

A survey was taken by “*Universum*” of over eighteen thousand people from nineteen nations during the late summer of 2016. It included three generations of current and future employees to study their needs, views and competencies relating to workplace leadership. It analyzed their responses by generation, gender and nation.

The study involved Generation X (*Born between 1965 & 1983*), Generation Y (*1984 – 1996*), and Generation Z (*1997 – 2002*). The Z respondents were mostly high school students at the time. Some Y respondents were in the work place while others were in college.

Their views on leadership varied. The Generation X participants, generally, do not consider leadership to be as important for them as for the younger generations because, being more mature or having other priorities, a position isn’t necessary to have influence.

High school students are the most excited about becoming leaders. Many see it as a concept that would motivate others into relationships. They would hope to produce servant leaders.

Most Generation Y students cited mentoring as their most efficient way to influence others into wanting to achieve responsible higher paying leadership positions.

Generations Y and Z both see leadership as an important part of their future. Both fear failure, but want to impact communities and organizations. This element varied based on nationalities. Culture becomes a major influence here. USA’s Millennials and India’s Gen Z showed the most interest in being leaders. USA and India are more focused on leadership, regardless of what age group you ask. Leadership is seen as an exciting opportunity.

In some nations, such as France, interest level in leadership varies widely by generation. Interestingly, Nordic countries and Japan show the least interest in leadership because it represents a large source of stress. People from Mexico, India, the U. S., China and United Arab Emirates consistently showed the greatest interest in leadership across all generations surveyed, compared to other nations.

Attitudes about workplace leadership differ by generation, gender and nation on whether becoming a leader is desirable or not, regardless of the motivation and what the ideal leadership qualities are. Older respondents were more pragmatic.

There is, sometimes, a disconnect between what a manager considers good leadership (due to gender or generation) and what his/her team-members want from him/her as a leader. Different roles produce different views. Female respondents reported wanting to be leaders to develop themselves and to help develop others on their team. Male respondents reported wanting to be leaders to tackle challenges and drive results.

The biggest detractors to leadership for Generations Y and Z are stress and fear of failure. These two factors were true, regardless of gender, age or nation. Our young people have been raised with too much stress and fear of making mistakes. The highest interest in leadership was reported from the U.S., India, Mexico, United Arab Emirates, and China—across generations and only by Generation Y in France. The good news is, more people want to be servant-leaders among the two youngest generations than among the older generations. Generations Y and Z clearly perceive leadership as a legitimate place to make a difference and to improve the communities in which they lead. Let’s go --- get them ready.

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