

**PERCEPTION OF EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY AND RELIANCE
ON IT AMONG EMPLOYEES OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS
TOWARDS THEIR DIRECT MANAGERS IN GREEK
ORGANIZATION “X”**

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Linda Kruope, Solveiga Blumberga

RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, Riga, Latvia

ORCID iDs: Linda Kruope

 N/A

Solveiga Blumberga

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9013-1981>

Abstract. *An international organization in Greece employs at least three generations—X, Y, and Z. Understanding the factors that influence the perception and reliance on epistemic authority across these generations is essential. Such insights would enable organizational leaders to address and accommodate these differences, thereby enhancing the level of perception and reliance on direct supervisors' epistemic authority. This could positively impact various outcomes, including job performance, employee turnover, achievement of key performance indicators (KPIs), employee integration and engagement, and other organizational objectives.*

Epistemic authority is studied as one of the most significant forms of authority, with the assumption that people are more likely to trust and agree with someone they perceive as knowledgeable or an expert in a given field—i.e., an epistemic authority. When a person's authority is based solely on their official position, it fosters less reliance than when they are regarded as an expert in their field. This perception as an expert enhances the sense of authority and fosters greater trust in it. The primary aim of this study is to investigate the perception of and reliance on the epistemic authority of direct supervisors from different generations, to promote positive collaboration between management and employees. The study results reflect that, overall, the employees at organization “X” perceive direct supervisors as positive epistemic authorities. Statistically significant differences were found in the perception of and trust in epistemic authority among employees from generations X, Y, and Z. The most important reasons for relying on epistemic authority, as claimed by respondents, include the supervisor's “personality traits,” “opinions,” and “expertise” in the relevant field. The factors most strongly influencing the perception of epistemic authority were “expertise” and “subjective compassion.”

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Corresponding author: Linda Kruope

RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, Meža iela 3, Rīga, LV-1048, Latvia | E-mail: lindakruope@inbox.lv

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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of human resources in organizations is continuously growing. In an era of globalization and open labor markets, organizations and their management approaches must adapt to changes to ensure their survival and competitiveness in the marketplace.

At least three generations—X, Y, and Z—are actively engaged within the international organization in Greece. These generations grew up in different time periods, shaping distinct worldviews, expectations, values, understandings, and general perspectives on things and their order. These differences are reflected in different work methods and interactions with others (Glass, 2007). Employees from different generations have various desires and perspectives on what they value and expect from their workplace. Consequently, employees' preferences for how they wish to be led, motivated, and how they perceive authority also differ (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Lester, et al., 2012; Salahuddin, 2010). Organizations must focus on effectively managing and integrating employees from different generations, recognizing the potential impact this has on the organization's success (Kraus, 2017). A lack of understanding of generational differences, along with the unused potential and benefits that workforce diversity can give, can slow down organizational development and even contribute to stagnation (Arsenault, 2004). This study specifically examines generational differences in the perception of epistemic authority among line managers and the level of reliance subordinates place on it.

Epistemic authority is explored in depth, particularly in the context of today's globalized environment, where it is considered one of the most crucial forms of authority. People are more likely to trust and agree with someone they perceive as knowledgeable, competent, an expert in a particular field, thus establishing epistemic authority. A person whose authority comes solely from their official position fosters less reliance on their authority unlike one who is recognized as a true expert in their field (Goodman, 2010).

Understanding the factors that influence the perception and reliance on epistemic authority among different generations of employees is crucial. By recognizing and addressing these differences, the management of an international organization can improve employees' perception and reliance on epistemic authority. This could lead to positive effects on various business aspects such as performance, turnover, achievement of key performance indicators (KPIs), employee engagement, and more. When employees trust their line manager, they are more likely to contribute to the organization's goals, demonstrate higher productivity, and show less resistance to their manager's directives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Description of Generations

Generational studies have been conducted since 1952, when sociologist Karl Mannheim defined a generational group as a cohort—a collective group of people born and raised in a

similar time and place, experiencing similar historical and social events (Kraus, 2017). Experts on generations, Strauss and Howe (1991), argue that generations are characterized by a specific time span: “A generation is a group of people who share a common time and space in history, which gives the collective personality” (Howe, 1991). Different generations are widely accepted as primary agents of social and political change (Taşbaşı, 2023).

There is considerable inconsistency among researchers regarding the time periods and names of generations. Literature does not provide a clear answer as to when one generation ends and another begins (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). As a result, generational boundaries in this study are defined based on the most widely accepted information in the literature: Generation X, born between 1965 and 1979; Generation Y, born between 1980 and 2000; and Generation Z, born between 2000 and 2015 (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Patterson, 2007; Wolfinger & McCrindle, 2009; Reynolds, 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Lester et al., 2012).

Generational theories not only highlight the differences between generations but also identify various influences on values, attitudes, norms, and personality traits (Stelling, 2023).

Some studies describe Generation X as the first truly global generation, arguing that members of this generation share similar characteristics across the world (Taşbaşı, 2023). Generation X is characterized by adaptability, a lack of respect for authority, and creativity (Salahuddin, 2010). This generation is also described as hardworking, independent, and often skeptical (Mat & Guloglu, 2023). Generation X values work-life balance (Patterson, 2007; Glass, 2007; Wolfinger & McCrindle, 2009). Salahuddin (2010) supports this view, suggesting that Generation X employees are motivated by flexible work schedules, informal work environments, and a reasonable amount of supervision and control. Additionally, Generation X places high importance on direct and immediate communication, preferring constructive feedback.

Glass (2007) highlights that Generation Y has a fundamentally different working style and belief system compared to any other group of young people in the past 50 years. It is assumed that this generation has a significant impact on organizations and the evolving work environment (Kraus, 2017). Generation Y has never known a world without technology (Patterson, 2007; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Taşbaşı, 2023), and is often referred to as “digital natives” (Roth-Cohen et al., 2022). Tapscott (2008) argues that collaboration, freedom, individuality, speed, dynamism, integrity, fun, and innovation are the key characteristics that define Generation Y (Tapscott, 2008). In the work environment, members of Generation Y are often less independent and require structure, supervision, and direction. However, this need for guidance must be balanced with autonomy and flexibility (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Generation Y also values constant feedback to stay engaged and motivated (Patterson, 2007). For this generation, achieving a healthy work-life balance is extremely important (Kraus, 2017). Generation Y is more likely to change jobs if they feel that a healthy work-life balance cannot be maintained.

Generation Z is growing up in a time of profound change. It is the most materially privileged, technologically saturated, globally-connected, and formally educated generation the world has ever seen (Wolfinger & McCrindle, 2009). Dangmei and Singh (2016) stress that Generation Z is a digitally centric generation, with technology serving as its core identity (Dangmei & Singh, 2016). Generation Z employees require regular feedback to stay engaged and improve. While they are eager to learn from managers, they prefer not to follow the traditional organizational hierarchy. Instead, Generation Z seeks a collaborative, team-oriented

environment and values positive relationships both in the workplace and in their personal lives (Stelling, 2023).

2.2. Description of authority

The term “authority” is complex and difficult to define; originally it comes from the Latin word “auctoritas,” which encompasses various meanings such as reputation, respect, value, conscience, conviction, truthfulness, relevance, importance, example, and opinion (Njegovan, Vukadinović, & Nešić, 2011). Alasuutari (2018) argues that authority broadly includes any factor used to influence others (Alasuutari, 2018). Authority is one of the most complex principles of social organization in modern society, with the most significant relationships between individuals or groups often grounded in various forms of authority (Njegovan, Vukadinović, & Nešić, 2011).

Authority is granted the right to manage, and those subject to it are expected to comply (Fives, 2023). Alasuutari (2018) suggests that someone or something is considered authoritative only if people acknowledge their authority and perceive them as such (Alasuutari, 2018). In other words, authority can be understood as a social relationship in which certain individuals are granted the legitimacy to lead, and others agree to follow (Pace & Hemmings, 2007).

2.2.1. Epistemic authority

Kruglanski introduced the concept of epistemic authority in 1980 (Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Abin, 1993). This concept emerged in social psychology with the primary goal of explaining the sources that shape the influence of social judgments (Kruglanski, 1989). Epistemic authority refers to a source of information with an influence on learning. Consequently, epistemic authority can also be defined as an expert in a specific or general area of knowledge (Kruglanski, 1989; Kruglanski et al., 2005). Alasuutari (2018) emphasizes that epistemic capital operates through knowledge and its validation. Those who effectively highlight epistemic capital in their projects are better equipped to influence the actions of others (Alasuutari, 2018).

Maslov (2022) emphasizes that an individual cannot be considered an authority without being an epistemic authority—an expert in a specific field (Maslov, 2022). A key condition for the concept of epistemic authority is the individual's ability and willingness to rely on and accept the information provided by the epistemic authority (Kruglanski, 1989). Individuals put high confidence in the accuracy of the information shared by epistemic authorities. They accept the knowledge shared by epistemic authorities as true and factual, apply it in their lives, and rely on it (Raviv et al., 1993). Epistemic authorities can vary throughout an individual's life, changing at different stages and across different fields (Erb et al., 2003). Individuals may select their epistemic authorities based on the specific area of knowledge in which they seek information (Bar-Tal et al., 1991). Epistemic authority is built by a person's knowledge and expertise; the authority's message is accepted because the individual believes that this authority knows better (Brozek, 2013). An individual may perceive someone as an epistemic authority if the authority's knowledge can be substantiated or proven by an object, such as the existence of documents (Ahopelto et al., 2024).

2.2.2. *Reasons for relying on epistemic authority*

In this subsection, we will analyze and explain the 12 reasons for individuals' reliance on epistemic authority, as identified by Bar-Tal et al. (1991) these are: 1) expertise, 2) objectivity, 3) understanding, 4) subjective compassion, 5) acquaintance, 6) like-mindedness, 7) intuition, 8) transference, 9) association, 10) friendship, 11) opinion (acceptance of an opinion), 12) personality traits.

In the expertise factor, epistemic authority is viewed as an expert, educated, or experienced individual within a specific field (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). A person whose authority is solely received from their official position tends to inspire less confidence in their authority compared to one who is perceived as a true expert in their field (Goodman, 2010). An individual is unlikely to agree to an authority figure if they do not perceive that person as competent in the relevant area of expertise (Maslow, 2022).

The objectivity factor refers to whether the authority's opinion is impartial in relation to a particular sector or activity (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). If the epistemic authority is considered to be lacking objectivity in their judgments, it may lead to the belief that the authority is misusing the position of power, which can result in the authority being viewed as illegitimate (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993; Goodman, 2010).

The understanding factor refers to the epistemic authority's understanding of the needs of those around them (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). In the context of this study, where the epistemic authority is assumed to be the direct supervisor, it is essential for the supervisor to be aware of and consider the needs of employees. This awareness creates a sense of care and empathy of how employees are treated. Recognizing and addressing these needs can encourage employees to be more engaged and effective in their roles (Asmuß & Svennevig, 2009). Genuine interest and concern for employees are crucial components of the epistemic authority structure (Goodman, 2010).

Subjective compassion is described as the authority's interest in the well-being of employees (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). It is important that empathy is demonstrated toward employees.

Acquaintance refers to a situation where the epistemic authority knows the employee personally (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). Research indicates that individuals are likely to respond more formally and reservedly to someone they perceive as an authority unless they get to know the authority's personality and character (Podis & Podis, 1999).

The like-mindedness aspect refers to when the individual identifies a similarity in beliefs, values, or attitudes with the authority (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). If the authority's beliefs and feelings align with those of the individual, it becomes easier and more natural for the individual to perceive and accept that authority as credible and trustworthy (Cottingham, 2014).

The intuition aspect refers to the inner feeling that an individual has, leading them to trust the authority without the need for logical reasoning (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993).

Transference refers to the phenomenon where an individual trusts their epistemic authority because that authority has been, or continues to be, trusted by someone else whom the individual already trusts (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). The process of transference can occur when individuals communicate with others about the positive or negative qualities of an authority figure, thereby shaping the individual's reliance on that authority (Raviv et al., 1993).

Associations occur when an individual perceives similarities between the authority figure and someone they already trust—whether it is an appearance, mindset, or other characteristics—leading to the individual transferring their trust to the authority figure (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993).

Friendship as a basis for trust in authority develops when a friendly relationship exists between the individual and the authority figure (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). The more an authority figure is liked, the greater the likelihood that individuals will adopt their opinions and attitudes (Raviv et al., 1993).

The opinion factor refers to the idea that an epistemic authority's opinion is accepted when it aligns with the views of others and is seen as acceptable rather than contradictory (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). Employees are more likely to trust an authority if the opinions resonate with those around them.

Additionally, personality traits play a significant role in the reliance on epistemic authority. When an authority figure possesses character traits that others perceive as significant or admirable, they are more likely to be seen as a reliable source of knowledge (Bar-Tal et al., 1991; Raviv et al., 1993). An individual may come to view someone as an epistemic authority if they believe that person's personality traits contribute to their expertise and credibility (Raviv et al., 1993).

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study is to investigate the perception of and reliance on the epistemic authority of direct supervisors from different generations, to promote positive collaboration between management and employees.

The research questions: How do employees perceive the epistemic authority of their line managers in general? What are the main reasons for relying on epistemic authority? What are the reasons that influence the perception of epistemic authority? Is there a statistically significant relationship between the perception of epistemic authority and reliance on it? Are there statistically significant differences in the perception of epistemic authority of employees of generations X, Y, Z? Are there statistically significant differences in the reliance on the epistemic authority of employees of generations X, Y, Z?

In the quantitative research methodology, three main questionnaires were used. First, the questionnaire analyzes the epistemic authority profile of line managers using the Epistemic Authority Scale (Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Abin, 1993), which has been adapted for use in Latvia. Second, the questionnaire identifies factors that influence reliance on managers' epistemic authority, utilizing the Reliance on Epistemic Authority survey (Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Abin, 1993), also adapted in Latvia. Finally, the survey includes socio-demographic questions to categorize the respondents.

All statements in the first and second sections of the questionnaire were rated on a six-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). It is important to note that the study employs an unbalanced rating scale, which does not include a neutral midpoint (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The epistemic authority section of the questionnaire was developed by Amiram Raviv, Daniel Bar-Tal, and colleagues (Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Abin, 1993). This part of the questionnaire consists of 17 statements, which are divided into four scales: 1) the level of knowledge the employee attributes to their line manager; 2) reliance on the manager's

knowledge, or the extent to which the employee trusts their line manager's expertise; 3) willingness to change opinion, or whether the employee is open to change their viewpoint under the influence of the line manager; and 4) willingness to change behaviour, or how much the employee is willing to adjust their behaviour based on the line manager's influence. The higher the score on the questionnaire, the stronger the perception of the line manager as an epistemic authority.

The reliance on the epistemic authority section of the questionnaire was developed by Amiram Raviv, Daniel Bar-Tal, and colleagues (Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Abin, 1993). This section consists of 12 factors that assess employees' reliance on their supervisors. Each respondent was asked to rate the 12 factors influencing trust or distrust in their line manager on a 6-point scale.

The study population consists of all employees of the international Greek organization ($N \sim 500+$). The study employed a probability sampling method. A total of 334 respondents will be randomly selected for the quantitative data collection phase, in accordance with probability sampling principles (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The sources of the sampling unit are demographic (respondents are categorized into three generational groups) and geographical (all respondents are employed within the same organization). The author's involvement in the study is minimal, with events observed as they naturally occur. Additionally, an uncontrolled research setting was employed, meaning the research was conducted in a natural environment, without manipulation or interference (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The years of birth of the respondents indicate that not all generations are proportionally represented in the study. Generation X is represented by 56 respondents, or 17% of the total sample. Generation Y creates 67%, or 224 respondents, while Generation Z represents 16%, or 54 respondents. Since Generation Z is still actively entering the labour market, its representation is smaller compared to Generations X and Y. Generation Y, however, is a significant part of the current workforce, and it continues to grow. The majority of respondents, 236 (71%), hold a university degree, suggesting that the interpretation and analysis of the survey data based on educational level is more consistent. Regarding gender distribution, the study shows a quite proportional balance, with 57% female and 43% male respondents.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the two variables were 0.84 and 0.95, indicating that the reliability of these scales is high and even very high. This suggests that the scales measuring the perception of epistemic authority and reliance on epistemic authority are both reliable and highly reliable.

The standard deviation of the study is relatively large, suggesting considerable variation or differences in the responses, particularly when measuring the reasons for reliance on epistemic authority. This indicates that there is a significant level of diversity in how respondents perceive and trust their line managers' epistemic authority.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on these results, we can conclude that since the significance value (p-value) of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test for the variables of perceived epistemic authority and trust in epistemic authority is less than 0.05, the data does not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, non-parametric tests are used for further analysis.

Table 1 Kruskal-Wallis tests: Analysis of generational differences in perception and reliance on epistemic authority

	Generation	Birth Year	N	Arithmetic mean**	Standard deviations	Std. Error	Minimum mark 6-point scale	Maximum mark 6-point scale	Asymp. Sig.
Epistemic authorities Perception	X	1965-1979	56	3.42	0.82	0.11	2	5	0.000*
	Y	1980-1999	224	3.34	0.76	0.05	2	5	
	Z	2000-2015	54	3.85	0.82	0.11	2	5	
	Total		334	3.54	0.80	0.04	1	5	
Reliance on epistemic authority	X	1965-1979	56	2.97	1.57	0.21	1	5	0.005*
	Y	1980-1999	224	3.36	1.23	0.10	1	6	
	Z	2000-2015	54	3.84	0.85	0.12	2	5	
	Total		334	3.39	1.21	0.07	1	6	

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

*sig<0.005

**Likert 6-point scale

The significance value (p-value) of the Kruskal-Wallis test for both variables is less than 0.05, indicating that there are statistically significant differences between the age groups or generations in both the perception of and reliance on epistemic authority.

From the Kruskal-Wallis test results, it is evident that Generation Z perceives their direct supervisor as a strong epistemic authority. In contrast, respondents from both Generation X and Generation Y show similar, moderate levels of perceived epistemic authority towards their direct supervisor.

The data on epistemic authority confidence reveal a similar pattern. Generation Z respondents reflect the highest level of confidence in their line managers' epistemic authority, while Generation X respondents show the lowest levels of confidence.

Interestingly, Generation Z and Generation Y respondents show nearly identical results for both perceived epistemic authority and reliance on their line managers. This suggests a direct correlation between the perception of epistemic authority and the reliance on it; the stronger the perception of a line manager as an epistemic authority, the higher the level of reliance on that authority.

In contrast, Generation X respondents show a discrepancy between their perception of epistemic authority and their reliance on it. While they acknowledge their line manager as an epistemic authority, they are less willing to rely on this authority fully.

Table 2 Perception of epistemic authority

Factors in the perception of epistemic authority	N	Arithmetic mean *	Standard deviations	Minimum mark 6-point scale	Maximum mark 6-point scale
Trust in knowledge	334	3.30	0.94	1.00	6.00
Level of knowledge	334	3.86	1.17	1.00	6.00
Willingness to change behaviour	334	3.08	0.83	1.00	6.00
Willingness to change your mind	334	3.45	1.09	1.00	6.00

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

* Likert 6-point scale

The mean values for all factors of epistemic authority perception are above 3 on the 6-point Likert scale, indicating that line managers are generally seen as positive epistemic authorities.

The two most significant factors influencing the perception of epistemic authority were identified as the manager’s 'level of knowledge' and employees' 'willingness to change their minds.' Among these, the manager's level of knowledge was proved to be the most important. Other factors, such as trust in the manager's knowledge and 'willingness to change one's opinion,' were similarly rated on average. Respondents were less willing to change their behavior under the influence of their line manager, with the average score for this factor just above the midpoint on the 6-point Likert scale, indicating a general reluctance.

The Kruskal-Wallis test reveals statistically significant differences between generations in both the perception of and reliance on epistemic authority (see Table 1). Therefore, the analysis of epistemic authority perception will be presented separately for each generation. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Comparison of perceptions of epistemic authority across generations

Factors in the perception of epistemic authority	N			Arithmetic mean *			Standard deviations			Minimum mark 6-point scale			Maximum mark 6-point scale		
	Generations			Generations			Generations			Generations			Generations		
	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z
Trust in knowledge	56	224	54	3.49	3.14	3.74	0.80	0.93	0.93	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Level of knowledge	56	224	54	3.62	3.74	4.61	1.41	1.08	1.03	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Willingness to change behaviour	56	224	54	3.24	3.09	2.87	0.75	0.82	0.87	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Willingness to change your mind	56	224	54	3.20	3.36	4.06	1.23	1.03	0.87	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

Source: Authors’ calculation in SPSS

* Likert 6-point scale

According to the data, all three generations (X, Y, Z) consider the level of knowledge attributed to their supervisor — the supervisor’s expertise and education in their field — as the most important factor in the perception of epistemic authority. However, Generation X differs from Generation Y and Z in that they view “trust in knowledge” as the second most important factor. For Generation X, it is not sufficient to recognize the manager's knowledge and qualifications; they must also trust the accuracy of their manager’s knowledge for the supervisor to be perceived as an epistemic authority. In contrast, for Generation Y and Z, the second most important factor is the “willingness to change one’s mind”. If employees perceive their line manager as knowledgeable, they are also more likely to adjust their views accordingly. Additionally, the standard deviation in Generation Z respondents’ perceptions is lower than in the other two generations, indicating less variation in their views.

Table 4 An analysis of the reasons for relying on epistemic authority

Factors of reliance on epistemic authority	N	Arithmetic mean *	Standard deviations	Minimum mark in 6-point scale	Maximum mark in 6-point scale
Expertise	334	4.11	1.67	1.00	6.00
Objectivity	334	3.77	1.67	1.00	6.00
Subjective compassion	334	3.68	1.71	1.00	6.00
Understanding	334	3.57	1.73	1.00	6.00
Acquaintance	334	2.89	1.57	1.00	6.00
Like-mindedness	334	2.74	1.43	1.00	6.00
Intuition	334	3.66	1.61	1.00	6.00
Transference	334	2.44	1.56	1.00	6.00
Associations	334	2.66	1.52	1.00	6.00
Friendship	334	3.16	1.60	1.00	6.00
Opinion	334	3.92	1.50	1.00	6.00
Personality traits	334	3.84	1.64	1.00	6.00

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

* Likert 6-point scale

Based on the data, it can be concluded that the three most common factors influencing the reliance on epistemic authority among respondents are the direct supervisor's expertise—being an expert in their field, well-educated, or experienced; the similarity of opinions between the supervisor and employees, or opinions that are acceptable to the employee; and the presence of qualities in the supervisor that the employee considers valuable and meaningful. The standard deviation coefficients are quite similar across all factors of reliance on epistemic authority, suggesting that the differences in respondents' opinions were relatively consistent for all factors. The least important reason for reliance on epistemic authority was identified as transference. This means that the supervisor has not become an authority to their employees simply because they are an authority to someone the employee trusts. Within the context of this study, transference is not considered a significant factor in reliance on epistemic authority.

Table 5 The Spearman correlation coefficients between variables

	Perception of epistemic authority	Reliance on epistemic authority
Perception of epistemic authority	1.00	
Reliance on epistemic authority	0.81***	1.00

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

*** sig<0.000

The correlation analysis of the study shows that the relationship between the perception of epistemic authority and reliance on epistemic authority is statistically significant ($p=0.000$). There is a very strong, positive correlation between the variables – the perception of epistemic authority and trust in epistemic authority ($r = 0.81$; $p = 0.000$), indicating that as the level of perception of epistemic authority increases, trust in epistemic authority also increases, and vice versa. When employees perceive their direct manager as an epistemic authority, they are more likely to trust, rely on, and listen to the manager.

Given that there is a statistically significant, very strong positive correlation between the perception of epistemic authority and reliance on it, the subsequent analysis aimed to examine the strength of the correlation between the factors of perception and reliance on epistemic authority. Four factors of the perception of epistemic authority—“level of knowledge” of the line manager, “trust in knowledge,” “willingness to change opinion,” and “willingness to change behavior” under the line manager’s influence—are marked with “**” in the correlation table. The factors of reliance on epistemic authority—“expertise,” “objectivity,” “subjective compassion,” “awareness,” “familiarity,” “like-mindedness,” “intuition,” “transference,” “associations,” “friendship,” “opinion,” and “personality traits”—are marked with “*” in the correlation table.

Based on the analysis results, it can be concluded that a statistically significant correlation exists between all the factors of perception and reliance on epistemic authority. However, some factors show a very weak or weak correlation. The reliance factors “familiarity” and “transference” reflect a weak correlation with the perception factors of epistemic authority. Their association with the perception of epistemic authority is marginal, meaning that when employees personally know their direct supervisor and/or trust in the epistemic authority (i.e., the supervisor) is transferred from another trusted individual, the perception of epistemic authority increases only minimally. The author is particularly interested in those factors that show a statistically significant and strong correlation.

The factors of “trust in the manager's knowledge” and “willingness to change one's opinion” under the manager's influence reflect a strong positive correlation with the perception factor of “the manager's level of knowledge”—the knowledge attributed by the employee to their supervisor. It can be concluded that the higher the employee values the manager's knowledge, the more they are likely to rely on it and be willing to change their opinion accordingly.

Interestingly, the “willingness to change behavior” factor of epistemic authority perception shows weak to moderate positive correlations with other perception factors. This suggests that respondents are cautious and reluctant to change their behavior under the influence of their manager, even if they believe the manager's knowledge level is high and trustworthy. Specifically, employees are more likely to change their opinion under the manager's influence if they trust the manager's knowledge. However, they are only willing to change their behavior once the other preceding factors have been met. The epistemic authority reliance factor of “expertise” (i.e., the manager's expertise in a specific field) shows a statistically significant, very strong, positive correlation with the epistemic authority perception factor of “knowledge level” ($r=0.86$; $p=0.000$), which refers to the knowledge that employees attribute to their manager. In other words, the more employees attribute knowledge to their manager, the more they will trust the manager's authority, believing the manager is an expert and knowledgeable, and vice versa.

The reliance factor “objectivity” also shows a very strong, positive correlation with the “knowledge level” perception factor ($r=0.81$; $p=0.000$). Additionally, the “objectivity” factor strongly, and positively correlates with the reliance factor “expertise” ($r=0.77$; $p=0.000$). Thus, as one reliance factor increases, the other will also increase, meaning that when employees perceive a manager as biased or using their power unfairly, the perception of the manager's expertise will significantly decrease, and vice versa. This, in turn, will reduce employees' overall reliance on the manager's epistemic authority.

Table 6 Spearman's correlation coefficients between all variable factors

	Knowledge level **	Trust in knowledge **	Willingness to change opinion **	Willingness to change behavior **	Expertise *	Objectivity *	Subjective compassion *	Understanding *	Acquaintance *	Like-mindedness *	Intuition *	Transference *	Associations *	Friendship *	Opinion *	Personality traits *
Knowledge level **	1.00															
Trust in knowledge **	0.68 ***	1.00														
Willingness to change opinion **	0.61 ***	0.48 ***	1.00													
Willingness to change behavior **	0.31 ***	0.49 ***	0.45 ***	1.00												
Expertise *	0.86 ***	0.56 ***	0.58 ***	0.31 ***	1.00											
Objectivity *	0.81 ***	0.55 ***	0.57 ***	0.16 ***	0.77 ***	1.00										
Subjective compassion *	0.78 ***	0.58 ***	0.55 ***	0.27 ***	0.72 ***	0.80 ***	1.00									
Understanding *	0.74 ***	0.57 ***	0.52 ***	0.21 ***	0.70 ***	0.78 ***	0.91 ***	1.00								
Acquaintance *	0.33 ***	0.18 ***	0.36 ***	0.30 ***	0.25 ***	0.14 ***	0.36 ***	0.36 ***	1.00							
Like-mindedness *	0.66 ***	0.46 ***	0.56 ***	0.28 ***	0.61 ***	0.61 ***	0.68 ***	0.65 ***	0.48 ***	1.00						
Intuition *	0.84 ***	0.58 ***	0.58 ***	0.25 ***	0.78 ***	0.75 ***	0.76 ***	0.76 ***	0.35 ***	0.70 ***	1.00					
Transference *	0.29 ***	0.23 ***	0.28 ***	0.28 ***	0.27 ***	0.31 ***	0.37 ***	0.37 ***	0.42 ***	0.46 ***	0.35 ***	1.00				
Associations *	0.57 ***	0.38 ***	0.38 ***	0.30 ***	0.50 ***	0.49 ***	0.54 ***	0.53 ***	0.36 ***	0.60 ***	0.61 ***	0.53 ***	1.00			
Friendship *	0.71 ***	0.52 ***	0.47 ***	0.27 ***	0.63 ***	0.63 ***	0.71 ***	0.68 ***	0.44 ***	0.66 ***	0.74 ***	0.55 ***	0.61 ***	1.00		
Opinion *	0.80 ***	0.54 ***	0.64 ***	0.29 ***	0.77 ***	0.71 ***	0.74 ***	0.76 ***	0.32 ***	0.71 ***	0.82 ***	0.35 ***	0.56 ***	0.69 ***	1.00	
Personality traits *	0.76 ***	0.45 ***	0.54 ***	0.17 ***	0.71 ***	0.73 ***	0.76 ***	0.74 ***	0.27 ***	0.68 ***	0.79 ***	0.35 ***	0.59 ***	0.70 ***	0.81 ***	1.00

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

*** sig<0.000

** Factors of Perception of Epistemic Authority

* Factors of Reliance on Epistemic Authority

The epistemic authority reliance factor of “subjective compassion” shows a strong, positive correlation with the epistemic authority perception factor of “knowledge level” ($r=0.78$; $p=0.000$) and with the trust factor of “expertise” ($r=0.72$; $p=0.000$). Additionally, “subjective compassion” shows a very strong, positive correlation with the trust factor of “objectivity” ($r=0.80$; $p=0.000$). This means that both the manager’s expertise and the level of knowledge attributed to the manager will increase if the manager demonstrates

empathy and shows concern for the well-being of employees. As the “subjective empathy” factor increases, the overall perception of epistemic authority and trust in it will also increase. Therefore, it can be concluded that “subjective compassion” is a very important reliance factor among respondents.

The reliance factor “understanding” shows a strong, positive correlation with the epistemic authority perception factor of “knowledge level” ($r=0.74$; $p=0.000$) and with trust factors such as “expertise” ($r=0.70$; $p=0.000$), “objectivity” ($r=0.74$; $p=0.000$). Furthermore, it demonstrates a particularly strong positive correlation with the factor “subjective compassion” ($r=0.91$; $p=0.000$). Similar to demonstrating empathy, epistemic authority must also understand and consider the needs and values of others, as this will enhance both the perception of epistemic authority and reliance on it among employees. Understanding without empathy is hard to imagine, which also explains the extremely strong positive correlation between the two factors “understanding” and “subjective compassion.”

The reliance factor “like mindedness” shows a strong positive correlation with factors such as “knowledge level” ($r=0.66$; $p=0.000$), “expertise” ($r=0.61$; $p=0.000$), “objectivity” ($r=0.61$; $p=0.000$), “subjective compassion” ($r=0.68$; $p=0.000$), and “understanding” ($r=0.65$; $p=0.000$). When an individual perceives that their way of thinking aligns with the authority’s, the perception and reliance on the other factors will also increase. Therefore, it is essential for the leader to communicate and present their views and ideas in a way that is understandable to everyone, and for the team to have shared goals and tasks.

Similarly, the reliance factor “intuition” shows a strong positive correlation with factors such as “knowledge level” ($r=0.84$; $p=0.000$), “expertise” ($r=0.78$; $p=0.000$), “objectivity” ($r=0.75$; $p=0.000$), “subjective compassion” ($r=0.76$; $p=0.000$), “understanding” ($r=0.76$; $p=0.000$), and “similar thinking” ($r=0.70$; $p=0.000$). Intuition is a factor that is difficult to influence or change, as it is a deeply subjective aspect tied to an individual’s own feelings. Similarly, the reliance factor “associations” also shows a strong positive correlation with both the “intuition” factor ($r=0.60$; $p=0.000$) and “like-mindedness” ($r=0.61$; $p=0.000$). Just like “intuition,” this factor cannot be directly influenced.

The reliance factor “friendship” shows a strong positive correlation with several factors, including “knowledge level” ($r=0.71$; $p=0.000$), “expertise” ($r=0.63$; $p=0.000$), “objectivity” ($r=0.63$; $p=0.000$), “subjective compassion” ($r=0.71$; $p=0.000$), “understanding” ($r=0.68$; $p=0.000$), “like-mindedness” ($r=0.66$; $p=0.000$), “intuition” ($r=0.74$; $p=0.000$), and “associations” ($r=0.74$; $p=0.000$). Similarly, the reliance factor “opinion” shows a strong positive correlation with “knowledge level” ($r=0.80$; $p=0.000$), “willingness to change opinion” ($r=0.64$; $p=0.000$), “expertise” ($r=0.77$; $p=0.000$), “objectivity” ($r=0.71$; $p=0.000$), “subjective compassion” ($r=0.74$; $p=0.000$), “understanding” ($r=0.76$; $p=0.000$), “like-mindedness” ($r=0.71$; $p=0.000$), “intuition” ($r=0.82$; $p=0.000$), and “friendship” ($r=0.69$; $p=0.000$). It is not surprising that the factors “friendship” and “opinion” show a strong correlation with many other factors. When authority is admired and liked, the willingness to accept their opinions and attitudes increases. It is crucial that the authority’s opinion is consistent with others. Individuals tend to trust and accept the messages from authorities more when their goals and needs align. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the employee generations and their needs in order to communicate the message effectively.

The reliance factor “personality traits” shows a strong positive correlation with the epistemic authority perception factor “knowledge level” ($r=0.76$; $p=0.000$). It also forms a strong positive correlation with other epistemic authority reliance factors such as “expertise” ($r=0.71$; $p=0.000$), “objectivity” ($r=0.73$; $p=0.000$), “subjective compassion”

($r=0.76$; $p=0.000$), “understanding” ($r=0.74$; $p=0.000$), “like-mindedness” ($r=0.68$; $p=0.000$), “intuition” ($r=0.74$; $p=0.000$), “friendship” ($r=0.70$; $p=0.000$), and “opinion” ($r=0.81$; $p=0.000$). Thus, if individuals perceive that an authority possesses characteristics that seem significant to them, the attributed level of knowledge of the leader will also increase, along with the previously mentioned reliance factors, thereby enhancing the overall reliance on epistemic authority.

Overall, the reliance factors on epistemic authority that form statistically significant, strong, and very strong correlations with the factors related to perceptions of epistemic authority are “expertise,” “objectivity,” “subjective compassion,” “understanding,” “like-mindedness,” “intuition,” “friendliness,” “opinion,” and “personality traits.” Nearly all of these factors can be influenced, thereby enhancing both the perception of the epistemic authority (in this case, the direct supervisor) and the reliance on it.

Table 7 Regression Analysis

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.82	0.67	0.66	0.47

Source: Authors’ calculation in SPSS

The regression analysis indicates that the adjusted R^2 is 0.66. This means that the independent variables collectively explain more than half (66%) of the variation in the perception of epistemic authority. However, in this context, the R^2 value is considered a moderate effect size. It is acknowledged that R^2 does not necessarily have to be high. For instance, in studies that attempt to explain human behavior, R^2 values are typically below 50%, as human behavior is harder to predict than physical processes. This may also be one reason why the R^2 value in this study is moderate.

Table 8 Regression Coefficients: Perception of Epistemic Authority

	Non-standardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(constant)	1.75	0.08	0.00	.000
Reliance on epistemic authority	0.50	0.02	0.80	.000

Source: Authors’ calculation in SPSS

By measuring the standardized regression coefficients, it is possible to determine the B coefficient, which displays the changes in the dependent variable—the perception of epistemic authority—in response to changes in the independent variable—reliance on epistemic authority. The B coefficient for the variable “reliance on epistemic authority” is 0.50, and this has also been proved as statistically significant ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). The variable “reliance on epistemic authority” has a moderate to strong impact on the dependent variable. The Beta coefficient between the independent variable “reliance on epistemic authority” and the dependent variable “perception of epistemic authority” is 0.8, showing a strong relationship between these variables.

In further research, a regression analysis will be conducted on the perception of epistemic authority with all trust factors. This regression analysis will allow conclusions to be made about which factors of reliance on epistemic authority most strongly influence

the perception of epistemic authority among respondents. The results are summarized in table 9.

Table 9 Coefficients: Regression of Perception of Epistemic Authority with Trust in Epistemic Authority Factors

	Non-standardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(constant)	1.74	0.08	0.00	.000
Expertise	0.13	0.03	0.27	.000
Objectivity	0.05	0.03	0.11	.106
Subjective compassion	0.12	0.04	0.25	.005
Understanding	-0.03	0.04	-0.07	.388
Acquaintance	0.03	0.02	0.06	.172
Like-mindedness	0.06	0.03	0.11	.034
Intuition	.08	.04	0.16	.024
Transference	-0.01	0.02	-0.02	.658
Associations	0.05	0.02	0.09	.047
Friendship	0.06	0.03	0.13	.026
Opinion	0.06	0.04	0.11	.135

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

Analyzing the results, it can first be observed that statistically significant factors of reliance on epistemic authority include “expertise,” “subjective compassion,” “intuition,” “like-mindedness,” “associations,” and “friendship,” as value sig < 0.05. Reliance factors such as “friendship,” “associations,” and “intuition” are highly subjective for each individual, making it difficult for others to influence or modify. To strengthen the belief that individuals and authority share a similar way of thinking, it is essential to understand employees, generations, values, and expectations, thereby addressing in communication what is important to employees while promoting the “like-mindedness” factor, where employees believe their leader thinks similarly to them. To be able to do that, it would require clearly defining the goals and core competencies of organization “X” and establishing a clear profile of the type of employees the organization’s leadership seeks to see working at organization “X.” This would help align all employees within the organization toward one goal. However, the regression analysis shows that the impact of the reliance factor “like-mindedness” on the perception of epistemic authority is quite limited.

The beta coefficient allows to compare the influence strength of each independent variable on the dependent variable—the perception of epistemic authority—we can conclude that the reliance factors with the greatest impact on the perception of epistemic authority are “expertise” ($\beta=0.27$) and “subjective compassion” ($\beta=0.25$). “Expertise” in a particular field is one of the most significant reliance factors. It is challenging to perceive someone as an authority, especially a leader if they are not sufficiently knowledgeable or an expert in their field; this can lead employees to question, resist, or reject the manager’s authority. Interestingly, correlation and regression analyses reveal that “expertise” is not the only critical reliance factor. If managers possess only a high level of expertise, this alone may not be enough for employees to view them as a strong, positive epistemic authority and to rely on them.

The reliance factor of “subjective compassion” has almost as much influence on the perception of epistemic authority as the leader’s “expertise”. It can be argued that empathy is a form of compassion- it is a genuine concern for another person’s well-being. For employees, it is crucial that their direct supervisor understands and cares about their welfare. “Subjective compassion” can be strengthened and encouraged by organizations. Research shows that compassion in the workplace increases employee satisfaction and loyalty. An employee who feels cared for at work is likely to experience positive emotions, which in turn foster positive working relationships, collaboration, and improved client relations (Suttie, 2015).

Table 10 Comparison of Reliance Reasons in Epistemic Authority Across Generations X, Y, and Z

Factors of the reliance on epistemic authority	N			Arithmetic mean*			Standard deviations			Minimum mark 6-point scale			Maximum mark 6-point scale		
	Generations			Generations			Generations			Generations			Generations		
	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z	X	Y	Z
Expertise	56	224	54	3.54	3.98	5.26	1.88	1.64	0.84	1.00	1.00	3.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Objectivity	56	224	54	3.25	3.57	5.15	1.88	1.59	0.81	1.00	1.00	4.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Subjective compassion	56	224	54	3.04	3.65	4.50	1.74	1.68	1.10	1.00	1.00	2.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Understanding	56	224	54	2.71	3.59	4.39	1.72	1.74	1.18	1.00	1.00	2.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Acquaintance	56	224	54	2.54	3.16	2.15	1.70	1.62	0.73	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	4.00
Like-mindedness	56	224	54	2.71	2.65	3.13	1.72	1.40	1.10	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	5.00
Intuition	56	224	54	3.21	3.58	4.50	1.99	1.53	1.12	1.00	1.00	2.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Transference	56	224	54	2.50	2.62	1.67	1.65	1.61	0.89	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	4.00
Associations	56	224	54	2.18	2.77	2.70	1.55	1.50	1.51	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	5.00
Friendship	56	224	54	3.18	3.11	3.35	1.90	1.53	1.54	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Opinion	56	224	54	3.39	3.86	4.69	1.93	1.42	0.92	1.00	1.00	3.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Personality traits	56	224	54	3.43	3.75	4.65	2.08	1.46	0.97	1.00	1.00	3.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

Source: Authors' calculation in SPSS

*Likert 6-point scale

All three generations identified “expertise” as the most important factor for epistemic reliance, emphasizing the importance of the authority being an expert in their field, well-educated, or experienced. Although this reason for reliance is the most significant across all generations, the data suggests that trust levels vary notably between generations (see Table 3.11). Respondents from Generation X reflect the lowest level of reliance, with a mean rating of just above 3 (i.e., 3.54) on a 6-point scale, indicating a moderate level of trust even for the highest-rated factor within this generation. Respondents from Generation Y show a slightly higher level of epistemic authority reliance than those from Generation X but significantly lower than Generation Z. Among Generation Y respondents, reliance on epistemic authority is classified as “somewhat yes rather than no,” indicating a level above moderate. Generation Z respondents, however, show a relatively high degree of reliance on epistemic authority, rating “expertise” as the most important factor, with an average score above 5 (i.e., 5.26) on a 6-point Likert scale. For both Generations X and Y, the next two most highly rated factors for epistemic authority reliance are shared “opinion”—suggesting the importance of the authority sharing similar views and beliefs to those of the employees—and “personality traits”, indicating that it is important for authority to have personality traits that these generations value.

Generation Z respondents showed different priorities for reasons of reliance. The next two most important reasons for epistemic authority reliance for Generation Z are shared “opinion” with the authority and “subjective compassion”. For Generation Z, it is important that authority figures can listen, understand, and are genuinely concerned about individuals' well-being.

In contrast, Generation X respondents evaluated “association” as the least important factor for reliance. For them, it does not matter if the authority figure (e.g., a manager) resembles another trusted individual; this similarity does not influence their reliance on epistemic authority. For both Generations Y and especially Z, the least important factor for trusting epistemic authority is “transference.” These individuals generally do not place trust in epistemic authority simply because others they trust endorse that authority. This suggests that for Generations Y and particularly Z, other people's opinions hold minimal influence, and thus, the impact of such factors is negligible.

5. CONCLUSION

Overall, the employees of the international organization “X” perceive their direct supervisor as a positive epistemic authority, with an average rating of 3.44 on a 6-point Likert scale for epistemic authority perception. This suggests that employees view their supervisor as knowledgeable and are willing to listen to and even adjust their own opinions and behaviors under the supervisor's influence.

The most important reasons for epistemic authority reliance among respondents are the supervisor's “personality traits,” “opinion,” and “expertise.” This indicates that employees value not only the supervisor's expertise in their field but also personality traits they consider important, as well as an opinion that is accepted and respected among employees.

All generations identified the supervisor's “expertise” or competence in the specific field, as the most important reliance factor, with an average rating of 4.11 on a 6-point Likert scale. This indicates that employees, regardless of generation, are most likely to trust the supervisor's epistemic authority if they view them as an expert in the relevant field.

Based on regression analysis, the statistically significant factors influencing perceptions of epistemic authority are: “expertise,” “subjective compassion,” “intuition,” “opinion,” “association,” and “friendship.”

The factors of epistemic authority reliance with the greatest impact on the perception of epistemic authority are “expertise” ($\beta=0.27$) and “subjective compassion” ($\beta=0.25$). This suggests that, for employees to perceive a supervisor as an epistemic authority, it is crucial that the supervisor demonstrates empathy and expertise in their field.

There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of epistemic authority and reliance on it, with a very strong positive correlation between the two variables ($r=0.81$, $p=0.000$). This indicates that changes in the perception of epistemic authority are strongly associated with changes in reliance toward it, and vice versa.

All 12 factors of epistemic authority reliance have a statistically significant correlation with factors influencing the perception of epistemic authority ($p<0.000$). Factors such as “subjective compassion” ($r=0.76$), “understanding” ($r=0.74$), “opinion” ($r=0.66$), and “friendship” ($r=0.71$) reflect a strong positive correlation, while “expertise” ($r=0.86$), “objectivity” ($r=0.81$), “intuition” ($r=0.84$), and “opinion” ($r=0.80$) demonstrate a very strong positive correlation with the perception of epistemic authority. This

suggests that if employees perceive their supervisor as empathetic, understanding, objective, and knowledgeable, and if the supervisor's opinions are acceptable to them, the supervisor's epistemic authority increases, leading employees to place greater trust in and reliance on their supervisor.

Statistically significant differences exist in the perception of epistemic authority among employees from Generations X, Y, and Z, primarily in the level of perception. Generation Z respondents reported the highest level of perceived epistemic authority in their direct supervisor, with an average rating of 3.85 on a 6-point Likert scale. In comparison, both Generations X and Y had similar perceptions, with average ratings of 3.42 (X) and 3.34 (Y) on the same scale. This indicates that Generation Z employees perceive their direct supervisor as a greater epistemic authority, viewing them as more knowledgeable and being more willing to adjust their views than employees from Generations X and Y.

All generations identified the supervisor's "expertise" or the knowledge attributed to them by employees, as the most important factor in the perception of epistemic authority. The knowledge level across generations was rated with an average of 3.86 on a 6-point Likert scale, indicating that employees across all generations expect their supervisor to be knowledgeable; only then will the supervisor be perceived as an epistemic authority by employees.

Statistically significant differences in reliance on epistemic authority exist among employees from Generations X, Y, and Z. The highest level of reliance on epistemic authority is observed in Generation Z, with an average score of 3.84 on the Likert scale, while Generation X respondents reported the lowest level, with an average score of 2.97. Generation Y's reliance on epistemic authority is moderate, with an average score of 3.36. This indicates that Generation Z employees are the most trusting and reliant on their direct supervisor as an epistemic authority, whereas Generation X employees exhibit much lower trust and are less willing to rely fully on their supervisor's epistemic authority.

This study is significant as it highlights the importance for leaders and managers at all organizational levels to recognize the differences and similarities among generational cohorts. Leaders need to be attentive to these generational distinctions, focusing on each cohort's preferred management styles, perception of authority, trust in authority, and preferred communication methods. By using strategic approaches to meet these unique preferences, leaders can enhance work efficiency and performance outcomes. Elevating the perception and trust in direct supervisors' epistemic authority could potentially yield positive effects on organizational outcomes such as employee retention, satisfaction levels, and job performance.

This research is likely to be of interest not only to leaders and HR professionals but to all employees, regardless of their role or industry. With more generations working and interacting together in the workplace than ever before, understanding each other is key to fostering mutual respect, collaboration, and productivity.

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PERCEPCIJA EPISTEMIČKOG AUTORITETA DIREKTNIH NADREĐENIH I OSLOJ NA NJEGA KOD ZAPOSLENIH RAZLIČITIH GENERACIJA U GRČKOJ ORGANIZACIJI „X“

Međunarodna organizacija u Grčkoj zapošljava najmanje tri generacije — X, Y i Z. Razumevanje faktora koji utiču na percepciju i oslanjanje na epistemički autoritet među ovim generacijama je od suštinskog značaja. Takvi uvidi bi omogućili organizacionim liderima da se pozabave i prilagode ovim razlikama, čime bi se povećao nivo percepcije i oslanjanja na epistemički autoritet direktnih nadređenih. Ovo bi moglo pozitivno uticati na različite ishode, uključujući učinak na poslu, fluktuaciju zaposlenih, postizanje ključnih indikatora učinka (KPI), integraciju i angažovanje zaposlenih i druge organizacione ciljeve. Epistemički autoritet se proučava kao jedan od najznačajnijih oblika autoriteta, uz pretpostavku da je veća verovatnoća da će ljudi verovati i slagati se sa nekim koga vide kao poznavaoča ili stručnjaka u datoj oblasti—tj., epistemičkim autoritetom. Kada se autoritet osobe zasniva isključivo na njenom službenom položaju, to podstiče manje oslanjanja nego kada se smatra stručnjakom u svojoj oblasti. Ovakva percepcija stručnjaka pojačava osećaj autoriteta i podstiče veće poverenje u njega. Primarni cilj ove studije je da istraži percepciju i oslanjanje na epistemički autoritet direktnih supervizora iz različitih generacija, da promoviše pozitivnu saradnju između menadžmenta i zaposlenih. Rezultati studije odražavaju da, generalno, zaposleni u organizaciji „X“ percipiraju direktne supervizore kao pozitivne epistemičke autoritete. Utvrđene su statistički značajne razlike u percepciji epistemičkog autoriteta i poverenju u njega među zaposlenima iz generacije X Y i Z. Najvažniji razlozi za oslanjanje na epistemički autoritet, kako tvrde ispitanici, su „osobine ličnosti“, „mišljenja“ supervizora, „i „stručnost“ u relevantnoj oblasti. Faktori koji su najjače uticali na percepciju epistemičkog autoriteta bili su „stručnost“ i „subjektivno saosećanje“.

Ključne reči: *epistemički autoritet, X,Y,Z generacije, generacijske razlike, međunarodna organizacija*