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INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN AN ENTERPRISE AND ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY – THE PERSPECTIVE OF GENERATION Z EMPLOYEES

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to identify factors that, in the opinion of Generation Z representatives, can positively influence integration processes in a company/organization, as well as those that negatively impact organizational identity. Furthermore, it is important to identify potential opportunities to improve the situation.
Design/methodology/approach: The article reviews the literature on organizational identity and its importance, as well as integration processes and their determinants, and also presents the results of the author's own empirical research.
Findings: The research identified the main causes of difficulties in implementing integration activities within the company. From the perspective of Generation Z employees, these include: communication problems among employees, hierarchical relationships that create a division between management and lower-level employees. Areas of action were identified for improving integration within the company/organization. These include: organizing integration events, improving communication between employees, demonstrating respect and greater understanding between employees, a more equitable division of responsibilities, collaboration, shared goals and motivation, training, changes in organizational structure, and other employee benefits.
Research limitations/implications: The limitations of the conducted research include the non-probabilistic sampling. The research was local in nature, conducted in the Lubuskie Voivodeship. Therefore, there is a need to conduct future research that adheres to the recommended representativeness of the research sample so that conclusions can be drawn for the entire population.
Practical implications: As a result of the conducted research, it should be pointed out that there is a need for systematic monitoring of factors limiting integration processes in the enterprise in the context of shaping mechanisms simulating organizational identity in the dimension of managing Generation Z.
Social implications: The research topic addressed meets the need to look at enterprise management in the face of demographic changes, which encourage managers to seek effective tools that support integration processes in enterprises, shape employee well-being and support mechanisms that create lasting foundations for organizational identity, taking into account multigenerational management.
Originality/value: Empirical research was conducted that fits into a new, important trend in the management of generationally intelligent organizations promoted by J. Moczydłowska.
Keywords: integration processes, organisational identity, company, Generation Z.
Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Enterprises operating in the third decade of the 21st century are grappling with a wide variety of conditions, demonstrating significant volatility and, as a result, a future that is difficult to predict. The flexibility of enterprises to adapt to new realities necessitates seeking sources of stability. According to Szarucki, Noga, and Kosch (2021), these include, among others: the leader's personality traits that influence interactions with employees and their surroundings, and employee attitudes. In seeking a foundation for the firm's stability in the new reality that has emerged after the global crisis (pandemic), it is important to shape an organizational identity based, among other things, on integration processes that unite employees. It is important to understand the opinions of employees, whose actions contribute to shaping a favourable organizational climate. For this to be satisfying and motivating for employees, and to translate into building a long-term platform for cooperation within a given entity, it is essential to understand employee opinions on the conditions shaping this integration and organizational identity. This provides a valuable source of information on how a given entity – a company/organization – perceives itself through the lens of Generation Z employees, where, despite the various internal processes taking place, a stable foundation for further development can be found.

The aim of this article is to identify factors that, in the opinion of Generation Z representatives, can positively influence integration processes in a company/organization, as well as those that negatively impact organizational identity. Furthermore, it is important to identify potential opportunities to seek sources of improvement. The article is based on the challenges for companies facing the turbulent environment in the post-pandemic period and takes into account the perspective of young Generation Z representatives, who may offer their own perspective on the practical implementation of actions that stimulate or inhibit integration within the company in the context of building organizational identity. Managers now face new challenges requiring, in particular, the demonstration of broad competencies, including the area of so-called "soft management" skills. Whether management can systematically acquire the opinions of all employees, but especially young employees – representatives of Generation Z – will influence the future of the company.

The theoretical section of the article presents various approaches to organizational identity, its determinants, and highlights its importance. Furthermore, it addresses the topic of integration processes and their determinants. The study was prepared based on the results of empirical research conducted from April to September 2023 on a sample of individuals employed in the Lubuskie Voivodeship.

2. Organisational identity – its essence and determinants

Ashforth, Rogers and Corley (2011), when discussing organisational identity, argue that it should be viewed through the prism of individual and group identities, which are interlinked. Frostenson, Helin and Arbin (2022) share this view. They argue that: "Organisational identity is not necessarily static or permanent, but refers to an ongoing construction between individuals and groups within organisations" (p. 1).

The sources of organisational identity can be found in two areas: the cognitive perception and the affective sense of unity with the organisation in which the employee works (Johnson, Morgeson, Hekman, 2012). For this to happen, it is necessary to identify which internal organisational factors bring employees together and ensure the development of strong bonds with the company.

Organisational identity, which refers to an individual's inclination to belong to an organisation, is linked to specific emotions arising from the fact of being recognised as a member of that particular organisation.

For employees to identify with the organisation's goals, it is necessary not only to communicate effectively with them but also to pay attention to: their job satisfaction, management practices, organisational culture and their perception of the organisation's prestige. The influence of these variables on employees' identification with the company makes it possible to foster a working atmosphere that promotes organisational identity. It is also important that the goals and values held by employees align with those of the organisation as a whole. It is worth noting that employees' sense of organisational integrity constitutes one of the soft factors of organisational success (Blanchard K., Blanchard S., Zigarmi, 2018).

Employee behaviour is linked to organisational identity, and without a strongly established organisational identity, an organisation cannot be said to survive throughout all stages of its life cycle. This objective is supported by the ongoing assessment of the extent to which employees identify with the organisation (Stuart, 2002).

Company management should bear in mind that identity-related behaviours are linked to the type of organisational culture. According to W. Bańka, the following leadership styles may be beneficial in an integrative corporate culture: promotional, integrative, democratic, mentoring and task-oriented. The first of these is based, among other things, on paying close attention to the company's 'brand' and ensuring the integration of employees with the organisation. The second style focuses, among other things, on motivating employees, with the 'attitude towards the company's strategy and mission' serving as the glue that binds the team together. In practice, the third style means that managers coordinate the work of their subordinates and delegate authority. In the mentoring style, it is important to support employees' development plans. The final style is characterised by the fact that managers

prioritise the outcome of the task, and their involvement, where necessary in complex situations, is limited to acting as an instructor to their subordinates (Bańka, 2009).

It is worth examining the attitudes employees display towards the organisation, how they perceive their workplace and the conditions there, including relation to integration processes that foster the development of organisational identity. It should be added that a strong image of organisational identity has a positive impact on employee behaviour; it acts as a catalyst for their commitment, boosts motivation, builds job satisfaction and contributes to the achievement of good results (Gilani, 2019). It is important to ascertain the views of employees working in the companies under study regarding their perception of organisational identity.

3. Integration processes within a company and their significance

Business entities operating as open systems, as they interact with their environment, must have a solid foundation to meet the challenges posed by that environment. This is only possible by building a lasting foundation of strength within the organisation. The source of this strength lies in a constant focus on ongoing integration efforts within the business entity. What are these integration processes and what forms can they take? From a holistic perspective in the context of managing the entire business entity, what is the significance of activities undertaken in this area?

Referring to A. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, it can be said that the integration processes taking place within organisations can be linked to higher-order needs, referred to as the need for belonging (Griffin, 2017). These belong to the group of social needs. In the ERG model, these needs are linked to the formation of organisational identity and influence the establishment of healthy interpersonal relationships (Kozłowski, 2017). In shaping integration processes within the company, a positive psychosocial climate undoubtedly plays a significant role, as it satisfies many important work-related needs, including: security, respect, recognition and belonging (Penc, 2007). A bond with the organisational environment, sustained by identification with institutional values and the quality of interpersonal relationships, also has a positive impact on productivity growth (Mazlan, Jambulingam, 2023).

"An integrated organization performs its tasks more efficiently and makes decisions faster" (Buszko, 2013, p. 77), which is crucial in today's turbulent environment, where companies must respond quickly and with a high degree of flexibility. The integration aspects discussed above are focused on the company's relationships with its environment. However, it is worth highlighting other factors related to the business itself. Namely, efficient task execution, which is made possible by improved work comfort. Synergy is achieved not only through the integration of human capital but also through the skillful alignment of competencies and high

levels of employee engagement. This engagement becomes possible when employees identify themselves with their workplace.

Research conducted by Rovetta, Bortolotti, and Palumbo (2025) indicates that team and organizational identification influence employee well-being, behaviour, trust, organizational citizenship behaviour, and goal achievement. It is crucial to develop identification at an optimal level for both specific teams and the entire organization so as not to compromise the effectiveness of the enterprise. Strategies for developing identification within the enterprise encompass the individual, team, and organizational levels.

In order to ensure high effectiveness of integration processes in the enterprise, it is worth striving to build the foundations of affective commitment, which promotes long-term commitment of newly hired employees and reduces their risk of turnover (Lourenço, Rodrigues, 2025).

The use of integration in the workplace is closely linked to shaping internal communication while maintaining its multifaceted nature, which requires practitioners to possess a range of competencies. Information exchange and teamwork are crucial to ensure a significant level of fluidity, transparency, and understanding between superiors and subordinates. Sensitivity to interpersonal relationships is essential (Yakubu, 2018).

Integration processes that socialize employees are particularly relevant to employees who, as Generation Z representatives, are entering a new professional reality, requiring a thorough understanding of, but also the adoption of, behavioural patterns and prevailing values. This applies to all activities that facilitate understanding and acceptance of organizational culture. How does the organizational socialization process work? The socialization process in an enterprise is reflected in productivity, employee engagement, and loyalty. It is the result of how perceptions of the organization are formed, which, when confronted with the existing reality, are then subject to a process of transformation (Ahmadi, Salavati, Sheikhesmaeili, Mirzaei, 2011).

The presented approach to the socialization process, so crucial for Generation Z employees, highlights the need to undertake systematic actions within organizations that ultimately significantly shape employee integration within a given business entity. How do employees of the surveyed companies assess these processes?

4. Research methods

The article reviews the literature on organizational identity and its importance, as well as integration processes and their determinants, and presents the results of author's own empirical research. These studies represent a fragment of research conducted on complex issues in the field of enterprise management.

The research was conducted using a survey questionnaire. Respondents answered three questions closely related to the topic of the article. One question was a single-choice, one was a multiple-choice, and one was open-ended. The study drew on empirical research conducted between April and September 2023 on a group of individuals employed in the Lubuskie Voivodeship. A limitation of the research was that the sample was not probabilistic, which does not ensure representativeness. However, care was taken to ensure diversity among respondents in terms of length of service at the enterprise/organization, position held, and nature of work performed. For the purposes of this article, 117 individuals representing the youngest age group, i.e., employees of enterprises – representatives of Generation Z, aged under 30 – were selected from a group of 200 respondents. The vast majority of respondents were employees of enterprises.

A more detailed description of the discussed group of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Characteristics of the studied population

Description		Number of indications as a percentage (%)
Work experience in the company/organization	Less than 1 year	29,0
	From 1 to 5 years	59,8
	From 6 to 10 years	10,3
	From 11 to 15 years	0,9
Type of job position	executive	74,4
	managerial	25,6
Nature of the work performed*	physical work	59,8
	intellectual work	65,0

Note: Some respondents do both physical and intellectual work.

Source: own study based on the survey research

The majority of respondents had been employed in the company or organisation for between 1 and 5 years (59.8% of respondents). Next, 29.0% had been employed for less than 1 year, whilst 10.3% had been working in the organisation for between 6 and 10 years. In terms of job roles, the majority of respondents were employed in operational roles (74.4%), whilst 25.6% held managerial positions. 65.0% of respondents performed intellectual work and 59.8% performed manual work.

In addition, a tabular summary has been provided showing the characteristics of the companies/organisations where the respondents are employed. These are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Characteristics of enterprises/organizations in which the respondents are employed

Description		Number of indications as a percentage (%)
The period of operation of the enterprise/organization on the market	Up to 5 years	23,9
	From 6 to 10 years	14,5
	From 11 to 15 years	12,0
	From 16 to 20 years	12,0
	Over 20 years	37,6

Cont. table 2.

The geographical scope of the enterprise/organization's activity*	Local market	31,6
	Regional market	25,6
	Domestic market	39,3
	International market	41,9

Source: own study based on the survey research.

The employees surveyed were employed by businesses that had been operating on the market for varying lengths of time. The largest group consisted of those that had been in existence for over 20 years – 37.6%. The geographical scope also varied. It was found that the largest group was active on the international market – 41.9%. In terms of capital ownership, Polish capital predominated.

5. Research findings

The aim of this article is to identify the factors which, in the opinion of Generation Z representatives, can have a positive impact on integration processes within a company or organisation, as well as those which have a negative impact in the context of organisational identity. Furthermore, it is important to identify areas of action that could help to improve the situation.

Figure 1 shows respondents' views on whether, in their opinion, measures are being taken in the workplace to promote staff integration.

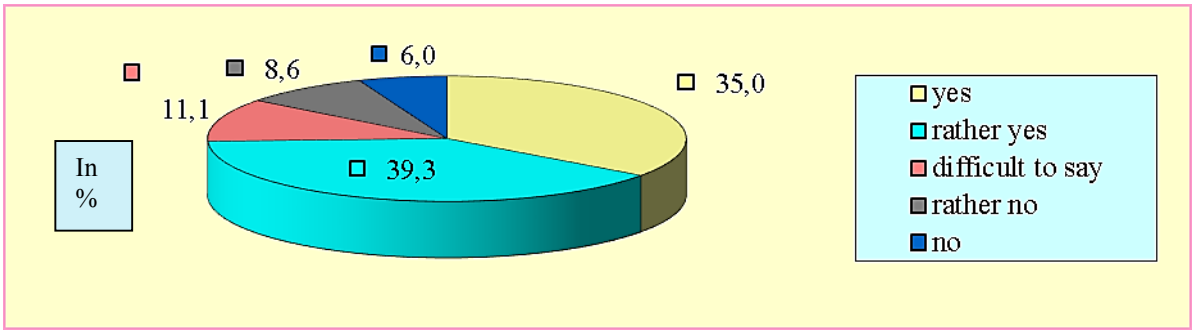

Figure 1. Respondents' opinions on measures taken to promote staff integration.

Source: own study based on the survey research.

The survey found that 35.0% of respondents believe that measures are being taken in the workplace to promote staff integration. 39.3% of respondents chose the answer 'rather yes'. 8.6% of respondents chose 'rather no' and 6.0% chose 'no'. 11.1% of respondents were unable to answer this question.

Figure 2 presents the opinions of respondents who cited reasons for difficulties regarding integration activities among members of the company/organisation in which they are employed.

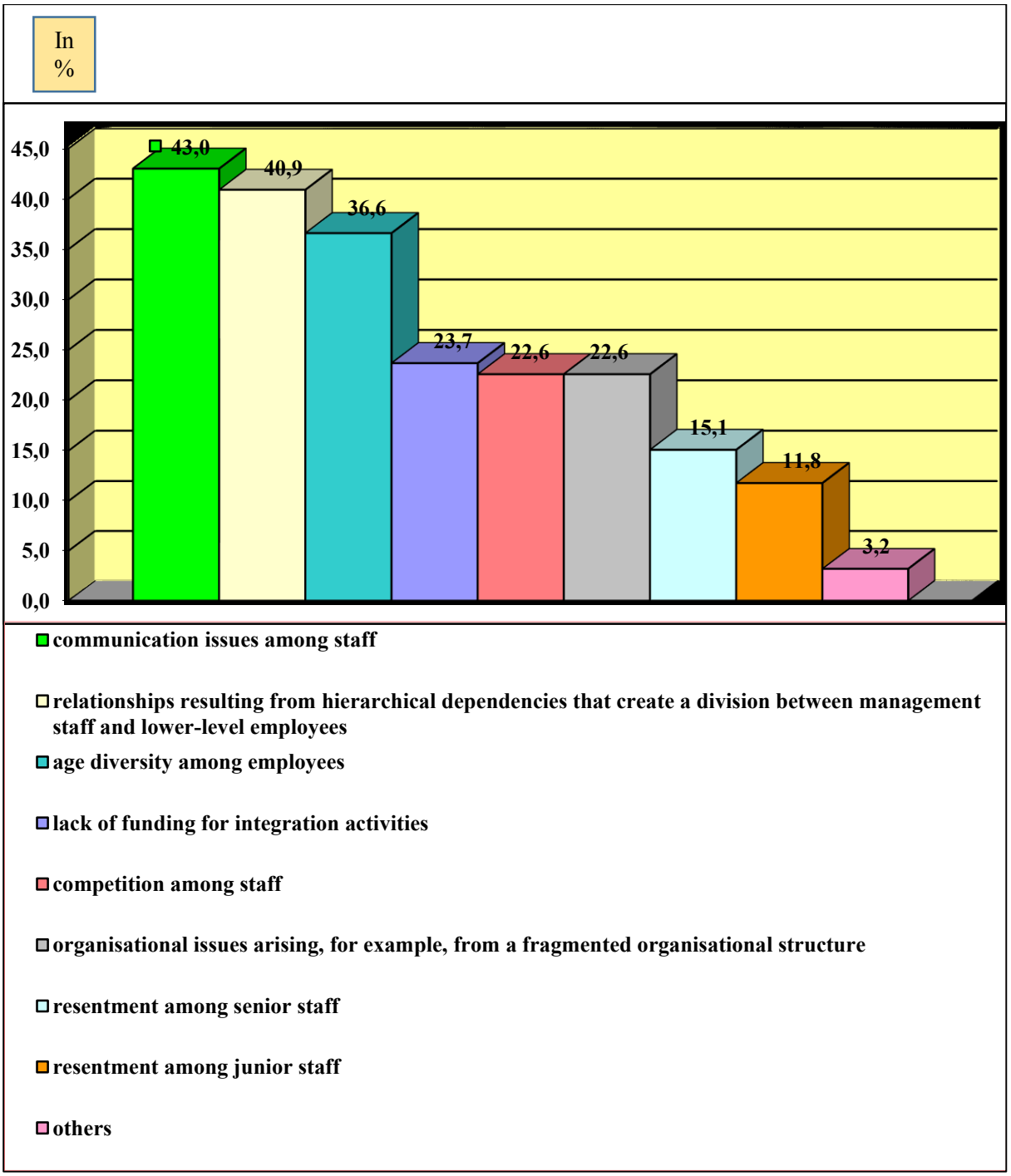

Figure 2. Respondents' views on reasons for difficulties in integrating members of the company/organisation where they are employed.

Source: own study based on the survey research.

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the three main causes of difficulties in team-building activities among members of a company or organisation are:

1. problems relating to communication between employees (43.0% of respondents),
2. relationships arising from hierarchical structures, which create a division between management and lower-level staff (40.9% of respondents),
3. age differences among staff (36.6% of respondents).

Next, the reasons cited by just over 20.0% of respondents were identified. This group includes:

1. a lack of funds for integration activities,
2. rivalry among staff,
3. organisational issues within the company or organisation where the respondents work.

In the final group of responses, the reasons cited were resistance from senior staff (15.1%), resistance from junior staff (11.8%) and other reasons (3.2%).

In order to obtain a more complete picture of the reality regarding the assessment of the integration situation within the company/organisation where the respondents are employed, the respondents indicated areas of action that could contribute to improving the situation. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide their own comments (open-ended question), and based on their suggestions, several areas for improvement were identified. These are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Areas of action that could help improve the situation within the company regarding staff integration

Examples of areas for action to improve integration within a company or organisation	
Area	**Description**
1. Organising team-building events	• team-building events both at and outside the workplace, including, for example, picnics, festivals and cinema trips for employees' families, • team-building trips, including for employees at all levels
2. Improving communication between staff	• better flow of information between departments/staff, • gaining insight into the views of front-line staff, • clear and unambiguous regulations/guidelines governing the company's operations
3. Respect and greater understanding among staff	• showing greater respect for junior staff, • giving staff greater recognition, • eliminating the passing on of responsibilities
4. A fairer division of responsibilities	• a more pleasant atmosphere when assigning tasks, equality
5. Changes to the organisational structure and other benefits for staff	• a change in working hours to allow for larger gatherings, • bridging the gap between senior and junior staff, • creating an outdoor relaxation area
6. Cooperation, shared goals and motivation	• introduction of group tasks
7. Training courses	• better pay and opportunities for career development

Source: own analysis based on empirical research.

The integration of diverse work processes within a given organisation, manifested, among other things, in: the fair treatment of all stakeholders, the implementation of affirmative action initiatives, and the representation of various demographic groups both within and outside the organisation, which contributes to improved learning, innovation, creativity and organisational flexibility (Roberson, 2006; Zadykowicz, Chmielewski, Siemieniako, 2020).

6. Summary

Given that "people management is, above all, about partnership-based relationships" (Ridge, 2010, p. 33), it is worth nurturing these relationships appropriately. Undoubtedly, this is facilitated by implementing measures to promote integration processes within an organisation, which in turn helps to shape organisational identity. Empirical research has established that the factors contributing most significantly to the weakening of integration processes include, above all: communication issues between employees, and relationships arising from hierarchical dependencies, which create a division between management and lower-level staff. These are the areas that need to be addressed in order to improve organisational integrity, which in turn will foster bottom-up processes that contribute to building and consolidating organisational identity. Support from managers can play a significant role for Generation Z employees; this support takes the form of providing appropriate guidance during the work process, being accessible, and showing appreciation, which can strengthen trust in the organisation as a whole as well as in the management team. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that this accelerates adaptation to the new working environment and may have a positive impact on productivity.

In practical terms, measures taken to shape organisational identity should be linked to the process of organisational renewal (Gabryś, 2015). It is worth emphasising that this requires undertaking a range of activities aimed at integrating employees within the organisation. This also applies to members of Generation Z, who, upon entering the labour market, should encounter a welcoming atmosphere in the workplace and feel that their well-being, in the broadest sense, is properly addressed by top management.

The arguments presented in this article align with the highly valuable concept of managing generationally intelligent organisations. One must agree with the view expressed by J.M. Moczydłowska, author of a monograph on this subject (2018, pp. 9-10) that "(…) one of the most important challenges facing management is to build an organisational culture and employ management tools that transform generational differences into a source of organisational success".

7. Suggestions for further research and research limitations

The author plans to conduct comparative research on a representative sample, which would show how representatives of different age groups perceive integration processes in the enterprises where they work, in the context of shaping organizational identity.

The limitations of the conducted research include the non-probabilistic sampling. The research sample is not representative, as the research was conducted with the author's own funds. Future research will utilize a Likert scale to assess individual factors that determine the causes of difficulties with integrating members of the enterprise/organization where respondents are employed. A similar approach could be used to determine the potential impact of activities implemented to improve integration within the enterprise/organization. This will allow for a more extensive statistical analysis. Another limitation of the research was its local nature, conducted in the Lubuskie Voivodeship. The author recognizes the need to conduct the research while maintaining the recommended representativeness of the research sample so that conclusions can be drawn for the entire population.

The topic discussed in the article is current and extremely important, as demographic changes encourage managers to look for effective tools that support integration processes in enterprises, shape employee well-being and support mechanisms that create lasting foundations for organizational identity, taking into account multigenerational management.

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