process to change the values, norms, behaviors, and interaction patterns within an organization to make it more adaptive to changes in the environment, technology, and work demographics. (Saubiran, et al., 2025).

The goal of cultural transformation

is to increase adaptability to technological and market changes, build an inclusive and collaborative work environment, reduce conflict between generations and departments, improve performance, innovation, and job satisfaction. (Schein, 1985, Doceo.id. (2025). HR (2025))

Organizational Culture Theory

This theory explains (Edgar Schein, 1985) that organizational culture consists of three layers, artifacts: symbols, rituals, and visible structures. values held: principles and standards of behavior, basic assumptions: unconscious beliefs that shape behavior, relevance: Cultural transformation must touch all three layers to be effective in bridging generations.

The factors that influence organizational culture transformation are as follows: Robbins & Judge, (2019).

1. Leadership and Management Commitment
 - a. A visionary, inclusive, and consistent leadership style is crucial for determining the direction of cultural change.
 - b. The leadership's commitment to new values serves as an example and a key driver of change.
2. Organizational Structure and System

- a. An overly bureaucratic organizational structure can hinder cultural flexibility.
- b. HR systems (recruitment, training, rewards) must be aligned with the cultural values that you want to build.
3. Demographic and Generational Changes
Age diversity (Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z) brings different values and expectations.

Generation Theory

Describe the psychosocial characteristics and dominant values of each generation: (Strauss & Howe, 1991)

1. Baby Boomers: Loyal, appreciative Work hard , tend to hierarchical .
2. Gen X: Independent, skeptical of authority, pragmatic.
3. Millennials: Collaborative, digital-native, seeking meaning in work.
4. Gen Z: Adaptable, visual, prioritize flexibility and diversity.
5. Relevance: These differences affect work styles, communication, and expectations of the organization.

The key roles of HRM are as follows:

1. Intergenerational Dialogue Facilitator
HRM creates open communication spaces between generations through discussion forums, town halls, and focus groups that aim to reduce miscommunication, build empathy, and strengthen mutual respect.
2. Intergenerational Training Program Designer
Design training that combines visual (Gen Z), reflective (Gen X), and practical (Boomers) learning styles and implements reverse mentoring and peer learning to encourage two-way learning.
3. Flexible and Inclusive Work System Developer
Establish flexible work policies (working hours, remote, hybrid) for the younger generation while maintaining the structure and stability valued by the older generation.
4. Competency Mapping and Collaborative Assignments
HRM identifies the unique strengths of each generation, namely Gen Z → technology and creativity, Millennials → collaboration and social innovation, Gen X → management and stability, Boomers → experience and mentoring, p
work assignments are structured to complement each other, not clash with each other.
5. Managing Value Conflict and Work Style
HRM uses an emotional intelligence-based approach (Goleman, 1995) to reduce conflict and build empathetic communication and intergenerational conflict is managed as an opportunity for innovation, not a threat (Coser, 1956).

Strategic HRM Practice Theory (Ulrich, 1997)

1. HR as a strategic partner, change agent, and cultural facilitator.
2. Relevance: HRM must play an active role in designing cultural interventions, cross-generational training, and inclusive work systems.

Maslow's Theory of Needs (1943)

The theory that explains: (Maslow 1943)

1. Five levels of human needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, self-actualization.
2. Relevance: Each generation may prioritize different needs in a work context, influencing motivation and performance.

Emotional Intelligence Theory (Daniel Goleman, 1995)

1. Core competencies: self-awareness, emotional management, empathy, social skills.
2. Relevance: Managers and HR need to develop emotional intelligence to manage conflict and build cross-generational communication.

Social Conflict Theory (Lewis Coser, 1956)

1. Conflict is a social process that can be destructive or constructive.
2. Relevance: Intergenerational conflict can be a source of innovation if managed with the right approach.

Organizational Learning Theory (Peter Senge, 1990)

1. Five disciplines: systemic thinking, personal mastery, mental models, team learning, and shared vision.
2. Relevance: Learning organizations are able to adapt to demographic changes and build collaborative cultures across generations.

TEAM PERFORMANCE

Team performance is the collective result of the activities, interactions, and contributions of team members in achieving a common goal. Team performance reflects the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of work produced by the work group, not just individuals.

Factors that influence Team Performance are as follows:

1. Effective Communication
 - a. Teams with open, clear, two-way communication tend to be more productive.
 - b. Miscommunication between generations or divisions can reduce work efficiency.
2. Inclusive Leadership

Leaders who are able to listen, provide direction, and encourage active participation from all team members increase motivation and synergy.
3. Trust between members: a high level of trust encourages collaboration, risk taking, and openness in conveying ideas or criticism.
4. Clear Goals and Roles: teams that have shared goals and structured role divisions are more focused and directed in their work.

The research framework in this study is as follows:



Data source processed by the author

Based on the problems in this research, the following hypothesis can be developed:

- H1: Characteristics of generational differences (work values, communication styles, and technology preferences) influence work dynamics in organizations.
- H2 : The key challenges facing HRM (such as value conflicts, digital divide, and resistance to change) negatively impact the effectiveness of multigenerational teamwork if not managed strategically.
- H3: HRM strategies based on inclusion, cross-generational training, and empathetic communication are able to bridge the generation gap and form a harmonious work culture.
- H4: Organizational culture transformation that emphasizes shared learning, flexibility, and respect for generational diversity has a positive effect on improving team performance and collaboration.

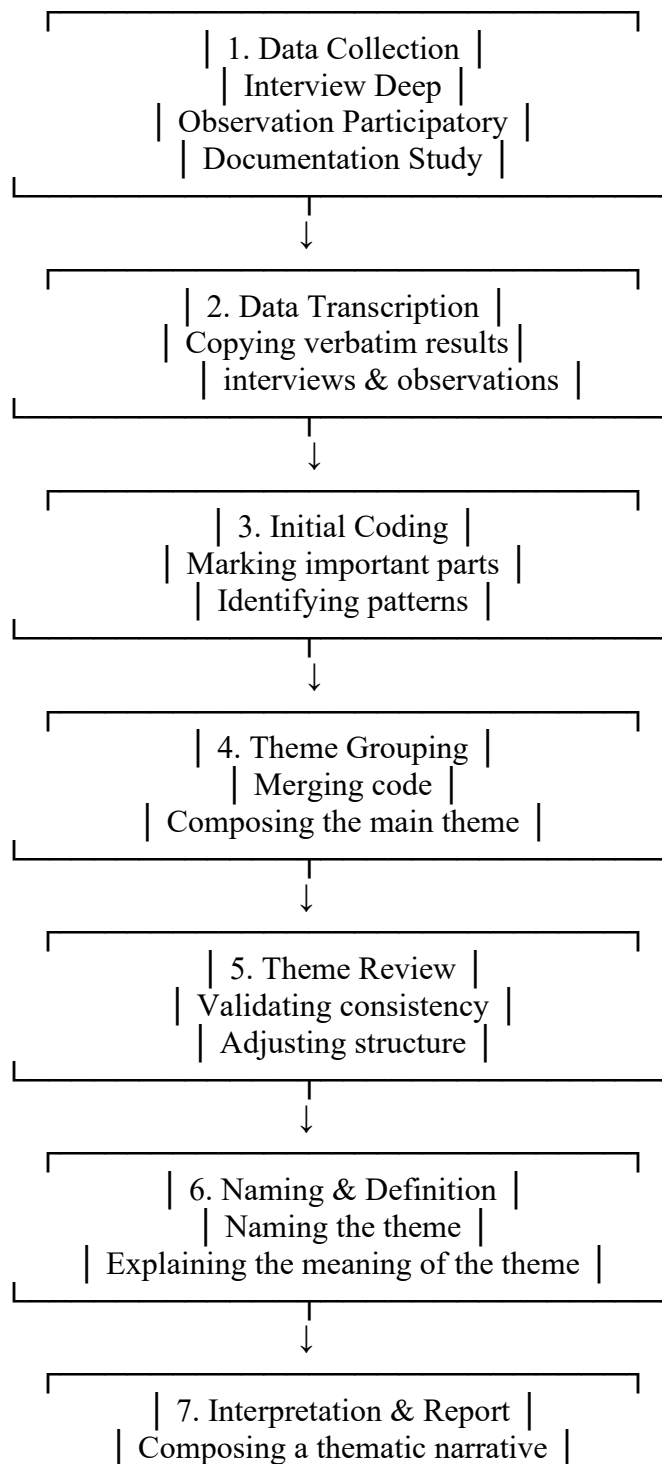
RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses an exploratory approach to deeply understand how HRM plays a role in bridging generational differences and shaping an inclusive work culture. Data collection techniques in this study used in-depth interviews conducted with HRM managers, cross-generational team members, and organizational policy makers, conducting participant observation by observing intergenerational interactions in the work environment, including the dynamics of communication, collaboration, and conflict. Documentation study by analyzing internal documents such as HRM policies, training programs, and team performance evaluation reports.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The data analysis techniques used in this research are:

Chart 3
Steps of the Exploratory Qualitative Method:



| Drawing conclusions |

Source data: Creswell, JW (2013)

Analysis Thematic Analysis : analysis used For identify , analyze , and interpret patterns (themes) that emerge from qualitative data , with step step as follows : (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

1. Data Transcription
All interview and observation results were transcribed verbatim.
2. Initial Coding
Mark important parts of the data that are relevant to the research focus (e.g.: generational conflict, HRM strategies, work values).
3. Grouping Code into Themes
Similar codes were grouped into main themes such as “cross-generational communication strategies”, “perceptions of work culture”, or “HR’s role as a facilitator”.
4. Interpretation and Conclusion Drawing
Themes were analyzed to understand the relationship between cultural transformation, HRM strategy, and multigenerational team performance.

Data Validity Test

1. Source Triangulation: Comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents.
2. Member Check: Confirming the interpretation results with the informant to ensure accuracy.
3. Audit Trail: Keeps a trail of analysis to maintain transparency of the research process.

Analysis Output

Thematic narrative that describes:

- a. Differences in values and work styles between generations.
- b. HRM challenges and strategies in bridging generations.
- c. The impact of cultural transformation on team collaboration and performance

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and analysis of organizational documents, the findings in this study are themes that reflect multigenerational dynamics and the role of HRM in the transformation of work culture, namely as follows: (Merdeka, 2024).

1. Differences in Communication Styles Between Generations
 - a. Gen X tends to use formal and direct communication.
 - b. Millennials and Gen Z prefer digital, fast, and informal communication.

- c. These differences often lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings within the team.
- 2. Conflict of Values and Work Expectations
 - a. The senior generation emphasizes loyalty and stability.
 - b. The younger generation is more focused on flexibility, meaningful work, and work-life balance.
 - c. HRM noted tensions in task allocation and performance appraisal.
- 3. Adaptive and Inclusive HRM Strategy
 - a. Organizations are starting to implement cross-generational training, two-way mentoring, and open dialogue forums.
 - b. HRM acts as a communication facilitator and guardian of inclusive values.
 - c. Onboarding and career development programs are tailored to generational characteristics.
- 4. Work Culture Transformation
 - a. Work culture is shifting from hierarchical to collaborative.
 - b. The values of teamwork, openness, and respect for diversity are beginning to be internalized.
 - c. New cultural symbols such as flexible workspaces and cross-age idea forums are emerging.
- d. Improved Team Performance and Collaboration
 - a. Teams that participate in cross-generational HRM programs show increased productivity and innovation.
 - b. Conflicts are reduced, and synergy emerges in task completion and decision making.

DISCUSSION

Multigenerational Dynamics as Challenges and Opportunities

The findings show that generational differences are not just a challenge, but also a source of strength when managed with the right approach. The tensions arising from differing values and work styles can fuel innovation if HRM can create a space for dialogue and shared learning.

The Strategic Role of HRM in Cultural Transformation

HRM is no longer merely an administrative function, but rather an agent of cultural change. Through cross-generational training strategies, two-way mentoring, and flexible work design, HRM has successfully bridged the generation gap and created a more inclusive and adaptive work culture. (Saubiran, Sulistiyawan, 2025).

Organizational Culture as a Catalyst for Team Performance

Cultural transformations that emphasize collaboration, openness, and respect for generational diversity have been shown to improve team performance. Teams that previously experienced conflict showed increased synergy and productivity after HRM interventions. (Goleman, D. (1995).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Organizations need to integrate a multigenerational approach into their HRM policies and work culture design. Cross-age training, empathy-based communication, and flexible work systems are key to success in the era of mixed-generation work.
2. HRM needs to design training that combines visual learning styles (Gen Z), reflective discussions (Gen X), and practical experiences (Boomers) and use intergenerational approaches such as reverse mentoring and peer learning to build mutual understanding.
3. Implement flexible work policies in terms of time and place to accommodate the needs of the younger generation and maintain the structure and stability valued by the older generation, for example through clear SOPs and evaluation systems.

CONCLUSION

1. This research shows that differences in generational characteristics—both in work values, communication styles, and expectations of the organization—significantly impact work dynamics within cooperatives. The tensions that arise from these differences can hinder collaboration if not managed strategically.
2. HRM faces three main challenges that directly impact the effectiveness of multigenerational teamwork in cooperatives, namely Intergenerational Value Conflict, Digital Divide, Resistance to Cultural Change.
3. HRM plays a central role in bridging the generation gap through adaptive and inclusive strategies, such as cross-generational training, two-way mentoring, and open dialogue forums. These strategies have been proven to reduce conflict, increase mutual understanding, and foster a more open and collaborative work culture.
4. Transforming organizational culture to emphasize inclusion, flexibility, and respect for generational diversity significantly contributes to improved performance and team synergy. Multigenerational teams managed with a humanistic and strategic approach demonstrate increased productivity, innovation, and job satisfaction.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

1. Limited Organizational Context, this research was conducted on certain cooperatives with unique cultural characteristics and organizational structures, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to all types of organizations or industrial sectors.
2. Using an exploratory qualitative approach, data is obtained through interviews and observations, making it subjective and contextual. This

research does not use a quantitative approach or statistical tests to measure the relationships between variables numerically.

3. **Subjects Limited to Multigenerational Teams:** The research focuses solely on work teams consisting of multiple generations. It does not include the perspectives of cooperative members working individually or in age-homogeneous structures.
4. The observation duration was limited, the observation was conducted within a certain time span, so it does not reflect the long-term dynamics of cultural transformation and its impact on team performance. Moleong, LJ (2019).

FURTHER RESEARCH

1. **Quantitative Model Development,** Further research can use a quantitative approach to statistically test the relationship between HRM strategy, cultural transformation, and team performance.
2. Using Longitudinal studies, it is recommended to conduct long-term studies to see the sustainable impact of cultural transformation on HR retention, innovation, and cooperative sustainability (Moleong, 2019).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

1. Contributing by raising the issue of organizational culture transformation and human resource management (HRM) in the context of Indonesian cooperatives, which has rarely been studied in depth in academic literature.
2. Integrating generational theory, organizational culture, and HRM strategies into an applicable conceptual framework to address real challenges in the field, particularly in managing multigenerational work teams in a cooperative environment.
3. This research produces a conceptual model that illustrates the relationship between generational differences, HRM strategies, organizational culture transformation, and improved team performance. This model can serve as a reference for policymakers and HRM practitioners in designing relevant interventions.
4. This research provides strategic recommendations for cooperatives and similar organizations to build a work culture that is inclusive, adaptive, and oriented towards cross-generational collaboration, as part of sustainable institutional transformation efforts.

Declaration Of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this research. The entire data collection, analysis, and report preparation process was conducted independently and objectively, without any external influence that could influence the results or interpretation of the research. This research is purely aimed at developing knowledge and practice of human resource management

in the cooperative context, as well as contributing to the transformation of an inclusive and sustainable organizational culture.

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