

GENERATIONS AND REMOTE WORK – COMPANIES SCOPE

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Purpose: In recent years remote work has gained popularity due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced employers to implement a remote work; growing importance of digital technologies is also important. Therefore, author decided to check the entrepreneurs willingness to implement remote work, taking into account generational differences.

Design/methodology/approach: In order to examine the problem, author conducted his own survey (survey at the sample of N = 132 entrepreneurs). The research method used is mainly a standardized survey conducted based on a questionnaire consisting of closed questions and a Likert scale. In addition, basic theoretical issues regarding remote work and differences between generations on the labor market were discussed.

Findings: Studies allowed to learn about the feelings of entrepreneurs in relation to the performance of remote work by employees from various generations. Generally, it can be observed a general tendency: the younger employees, the greater the entrepreneurs' propensity to implement remote work. The research hypotheses will be explained thanks to the analysis of the results of the conducted own study.

Research limitations/implications: The research presented in this article should be continued. In the following years, they can be enriched with research from the employees perspective, as well as to study the feelings of entrepreneurs regarding employees from the alpha generation.

Originality/value: The author's own research enriches the literature by examining employers' attitudes regarding their approach to implementing remote work among employees representing different generations. The results of this research can be used both by employees (in order to learn what their potential employers feel about remote work), but also by managers/entrepreneurs (knowledge from this research may be useful when managing an enterprise and making personnel decisions).

Keywords: Employees, generation, remote work, home office.

Category of the paper: Research paper, viewpoint.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has in many ways revolutionized economic systems around the world. It undoubtedly accelerated the growth of interest in remote work, which marked a significant turning point in the global labor market. Aspects such as the introduction of

sanitary restrictions, for example, forced work participants to adapt to new conditions in which the home became an important and, in some cases, even the main place for performing work duties. This difficult situation has demonstrated the potential of remote work as a flexible solution that can benefit both employers and employees (Dolot, 2020).

Working remotely makes it easier for employees to manage their own time, which can ultimately ensure work-life balance. By eliminating the need for daily commutes, employees gain time for rest or other home responsibilities. Remote work can help increase productivity if employees have the opportunity to work in the proper conditions at home, without distractions. Such workplace flexibility can be particularly appreciated, for example, by those raising children (Wray-Lake et al., 2011; Sako, 2021). Finally, remote work can include creative activities such as online brainstorming (Gajdzik et al., 2022a, 2022b).

However, despite the many advantages, not all employees can take benefits of remote work. First of all, many professions require physical presence at the workplace. This is especially true in industries such as for example manufacturing, construction, transportation and healthcare. Intergenerational differences also play an important role in terms of adaptation to remote work. Younger generations who grew up in the digital age tend to be more familiar with modern technology and adapt more easily to remote work. Z generation and millenials are more likely to use communication tools such as video conferencing, instant messaging and online collaboration platforms – for example, Slack (Gajdzik et al., 2022a, 2022b). For them, remote work does not pose a major technological challenge, moreover, it can be often seen as a natural way to perform professional duties.

In contrast, older generations, especially baby boomers, may find it difficult to adapt to the new work model. Lack of proficiency with information technology and attachment to traditional work methods can be barriers to effectively taking advantage of remote work opportunities. For many older employees, the transition to remote work involves learning new technical skills and changing work habits, which can be a stressful and time-consuming process (Wyn, Woodman, 2007; Sako, 2021; Dolot, 2020).

The aim of the work is to compare employers' feelings and plans regarding the implementation of remote work among employees from different generations. Accordingly, the author hypothesizes that entrepreneurs take into account age differences between employees when deciding to implement remote work (main hypothesis).

In addition to this, auxiliary hypotheses are posed:

- employees from younger age groups (i.e., Y and Z generations) are perceived by employers as more adaptable to remote work;
- baby boomers and X generation employees, though, according to respondents, are less adapted to remote work, although, of course, such a solution is also possible among them;
- other difficulties are highlighted in relation to employees from different age groups.

These hypotheses will be verified based on the analysis of empirical data – data collected as a result of our own research.

2. Various generations on labor market – characteristics

According to the general definition, the generation is a community consisting of individuals – the assignment of individual units to a given generation is primarily determined by the age criterion. This approach necessarily leads to generalizations, but, however, allows, at least to some extent, to analyze communities whose members have common historical and social experience and show some characteristic behaviors (in these considerations, such a common feature may be, for example, a form of professional activity). However, as Mannheim notes (Mannheim, 1992-1993), not only year of birth, but more, i.e. the community of experiences, should decide about belonging to a given generation.

It should therefore be noted that there are many differences between generations and all classifications should not be reduced to general frameworks (Roberts, 2009). The differences between generations are also conditioned by the context of life, the specificity of work, culture and finally socioeconomic conditions. It means that assigning certain characteristics to individual generations and drawing conclusions on the entire generation on this basis may be unfounded.

Baby boomers generation

Baby boomers generation (its members are also commonly referred to as so-called boomers) – despite the fact that it includes mature people – still exerts an extremely strong impact on shaping the modern labor market; this meaning is indisputable, although three more generations have entered the labor market over the last few dozen years (more information regarding these generations is later in this consideration). Baby boomers are still an important element of the modern labor market, although it cannot be ignored that due to their advanced age, their importance in the labor market is systematically decreasing. Despite that, baby boomers hold high managerial positions, being high-class specialists and/or having own businesses. Their motto on the labor market is: "I work to survive" (Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2015).

Representatives of this generation, which includes people born in 1947-1964, i.e. during the post-war demographic growth, are characterized by ambition and attachment of great importance to the development of a professional career. It is reflected in their commitment to work, which can even turn into workaholism. Baby boomers devoted a lot of effort and determination to climb the career ladder; it made them experienced and valued employees (Stam, 2003).

Baby boomer generation is characterized by a high need for stability and security in professional life. For them, remuneration is a key motivational factor; prestige, appreciation and recognition are important for their professional satisfaction, too. They prefer a traditional career, best developed within one organization. However, they have difficulty in defining and expressing their needs and expectations, which may cause frustration. Additionally, they are reluctant to introduce changes in the workplace.

As for baby boomers, another characteristic feature is loyalty to the employer. Employment stability is a factor that plays a key role for representatives of this generation, which translates into relatively low rotation. Baby boomers are a group of employees who particularly value permanent, predictable employment conditions, because this is due to their pursuit of a sense of security and life stability (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz, 2014).

Generally, baby boomers are people who adopt a fairly conservative attitude towards new technologies. It may result from their attachment to traditional working methods; the effect is less confidence in innovative solutions. This feature can be a challenge in the era of dynamically developing modern technological solutions, which, however, does not mean that you can depreciate the experience and qualifications of these mature employees – these features can be a valuable advantage from enterprises as employers point of view (Mustajab et al., 2021).

Baby boomers show a fairly conservative approach to way they work, which results from their attachment to traditional methods and office environment. This generation, shaped at a time when remote work was not widely available, gained habit to physical presence in the workplace and direct contact with colleagues (Stam, 2003).

Of course, it does not mean that baby boomers do not use remote work at all. On the contrary, in recent years, especially in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, many of them have been forced to adapt to new realities. Nevertheless, for a significant part of this generation, the traditional office environment remains the optimal way to perform professional duties (Balkhair, 2020; Dolot, 2021; Mustajab et al., 2021; World Health Organization, 2020).

X generation

X generation is a term describing a group of people (employees) born from mid 1960s to mid 1980s. Although the definition of this generation may vary depending on the source, in this case there is attention to certain characteristics that allow you to describe this group.

X is a generation growing up during social, technological and economic changes that occurred in the world at the end of twentieth century. Representatives of this generation experienced economic recession manifested among others high unemployment (Wojciechowska, 2017).

One of the characteristic features of X generation is a pragmatic approach regarding professional life. Representatives of this generation are referred to as people with a realistic approach to life and independent.

Representatives of X generation currently dominate the labor market. Experienced and often highly qualified, they also stand out due to their strong commitment to work. This is probably due – at least partly – to the fact that the initial stage of their professional life coincided with difficult times of economic transformation (it applies to Poland, where the economy in the 1990s underwent serious perturbations, manifested, among others, by an increase in unemployment). The motto of X generation employees is: "I live to work" (Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2015).

X generation is also known for its involvement in a career, often understood as many years of work in one enterprise (the issue of discussion is how much loyalty results from a sense of attachment to a given organization, and to what extent it is a manifestation of fear of uncertainty). Representatives of this group are rather reluctant to change work or industry, although of course the degree of mobility depends on the character traits of individual units or demand for qualifications. Representatives of X generation growing up during economic uncertainty. The main driving force of their activities is the development of a professional career, and they derive great satisfaction from promotions and stable employment within one company. People from X generation are characterized by orientation for success and a desire to independence in making decisions. They conscientiously perform their duties and respect the authority of their superiors, although the hierarchy is valued to a lesser extent than their parents belonging to the baby boomers generation (Wojciechowska, 2017).

Y generation

Y generation (millennials) is a demographic group covering people born in 1981-1996. It is currently one of the largest part of the population in the world, but of course its participation differs in individual countries (Brief, 2017). One feature of Y generation is growing up in the digital era of transformation. Millennials had to experience the technological revolution represented by personal computers, smartphones and social media, while some of these solutions were not yet widely available during the adolescent period of millennials. This reality enriched with digital solutions shaped their way of thinking, communication and approach to professional life and obtaining information (Wojciechowska, 2017; Brief, 2017).

Y generation has experienced the benefits of using new technologies to a much greater extent (either in private or professional life). Currently, Y generation can be identified with specialists who have long professional experience or run a business. The leitmotif of employees from this generation is: "I work to live", because they appreciate the importance of work-life balance to a greater extent than baby boomers or X generation (Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2015).

Y generation is a group of people who prefer a task-based work system, where self-fulfillment is of great importance. What counts in their approach to employment is compliance with priorities and passion. A friendly atmosphere in the workplace, as well as a high need for recognition and prestige, play an important role. They expect an attractive remuneration package, while taking into account family values. They focus on continuous personal and

professional development. Another characteristic of the Y generation is a strong sense of individualism; it at least partly explains why millennials are looking for such employment, which will give them not only a sufficiently high salary, but also professional satisfaction and the opportunity for personal development. At the same time, this generation is also referred to as more oriented and focused on achieving success (Wyn, Woodman, 2006).

Z generation

The Z generation, which is also referred to in the literature as post-millennials or iGeneration, is a demographic group covering people born from 1997 to 2012. First of all, this is the first generation that totally grew up in the digital era, i.e. with widespread access to the Internet; this factor is one of the elements that distinguish the generation from the previous (Messyasz, 2021; Wrzesień, 2015).

Z generation currently constitutes over one third of the global population. The number of its representatives will soon exceed the number of millennials. In the USA, Gen Z already constitutes over a quarter of society and is considered the most diverse generation in the country's history. There are around 10 million people in this age group in the UK, making up around 15% of the population. In Poland, about 8.9 million, which is almost 23%. More and more of them are starting their studies and professional careers.

Z generation is described as the most revolutionary in history. Their share in the labor market is growing rapidly, and it is predicted that by 2030 they will constitute 30% of employees. This group's income will increase almost sevenfold, reaching \$3.2 trillion, and their consumer spending will increase more than sixfold, accounting for 11% of total economic spending (Oxford Economics, 2021; Messyasz, 2021).

The immanent feature of the Z generation is the "immersion" of its representatives in digital technology. For this generation, people are also referred to as "digital natives", because from an early age (childhood) they have access to modern technologies and smartphones, social media or video streaming – these are solutions that have become an integral part of their everyday life. Such a close relationship with technology is a factor that largely shapes the way of perceiving the world, communication with the environment and making decisions (France, Roberts, 2015; Pyżalski, Batorski, Michalska, 2018; MacDonald, 2011).

Z generation are employees who, not without reason, are also called the Hashtagnation generation – generation which seems to attach less importance to professional career and more to well-being. Genzie's life motto is: "Work should allow me to live well". This should not be ignored by employers or management staff in enterprises, considering the fact that over the years the labor market (both domestic and global) will be increasingly based on Z generation employees (Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2015).

All this means that the Z generation can be an interesting subject of consideration regarding approach of "genzie" to a professional career (Kelly, 2006). At the same time, it should be borne in mind that representatives of the Z generation must take into account the problem of

precarization, i.e. such employment that does not give stability and high salary (Standing, 2011). Table 1 summarizes selected differences between the generations.

Table 1.
Generations: baby boomers, X, Y, Z – differences

Criterion	Baby boomers	X generation	Y generation	Z generation
Birth years	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-1996	1997-2012
Independence	More independent	Independent	Quite often live with parents longer, less independent	More independent, become independent faster
Approach to finances	Frugal, invest long-term	More risk-taking, invest in new technologies	Cautious, prefer safe investments	Interested in ethical and sustainable investments
Approach to technology	Distrustful of new technologies	Open to new technologies	Skilled in using new technologies	Raised in the digital era, skilled in using new technologies
Approach to work	Work hard, believe in job stability	Work hard, but more flexible	Seek work-life balance	Focused on rapid growth, expect clear goals and career paths
Approach to tradition	Strong attachment to tradition	Attached to tradition, but more open to change	Less attachment to tradition	Less attachment to tradition, prefer innovation
Communication	Prefer traditional meetings, distrustful of new technologies	Prefer traditional communication, but open to new technologies	Open to new technologies, prefer online communication	Raised in the digital era, communicate mainly online
Approach to education	Education as a path to a stable career	Education for personal growth	Education as an investment	Education as a tool for changing the world
Approach to health	Traditional treatment methods, less health-conscious	More health-conscious, interested in new trends	Health awareness, interest in holistic approach	Proactive approach to health, interested in new technologies
Approach to environment	Less environmental awareness	Growing environmental awareness	Strong commitment to environmental protection	Strong commitment to sustainable development and environmental protection
Life values	Family, stability, security	Individualism, independence, work-life balance	Work matters, but work-life balance	Social responsibility, sustainable development, diversity
Approach to authorities	Strong attachment to authorities	Believe in authorities, but not as strongly as Baby Boomers	Less respect for authorities	Question authorities, prefer making decisions independently

Source: France, Roberts, 2015; France, 2016; Wrzesień, 2015.

So, as you can see, the different generations differ in virtually all aspects concerning daily functioning. Especially abovementioned examples are issues in which differences can be observed: attitudes toward modern technologies and the way of learning or doing work, the way of communicating with the environment, professed values or recognition of authorities.

Of course, it should be borne in mind that each generation is an extremely complex and multi-dimensional community, and the above-mentioned features and attitudes are only general observations reflecting social, technological and economic changes, which have occurred in recent decades (Wray-Lake et al., 2011; Wyn, Woodman, 2007; Sako, 2021).

3. Remote work – characteristics

Remote work is a form of work organization in which the employee performs his duties outside the traditional workplace, usually at home or other location of his choice. It is possible thanks to the use of modern communication and information technologies such as computers, internet, video conference applications and tools for remote cooperation. Remote work differs from traditional work because employees do not have to be physically in the office to perform his tasks. Instead, they can work from anywhere, still having access to the necessary equipment and internet connection (Dingel, Neiman, 2020; Choudhury, 2020; Bailey, Kurland, 2002). The development of remote work is one of the elements of the digital revolution and the concept known as Industry 4.0 (Czerwińska-Lubczyk et al., 2022a, 2022b).

Thus, remote work is a form of employment in which duties are performed in a place away from the place of activity of the employer. With regard to remote work, it is noted that the work results are sent to the employer via modern solutions, in this case: information and communication technologies. This definition has a fairly general nature and, in principle, it is consistent with what he says about remote work colloquially (Galinsky, 2021).

Table 2 presents some differences between remote and stationary work.

Table 2.
Home office and stationary work

Feature	Remote work	Office work
Work location	Any location chosen by the employee, e.g., home or co-working space	Company's office premises
Team interaction	Hindered direct contact as communication occurs online	Direct interaction and communication with the team
Costs for employer	Lower office maintenance costs	Higher office and workstation maintenance costs
Work-life Balance	Potentially better work-life balance	Harder to separate work and personal life
Commuting	No need for commuting	Commuting to the workplace is necessary
Work hour Flexibility	Greater flexibility, although employers may impose strict working hours	Fixed working hours set by the employer
Productivity	May be higher due to fewer distractions or lower due to isolation	May be higher due to direct interaction or lower due to typical office distractions

Source: Galinsky, 2021; Dingel, Neiman, 2020; Choudhury, 2020; Bailey, Kurland, 2002.

Properly implemented, remote work can bring numerous benefits to both employers and employees. On the corporate side, it enables companies to lower operating costs by reducing the need for office space, as well as reducing expenses for utilities and office maintenance. In addition, remote work allows hiring of top professionals regardless of their geographic location, increasing the pool of talent and competencies available to organizations. From the employees' perspective, the flexible remote working model translates into savings in time and money associated with commuting to the office, as well as a better work-life balance. Employees gain more freedom to manage their own time, which can translate into higher productivity and job satisfaction. In addition, working remotely eliminates the need to move for a new job, which increases job stability and employees' sense of security (Licite-Kurbe, Leonovica, 2021; Dingel, Brent, 2020).

4. Research & Methodology

The survey for the purposes of this study was conducted between May 7 and June 5, 2024 and was addressed to entrepreneurs and managers from SME companies. In order to obtain information, an online survey was prepared – online forms were used using MS Forms and consisted of closed, single- and multiple-choice questions and ratings on a 5-point Likert scale.

According to the author, this form of survey is appropriate – thanks to the digital form, data analysis is much simpler and allows to present results in an accessible form. Moreover, online version of the survey is a convenient solution for the respondents themselves – they can provide answers in a comfortable way. Survey was addressed to entrepreneurs from Masovian Voivodeship. Author decided on this solution because, in his opinion, extending the study to the entire country would require a significant increase size of the research sample. Moreover, a study conducted on respondents from the entire country would also require taking into account analysis of differences between individual regions of Poland, which is beyond the researcher's capabilities.

As already mentioned, the survey – in addition to closed questions – also uses a 5-point Likert scale in order to obtain answers in numerical form, which allows for comparison of assessments made in relation to employees from different age groups.

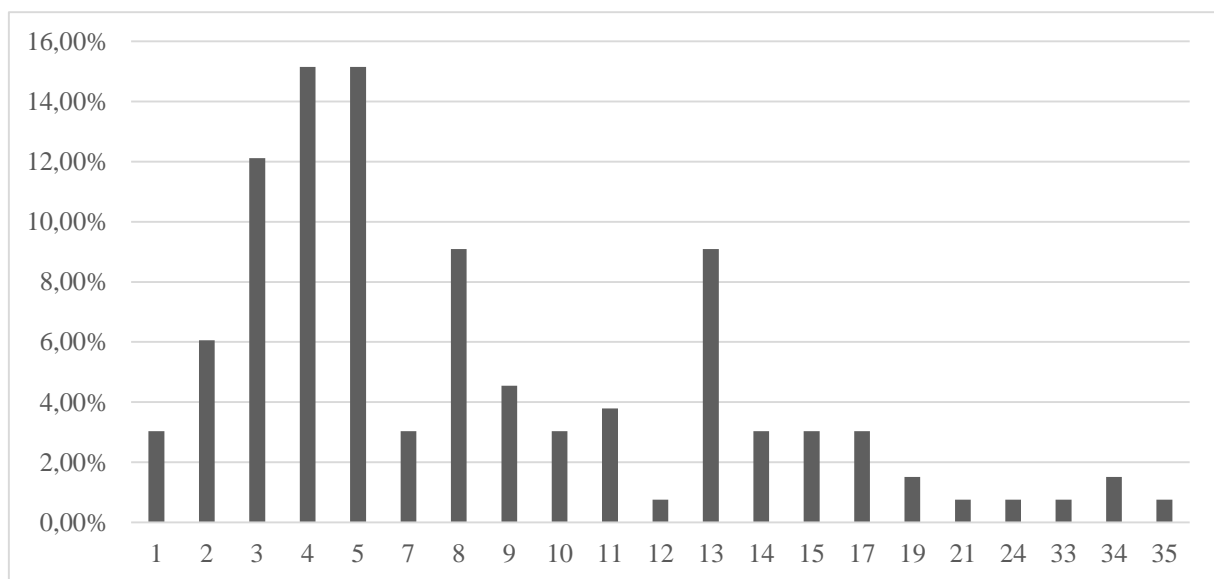
The initial set of three questions covered general topics such as company profile, number of employees and years of market activities, while the next 10 questions focused on respondents' attitudes toward hiring employees and contractors during periods of high inflation. A total of 132 entrepreneurs took part in the study. Below (Table 3) is a summary of research sample based on the answers to questions 1-3.

Table 3.*Basic information about the research sample*

Feature	Number of replies	(%)
Area of activity	132	100%
<i>Trade</i>	32	24,24%
<i>Production</i>	4	3,03%
<i>Services</i>	96	72,73%
Number of employees	Min. value = 1 Max. value = 280 18,18 (standard deviation = 41,26) After skipping 10% of the most extreme (highest) values: 7,20 (standard deviation = 6,75)	
The average age of the company on the market (years)	Min. value = 1 Max. value = 35 8,27 (standard deviation = 6,65)	

Source: study based on own research.

The surveyed group of respondents are entrepreneurs and managers representing entities from different business sectors, diversified both in terms of the number of employees and years of operation in the market. Figure 1 shows the respondents in terms of how long the surveyed companies have been in business.

**Figure 1.** The average age of the company on the market (in years).

Source: study based on own research.

In turn, Figure 2 shows the distribution of surveyed companies considering number of employees. It can be inferred from it that mainly SME enterprises were surveyed.

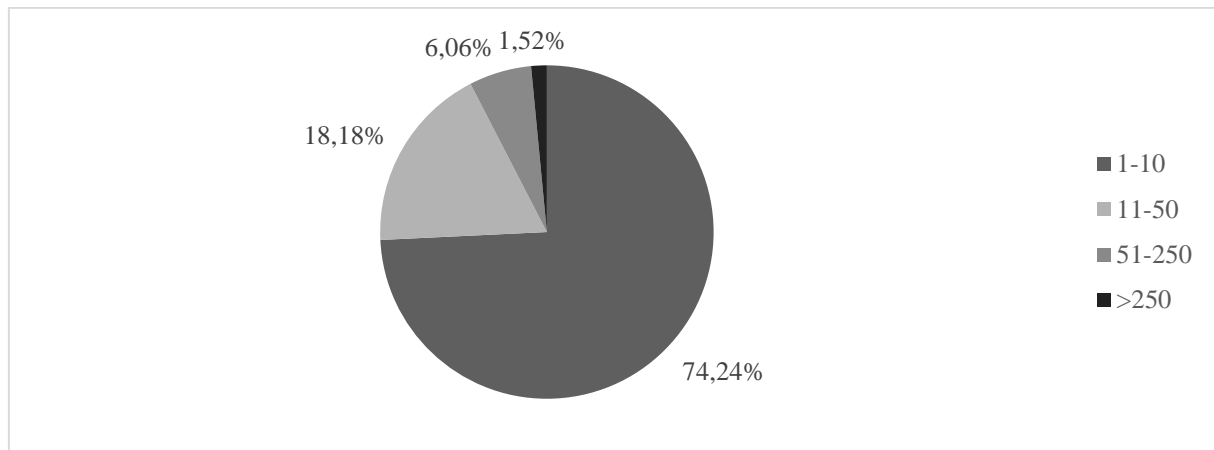


Figure 2. Number of employees.

Source: study based on own research.

As you can see from the answers to question 4, remote work is used, but not necessarily commonly used (Figure 3).

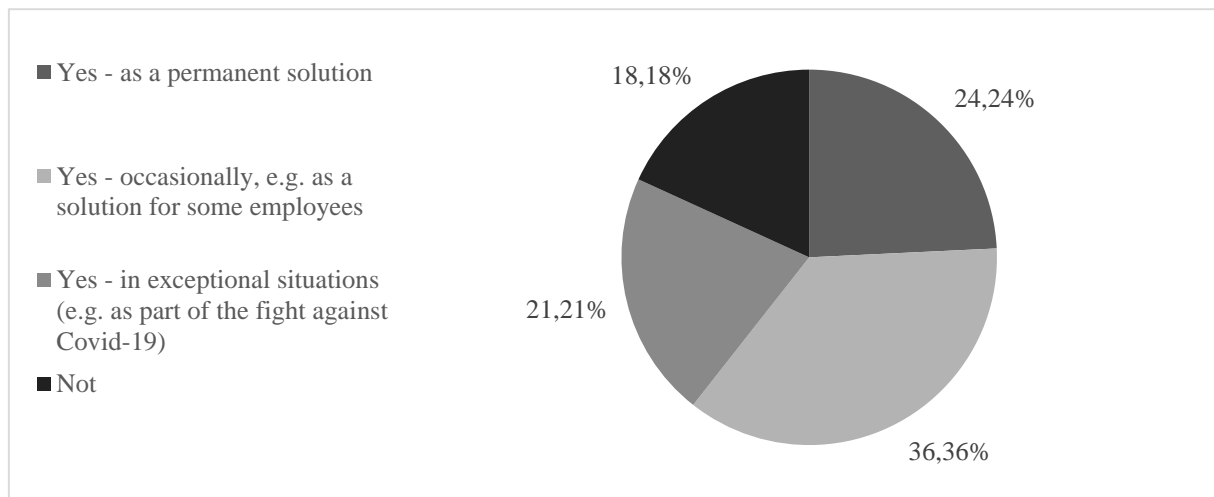


Figure 3. Do you use remote work in your company (replies to question 4)?

Source: study based on own research.

According to data, 60.6% of companies at present use remote work in some form. The largest percentage (36.36%) are companies that offer remote work occasionally or for selected employees. This may suggest that many organizations treat remote work as an flexible option, adapted to their and employees individual needs. 24.24% of companies have implemented remote work permanently, which indicates a significant change in the work model in these organizations. This may be due to experience with Covid-19 pandemic or other factors, such as cost savings, greater efficiency or employee preferences. 21.21% of companies use remote work only in exceptional situations, such as Covid-19 for example. It suggests that these organizations treat remote work as a temporary solution, not a permanent strategy. Only 18.18% of companies do not use remote work at all. It may result from the nature of their activities, security requirements or management preferences.

In the next question, respondents were asked to answer their opinions about the effects of remote work (replies shown in Figure 4):

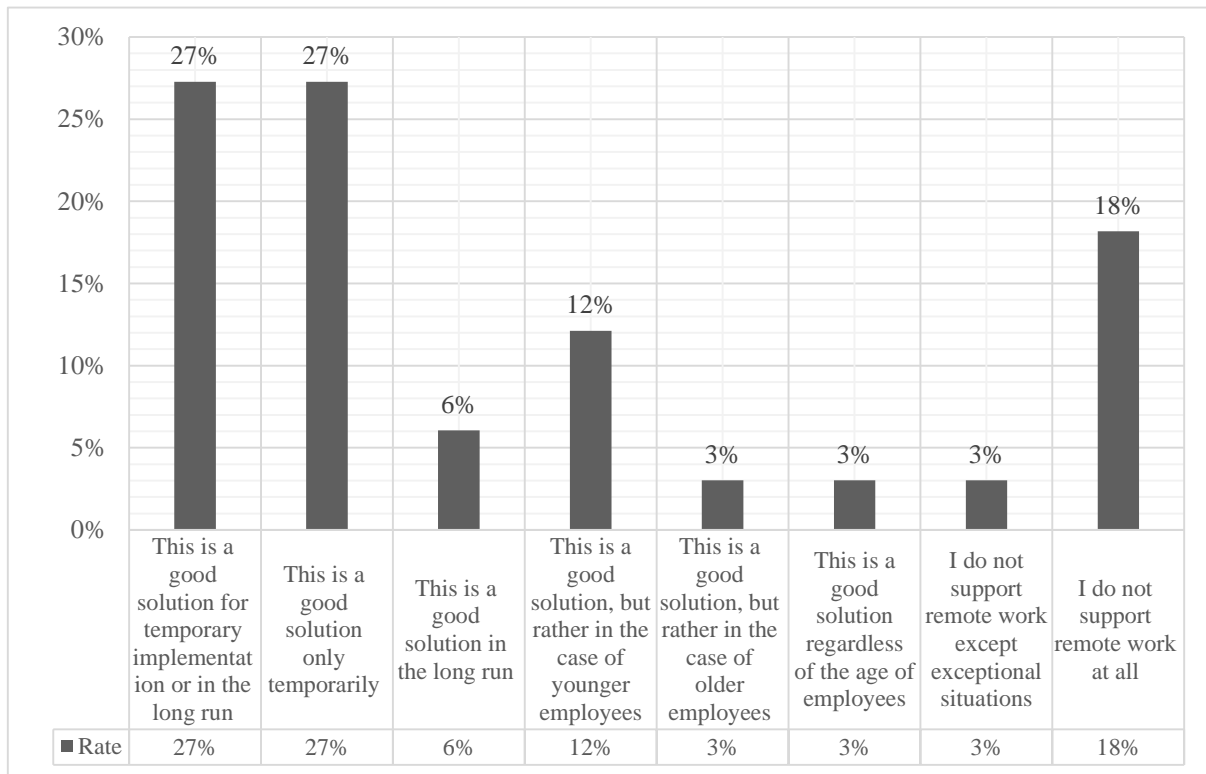


Figure 4. What is your opinion on remote work (replies to question 5)?

Source: study based on own research.

The results of the author's empirical study indicate that the majority of respondents (54%) consider remote work to be a good solution, but half of them only temporarily (27% – only temporarily, another 27% – temporarily or longer). A small part (6%) sees it only as a good long-term option. Interestingly, 12% of respondents consider remote work to be the optimal solution for younger employees, while only 3% prefer it for older ones. An equally small group (3%) supports remote work, regardless of the age of employees.

It is worth noting that 21% of respondents do not support remote work, of which 18% are completely against it and 3% accept it only in exceptional situations. This group may perceive remote work as a threat to productivity, team collaboration or organizational culture. Overall, the results suggest that remote work is perceived as a temporary solution, and its long-term acceptance may depend on the age of employees and individual employer preferences.

The vast majority of surveyed respondents stated that age is an important factor that should be taken into account when making decisions about implementing remote work (Figure 5).

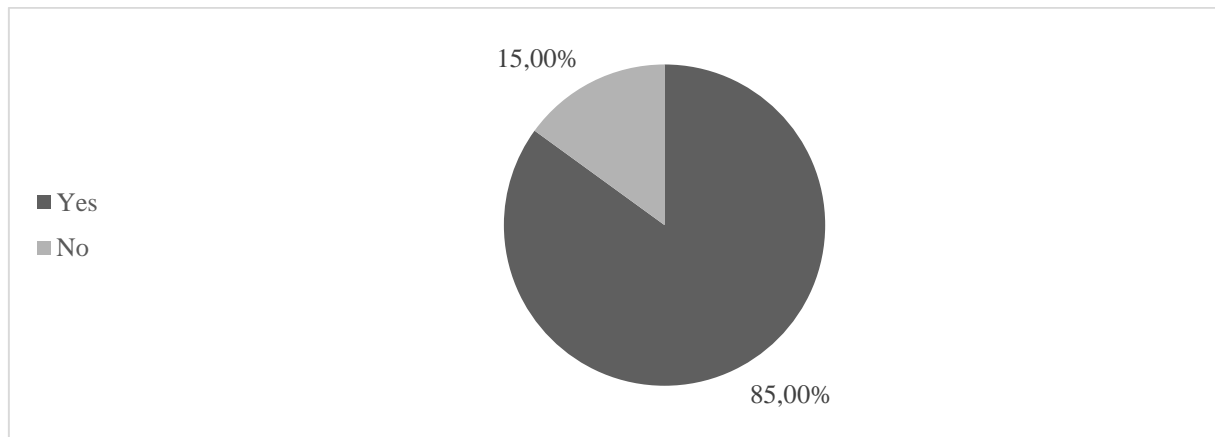


Figure 5. Do you think that age has an impact on the relationship of employees to perform remote work (replies to question 6)?

Source: study based on own research.

The vast majority, as many as 85% of respondents, believe that age has a significant impact on employees' attitude towards remote work. This high percentage is not surprising given generational differences in attitudes towards technology and flexible forms of employment. Nevertheless, 15% of respondents believe that age has no significant impact on employees' attitudes towards remote work. It may result from a person's individual preferences, experiences or life situation, regardless of age. Some of them, regardless of generation, may simply prefer a traditional office environment or have difficulty working effectively from home. Of course, although age seems to have a significant impact on employers attitudes towards remote work, it should not be treated as the only determining factor. Individual preferences, personality, work style and experience with technologies and forms of work also play an important role.

The answers to question 6 show that entrepreneurs take age into account when making decisions about implementing remote work, which allows us to assume that their attitude may vary depending on the age of employees. This is the reason why in the next question (question 7) respondents were asked to indicate their preferred generations (Figure 6).

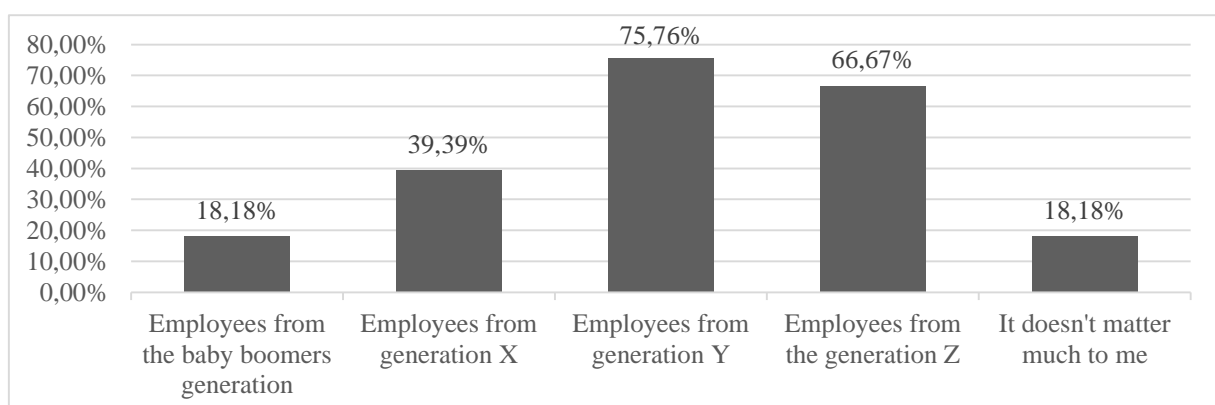


Figure 6. Employees from which age group do you prefer in your enterprise (possibility of multiple choice; replies to question 7)?

Source: study based on own research.

The responses obtained show that remote work is the most popular among Y generation (75.76%) and Z generation (66.67%). Gen X is also quite desirable, with a score of 39.39%. Baby boomers are the least desirable (18.18%) and 18.18% of respondents said that the age of employees is not important to them, too.

These results suggest that employers prefer younger employees, probably partly due to their greater openness to new technologies and innovations. Y and especially Z generations are so-called "digital natives", which means that they grew up in the digital era and are more adept at using modern technological tools and solutions. They can help increase productivity and efficiency in the workplace. It is also important that younger employees are often perceived as more flexible, open to change and willing to work in a team. These characteristics are highly desirable in today's dynamic business environment. Of course, it does not mean that the experience and professional maturity of employees from X generation or baby boomers are not appreciated by employers, which is reflected in the already mentioned result of 39.39% and 18.18%, respectively.

The answers to question 8 show that surveyed managers and entrepreneurs are aware that employees from certain age groups may have some problems adapting to remote work (Figure 7).

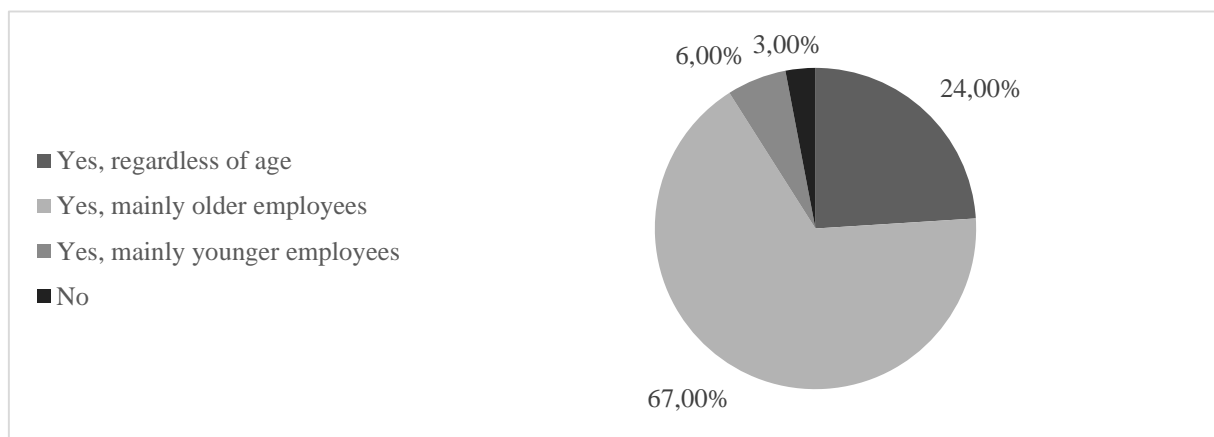


Figure 7. Do you think employees need support when implementing remote work in an enterprise (e.g. in the form of support from the IT department or participation in training; replies to question 8)?

Source: study based on own research.

The vast majority of respondents agreed that employees need support in implementing remote work in the company, which is understandable considering the scale of changes and challenges related to this process. As many as 67% of respondents stated that support is especially needed for older employees who may have greater difficulties adapting to new technologies and tools used in remote work.

It is worth noting that 24% of respondents felt that support was needed regardless of employee age, suggesting that the challenges of remote work apply to all age groups. On the other hand, only 6% of respondents said that support is particularly needed for younger employees, which may be due to their greater proficiency in using digital tools. A small percentage, just 3%, believed that employees did not need any support when implementing remote work.

Since respondents overwhelmingly answered question 9 in the affirmative (Figure 8), the answers regarding their feelings about the effectiveness of work with generational differences are supported by practical experience.

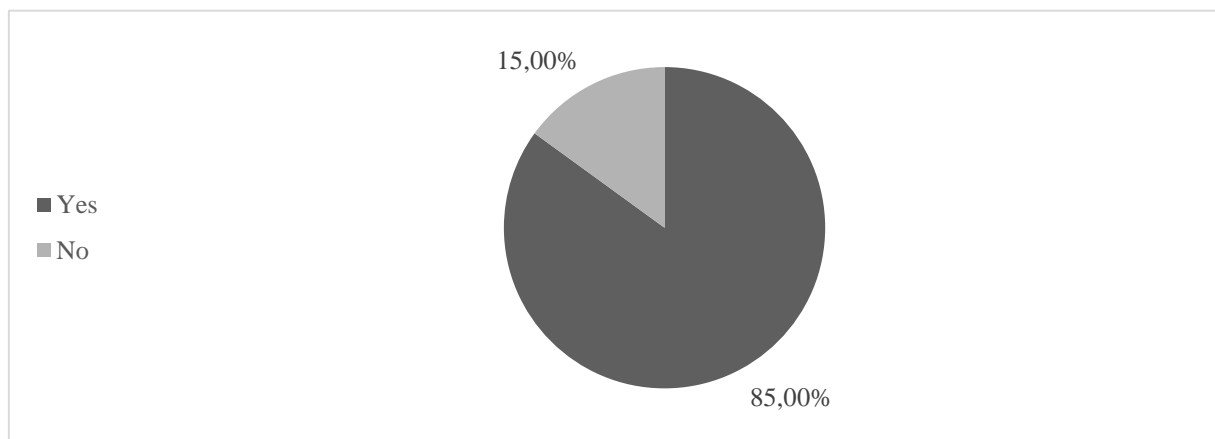


Figure 8. Has you used remote work in your company in the last 5 years (replies to question 9)?

Source: study based on own research.

Business surveys reveal that remote working has become common practice, with 85% of companies using it during last 5 years. This impressive percentage proves the growing acceptance and integration of this form of employment in the modern business environment. Both companies and employees benefit from the flexibility and convenience of remote work.

On the other hand, 15% of companies still stick to the traditional model of stationary work. There are several potential reasons for this. For example, specific nature of some industries or types of activities may require physical presence of employees in the office.

In the next question respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they were satisfied with the implementation of remote work. In order to do this, they were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating no satisfaction at all and 5 indicating a very high level of satisfaction with implementing home office (the distribution of responses is shown in Figure 9). This question is general in nature without taking into account differences between generations.

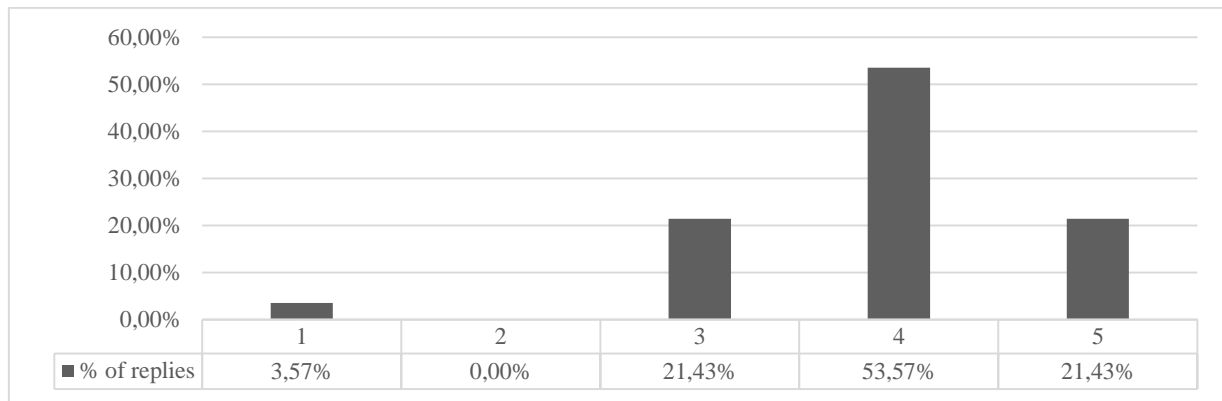


Figure 9. How much are you satisfied with the implementation of remote work (replies to question 10)?

Source: study based on own research.

As for the distribution of answers to question 10, average rating is 3.89 out of five, which means a fairly high level of satisfaction of entrepreneurs with implementation of remote work.

75% of surveyed entrepreneurs chose a rating of 4 or 5, which means that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the cooperation with employees working in the home office mode.

The largest percentage, i.e. 53.57% of respondents, chose a rating of 4, which suggests their satisfaction with remote work.

Slightly more than every fifth respondent (21.43%) chose a rating of 3, proving their neutral feelings towards the described cooperation model. On the other hand, the same percentage also gave a rating of 5 (very satisfied with using home office in their company).

The prospects for remote work are positively reflecting the fact that only 3.57% of respondents expressed strong dissatisfaction with remote work, choosing a rating of 1. The answer "2" was not indicated by any respondent.

The standard deviation for the answer to this question is 0.86, which indicates a fairly moderate dispersion of the answers around the mean. Most of the answers focus on grades 3, 4 and 5, which confirms a generally positive attitude towards remote work and a relatively small percentage of extreme ones.

Question 11 is a continuation of the previous one. It, too, asked for a rating on a five-point scale, but this time asked for a separate answer for each of the generations described in the article (baby boomers, X, Y, Z generations). Figure 10 shows the opinion of respondents regarding the effects of introducing remote work for employees from different generations. A general trend can be seen here – the younger the generation, the more dominant the high ratings.

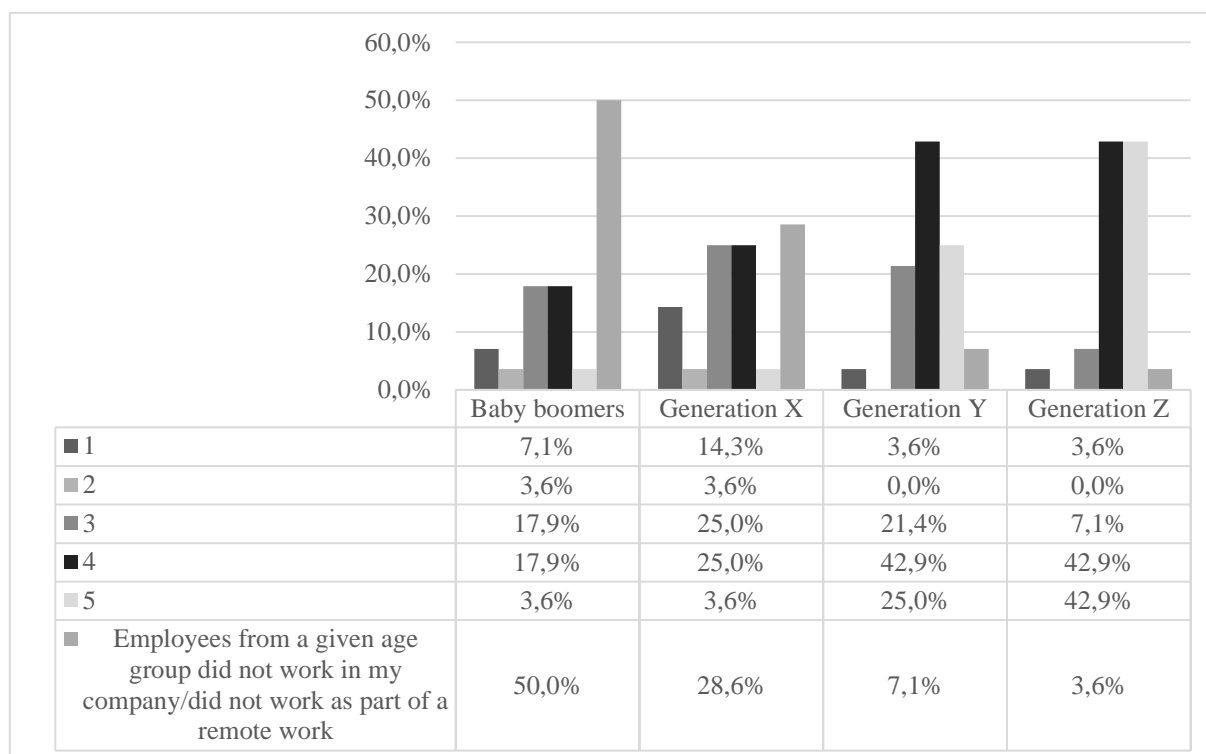


Figure 5. How do you assess the effects of implementing remote work in your company (replies to question 11)?

Source: study based on own research.

The surveyed entrepreneurs assessed the effects of introducing remote work for Z generation employees very positively, as evidenced by the average rating of 4.11 on a 5-point scale. This is confirmed by the fact that 42.9% of respondents for this age group rated the effects very positively (5 out of 5); the same percentage of surveyed entrepreneurs or managers rated the effects of home office positively, giving a score of 4. Only 7.1% rated remote work of Z generation people neutrally (3 out of 5), while 3.6% gave the lowest rating. Rating 2 was not chosen by any of the respondents.

Also in the case of Y generation, the effects of remote work were assessed positively – the average score was 3.64. This is due to the fact that 67.9% of respondents assessed the home office of people from Y generation positively or very positively (for ratings 4 and 5 it was: 42.9% and 25%, respectively). Only 3.6% assessed it negatively.

In the case of X generation, the average rating was 2.15. Half of respondents (50%) assessed the effects as neutral or positive (each of these answers was chosen by 25% of respondents), and 14.3% assessed them very negatively.

As for baby boomers, the effects of remote work were rated the lowest, as evidenced by an average rating of only 1.58. In fact, a total of 35.8% rated them neutrally or positively, and only 21.5% positively or very positively (17.9% and 3.6%, respectively). It should be noted that as many as half of the respondents did not employ employees from this age group in their home office.

The Table 4 (below) shows the weighted average calculated for each generation – calculations based on the answers to question 11. Here, too, one can see the trend that the level of satisfaction of entrepreneurs/managers is increasingly noticeable in younger generations.

Table 4.
Weighted average – replies to question 12

Generations	Weighted average
Baby boomers generation	1,58
X generation	2,15
Y generation	3,64
Z generation	4,11

Source: study based on own research.

Question 12, on the other hand, is a continuation of no. 11. Like the previous one, respondents were asked to answer for each generation – but this time they were asked about future plans (Figure 11).

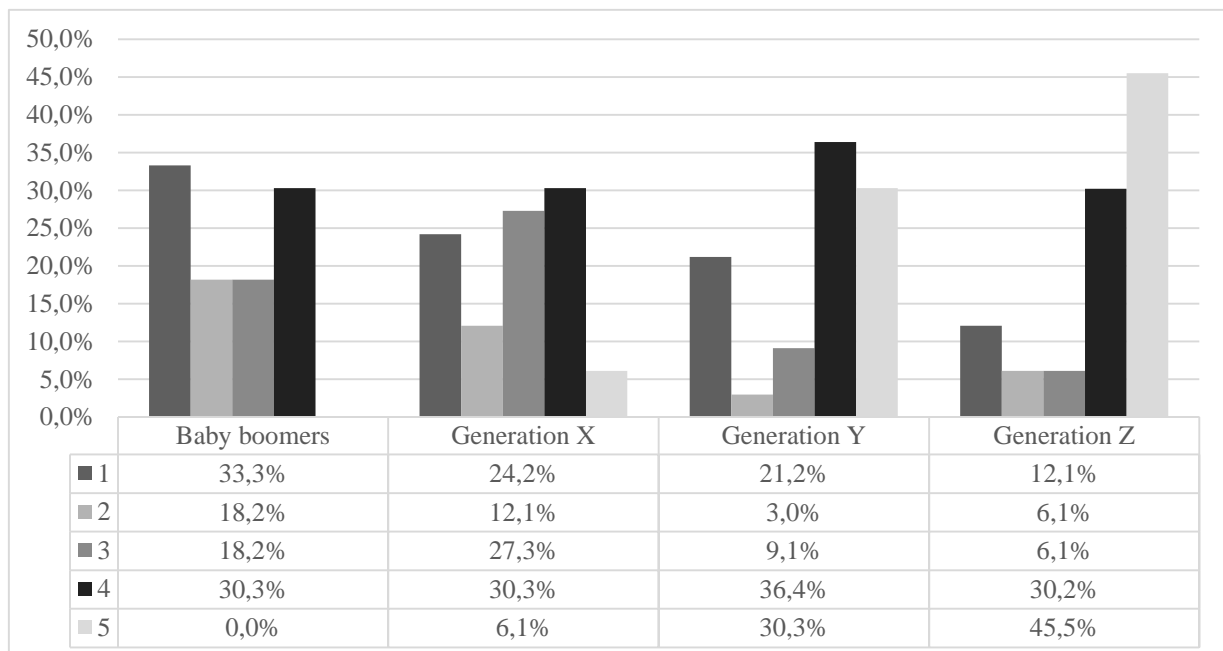


Figure 6. If the company in the future will implement/maintain remote work, what is your tendency to use remote work for employees from various age groups (replies to question 12)?

Source: study based on own research.

Again, based on the numerical ratings given (on a scale of 1 to 5), a weighted average was determined (Table 5).

Table 5.
Weighted average – replies to question 12

Generations	Weighted average
Baby boomers generation	2,46
X generation	2,82
Y generation	3,52
Z generation	3,91

Source: study based on own research.

Generally, the results of our own research indicate that the surveyed entrepreneurs are more willing to implement remote work among younger generations of employees. The average assessment of entrepreneurs regarding their willingness to work remotely increases in inverse proportion to the age of employees:

- Z generation: 3.91,
- Y generation: 3.52,
- X generation: 2.82,
- baby boomers generation: 2.46.

The collected data shows that as many as 45.5% of the surveyed entrepreneurs and managers are willing to implement remote work among Z generation employees to a very large extent, and 30.2% of the respondents show a high tendency to apply this work model.

In the case of Y generation employees, the percentage of responses indicating a very strong and strong tendency was 30.3% and 36.4%, respectively. On the other hand, 21.2% show a definite lack of willingness to implement such a solution.

When asked about the willingness to introduce remote work among X generation employees, the largest percentage of respondents showed a neutral (27.3%) or rather positive (30.3%) attitude. In turn, 24.2% have a very negative attitude, which indicates a large group of skeptics towards the discussed solution. Strongly positive opinions constitute only 6.1%, which suggests that full support for remote work is relatively rare among X generation employees. It is also worth paying attention to 12.1% of moderately negative opinions. This distribution of answers shows that employers' concerns about implementing remote work for X generation are quite common.

Employers are pessimistic about implementing or maintaining remote work among baby boomer workers. Most employers (33.3%) assess plans to introduce or maintain remote work for this age group very negatively, which may result from the belief that, according to respondents, older employees may have difficulties adapting to new technologies or prefer a traditional work environment. 18.2% of respondents have a slightly negative attitude, and the same percentage have a neutral approach to remote work for baby boomers. An interesting observation is the fact that 30.3% of employers have a positive attitude to remote work for this group, which suggests that, after all, some employers see the potential benefits of such a solution. Nevertheless, the lack of very positive responses (0.0%) may indicate a general reservation towards the implementation of remote work for this age group.

Implementing remote work in a company can be an organizational challenge. Therefore, respondents were asked to identify the main problem they noticed in their companies. In order to get more detailed information, the responses were once again “broken down” so as to make an assessment for each generation (Figure 12).

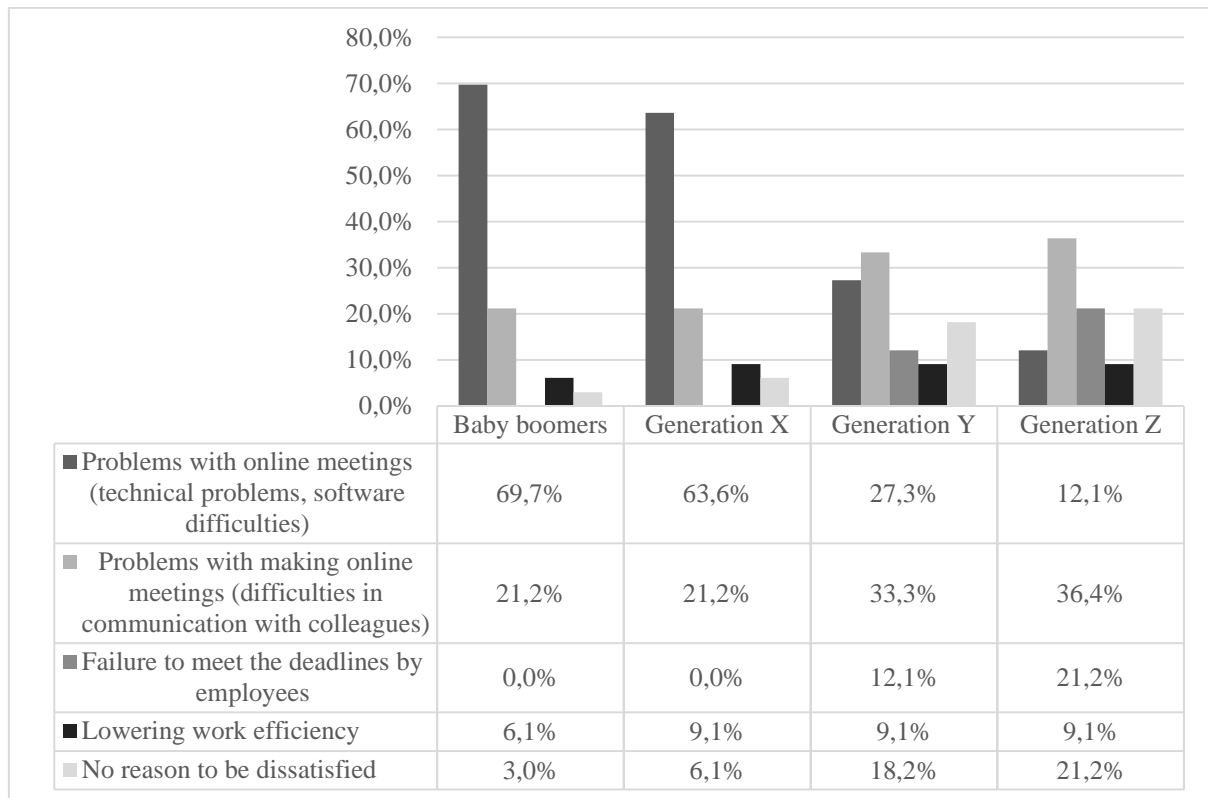


Figure 7. What is the main obstacle to you in implementing remote work for employees from individual groups (replies to question 13)?

Source: study based on own research.

The results of our own research also reveal significant differences in how entrepreneurs and managers identify obstacles related to remote work among employees from different age groups. In relation to representatives of the baby boomer generation, the main problem was considered to be technical issues related to organizing online meetings (the ability to use software, establish contact with colleagues for a smooth conversation) – this option was indicated by almost 70% of respondents. Similarly, many express such concerns (63,6%) in relation to representatives of X generation.

As could be predicted, younger generations (Y generation, Z generation) struggle with technical challenges to a much lesser extent. In this case, a more serious challenge is communication issues and difficulties in conducting effective online meetings. According to respondents, approximately one third of millennials and just over 36% of genzie have this problem. Moreover, in these age groups, entrepreneurs and managers are also concerned about missing deadlines and the associated decline in work efficiency, especially among representatives of Z generation.

It is worth noting that among millennials and Z generation there is also a significant group of people who do not see any obstacles to remote work (18.2% and 21.2%, respectively). This suggests that for younger employees this form of employment may be fully acceptable and does not pose a major challenge, and as the share of younger generations in the labor force increases throughout the economy, the confidence of entrepreneurs and managers in the home office will increase.

5. Discussion

It should be considered that information presented in this paper about individual generations is based on analyzes of trends and features dominant in a given age group. For this reason, they are quite general in nature. The reality is much more diverse and the boundaries between generations are often fluid. In each generation you can meet people who identify with characteristics typical of other age groups.

For example, not all representatives of X generation will be reluctant to use new technologies, and among Gen Zs there are people who value the stability and security of full-time work. The formation of an individual's personality and preferences is influenced by many factors, which include, for example, individual experiences, education, social environment and family values.

In addition to the generations presented in paper that are currently active on the labor market, it is also necessary to mention another generation that will soon start their professional life – the beginning of this process will take place at the end of this decade. The alpha generation is the generation following the Gen Zs; it includes people born after 2010 (as a contractual border date, which will separate the alpha generation from the next generations, is considered 2025). It means that its oldest representatives are currently teenagers and for this reason it is impossible to analyze this group in terms of activity on the labor market.

In particular, this is noted that the alpha generation is the first to be fully born in the twenty first century growing up in the environment that is dominated by Internet and modern digital technologies; this is not without a harmful impact on the unique features and experiences of representatives of this generation.

In author's opinion, further considerations and direction of empirical research undertaken in this article, it is worth continuing in the following years, taking into account the alpha generation, which in a few years will enter the labor market. It seems that direction of research is obvious – a comparison of alpha generation with previous generations. Such comparisons can be prepared from different points of view. It can be analyzed, for example, the attitude of employers to implement remote work in relation to employees from various generations, as well as, for example, attitude of various generations (including alpha generations) to remote work or flexible forms of cooperation.

What is more, results of author's own study should not be interpreted as evidence that entrepreneurs completely reject the possibility of remote work among baby boomer employees. Although this age group's employment preference rates for remote work are significantly lower comparing to younger generations, it does not mean that baby boomers are perceived as incapable of working remotely effectively. It should be remembered that each candidate is assessed individually and factors such as experience, skills and motivation can outweigh age-related stereotypes. Baby boomer workers may still be highly flexible, committed and adaptable

to new work environments, making them valuable members of remote teams. Additionally, their extensive professional and mentoring experience can be a valuable asset, especially in environments requiring specialized knowledge and project management skills.

It should be remembered that respondents' answers concern, for example, their tendency to use remote work in the future. There may well be a situation in which an entrepreneur or manager intends to use remote work in a given company or department, but only partially or as a way to deal with a crisis situation, and it does not necessarily mean sending the entire staff to remote work. In such a situation, it may be necessary to make a choice regarding who among the employees will be sent to work remotely; Gen Z or millennials may then be preferred to a greater extent than baby boomers.

It is worth noting that although in recent years – especially in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic – remote work has become significantly more popular, it does not mean that all employers or employees are equally satisfied with it. As for the latter, it is well demonstrated by the report prepared by Antal and Cushman & Wakefield, according to which both the oldest employees (i.e. born no later than 1983) and the youngest (which is worth attention) are the least willing to work remote in the long term. Perhaps the lower willingness of employers to use remote work among baby boomers results from the awareness that older employees are not interested in this form of performing professional duties.

6. Summary

As emphasized in the article, each generation, despite having certain common features, consists of individuals whose behaviors and attitudes, e.g. towards changes taking place on the labor market, may differ to a greater or lesser extent from the characteristics typical of a given generation.

In general, the baby boomer generation, despite its advanced age, still has an impact on the labor market. Although their number on the labor market is decreasing, they still hold high managerial positions and are valued specialists. They are characterized by need for stability and security at work; remuneration and prestige are another key motivating factors.

X generation grew up in times of social, technological and economic changes. They are characterized by pragmatism and a realistic approach to professional life. They often remain loyal to one employer, which may result from both attachment and fear of uncertainty. The pursuit of success and decision-making independence are their characteristic features. They are looking for a stable career in one company, which gives them a sense of security.

Y generation is the first generation to grow up in the digital age. They are characterized by a high level of education and adaptation to new technologies. Y generation employees place great emphasis on work-life balance. They prefer a task-based work system and strive for self-

fulfillment. They attach great importance to the atmosphere in the workplace and to recognition and prestige.

Z generation, born between 1997 and 2012, grew up completely in the digital age, which shapes their way of perceiving the world and communicating. They are more socially aware and involved in political and social issues. They are characterized by individualism, creativity and pragmatism. They place more importance on well-being than on a traditional career. Employers must take this into account because the importance of this generation in the labor market will continue to grow.

Individual generations also differ in their approach to the way work is performed (different attitudes towards stationary and remote work). Employers also see this, hence the differences in their approach when it comes to implementing remote work among employees of different generations. These differences are reflected in the research conducted by the author.

The hypotheses put forward in this paper have been confirmed. Based on our own research, it is possible to conclude, among others the following conclusions:

- the vast majority of respondents, as many as 85%, believe that age is an important factor for employees' attitude towards remote work. This is due to generational differences in approach to technology and preferences for flexible forms of employment. Older generations may have difficulty adapting to modern tools, while younger generations are usually more open to new technologies;
- employers are most likely to employ people from Y generation, which is 75.76%, and Z generation, which is 66.67%. The next group are X generation employees, sought by 39.39% of employers. The least desirable are baby boomers, whom only 18.18% of companies decide to employ;
- according to 67% of respondents, employees, especially older ones, require support when implementing remote work. These difficulties result from problems adapting to new technologies and tools, which may be more complicated for people with less experience in using modern systems;
- 24% of survey participants believe that support in remote work is necessary regardless of the age of employees, while only 6% claim that especially younger employees need additional help. It means that the need for support is seen as a general problem and not just age-related;
- remote work has become an everyday reality for 85% of companies over the last five years, which proves the growing acceptance and integration of this form of employment in various industries. This is an expression of companies' adaptation to changing working conditions and the growing demand for flexible forms of employment;
- as many as 75% of entrepreneurs declare they are satisfied or very satisfied with cooperation with employees who perform their duties remotely. Only a small percentage, precisely 3.57%, expresses strong dissatisfaction with this form of work, which indicates its generally positive reception;

- the highest ratings for the effectiveness of remote work were obtained by people from Z generation, who achieved a score of 4.11, and Y generation, with a score of 3.64. X generation workers received a lower score of 2.15, and the lowest scores were among baby boomers, who scored 1.58;
- if remote work continues, the greatest willingness to do so is visible among employees from Z generation, with a score of 3.91, and Y generation, with a score of 3.52. X generation employees are less likely to do so (2.82), and baby boomers with a score of 2.46;
- the main problems associated with remote work include technical difficulties, which most often affect older generations when meeting online, and communication problems, which particularly affect younger generations. These differences indicate the need to adapt communication tools and methods to the specific needs of different age groups. According to the author, the considerations in this article can be continued as follows:
- examining the reasons why employers do not want to send employees from different generations to remote work. According to the author, the lower willingness of employers to direct baby boomers to remote work is not necessarily a manifestation of ageism, i.e. discrimination based on age. The reasons for this phenomenon may be much more complex and result from several factors. Firstly, older employees often perform key functions in organizations that require their physical presence on site – e.g. in team management or direct contact with customers,
- research on the attitudes of employees of particular generations towards not only remote work, but also flexible forms of work (civil law contracts, B2B contracts),
- examining employers' willingness to use remote work or flexible forms of cooperation for employees of particular generations, taking into account industries, enterprises size etc.,
- research taking into account also Alpha generation, which will enter the labor market later this decade.

At present, employers and managers should pay particular attention to the specificity of Z generation, which is currently entering the labor market and providing new employees. Each generation brings unique characteristics to the labor market, but Z generation, due to its size and influence on the future, should be particularly taken into account by employers and managers. Their approach to work, based on new technologies and striving for self-fulfillment, requires adapting management strategies and motivation in the workplace.

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