Generation Z's Expectations of a Remote Team Manager

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The paper aims to categorise the expectations of Generation Z of managers managing remote teams.

Research Design & Methods: The research was carried out using the technique of written statements according to instructions. Analysis of the data collected was performed with the use of text-analysis software NVivo Pro as well as MS Excel for quantitative analyses. The study group consisted of 287 people.

Findings: The analysis shows that, apart from digital skills, remote managers need several people-oriented qualities and skills. Young people expect understanding, empathy, patience, and support in performing duties. They emphasised the role that trust plays for managers in motivating employees. The research also shows that there was some differentiation in men's and women's answers. Women more often emphasise patience and team support, the need to trust employees and team-building skills, while men proportionally more often wrote about self-control, self--confidence, firmness and assertiveness, which is partly in line with the stereotypical perception of a male manager.

Implications/Recommendations: The results reveal the image of the remote manager Generation Z expects: a manager-psychologist that is proficient in computer operation and will organise work and care for his team.

1. Introduction

Generation Z goes by many names: Generation I, Gen Tech, Digital Natives, and Gen Wii (Singh & Dangmei, 2016, p. 2). However its members may be labelled, they have only recently entered the labour market. According to the Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS), about 2.5 million people in Poland are 20–27 years of age. Even if every one of them was working, they would currently account for less than 15% of the country's employed. However, with each passing year, there will be more and more representatives of Generation Z. It is estimated that by 2028, 58% of the global employees will be constituted by Zets (Winczo-Gasik, 2022).

Generation Z is sometimes called the "lockdown generation" (Winczo-Gasik, 2022) because nearly half of their professional lives were spent during the pandemic. For many of them, this work was at least temporarily remote. As research shows, many will also encounter this type of work in the future, and that accords with employees' expectations.

For example, as many as 89% of respondents to the *Decoding Global Ways of Working* study (Strack *et al*., 2021, p. 8) believe that work will be at least partly performed remotely in the future (while 24% claimed it would be done entirely remotely)[1]. Some 52% of respondents would like to work flexibly (Goldenline, 2020, p. 12), 12% would prefer remote work to be the main mode in their company, and 75% of respondents believe that remote and in-office modes should be combined (Future Business Institute, 2020). About 72% of Polish respondents in the *People at Work 2022* survey also express the expectation of continuing work partly remotely (Richardson & Antonello, 2022). The same trend is also visible in the *Working from Home around the Globe: 2023 Report* – 56% of respondents desire hybrid work (Aksoy *et al*., 2023). Similarly, Manko and Rosinski's (2021, p. 53) research shows that many people want and like to work remotely. The youngest generation also presents such expectations in the labour market – 79% of respondents indicated that they expect to work remotely (Gajda, 2017, p. 166).

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[1] Remote work is defined as a flexible form of work that allows employees to do their jobs from outside of the physical boundaries of the organisation (Śliż, 2020, p. 51).

Employers' opinions about remote work and its effectiveness are divided because it presents organisations with so many challenges, including the need to develop new internal procedures, ways of monitoring remote work and problems with employee commitment and efficiency (Pokojski, Kister & Lipowski, 2022, p. 11; Pokojski & Lipowski, 2022, pp. 223). According to Barrero, Bloom and Davis (2023, p. 9), managers attribute the impact of working from home on productivity to be –3.5%. Their study points out that there are two models of remote work – fully remote work and hybrid work – but only the latter causes real productivity loss – due to worse communication and problems with professional development and motivation. Hybrid work, on the other hand, appears to have no or even a mildly positive impact on performance (Barrero, Bloom & Davis, 2023, p. 13). This explains why managers expect blended rather than fully remote work (Williamson, 2022, p. 14).

The changing nature of work and generational changes in organisations raise questions about what may be necessary for work efficiency and employee satisfaction. The article aims to categorise the expectations of Generation Z towards managers who manage the work of remote teams. Accomplishing this goal will involve answering the following questions: What is Generation Z like and what does it expect from work and superiors? What specific competencies does the work of a manager who manages his team remotely require? What expectations do members of the youngest generation currently present in the labour market have of a remote manager?

The research was conducted using a non-standardised written expression technique – based on indirect communication and analysis of thus obtained material (Lutyński, 1994, pp. 120–122). The study group consisted of 287 second-semester students pursuing a bachelor's degree in management.

2. Characteristics of Generation Z and Their Expectations towards Work and Their Superiors

As stated by Żarczyńska-Dobiesz and Chomątowska (2014, p. 407), members of Generation Z have a number of features in common with Generation Y, and also some significant differences. Most importantly, Generation Z is the first generation born in the so-called digital world, which makes them the closest to technology. Differences are also noticeable in their attitude to life, which is characterised by greater realism (Dwidienawati, Syahchari & Tjahjana, 2021, p. 895) and materialism (Hysa, 2016, p. 394), caution, and fear about the future, which may result in greater interest in CSR and ecology. This generation is much more likely than its predecessors to prioritise social activity (Gomez, Mawhinney & Betts, n.d., p. 12) and to appreciate diversity and non-discrimination (Gomez, Mawhinney & Betts, n.d., p. 16).

Representatives of Generation Z also have different expectations in terms of development. For example, they want to gain knowledge quickly, preferably online.

They are reluctant to build a long-term career (Smolbik-Jęczmień & Żarczyńska- -Dobiesz, 2017, p. 179) and struggle to persevere (Lev, 2022, p. 6). They would like to achieve professional success relatively quickly, while not being attached to a single job (Gomez, Mawhinney & Betts, n.d., p. 21; Dwidienawati, Syahchari & Tjahjana, 2021, p. 895; Wasiluk & Bańkowska, 2021, p. 142). At the same time, when it comes to training, as many as 43% prefer hands-on training and in-person first-day orientation (Kronos Incorporated, 2019, p. 4). Z-ers want to develop creativity and to be innovative, and they view self-development in a positive light (Karasek, 2022, p. 214).

It is also easy for Z-ers to multi-task (Wasiluk & Bańkowska, 2021, p. 142). They are more flexible, but less loyal or commited their organisation (Kronos Incorporated, 2019, p. 3; Lev, 2022, p. 9). They want work and life to form a whole in which they are themselves and are guided by the same values. Despite the caution, which is visible in their attitude to life, they are not afraid to move on to other jobs as they believe that doing so is good for their personal and professional development (Lev, 2023, p. 467). As such, they can make quick decisions (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz & Chomątowska, 2014, p. 408), for example, concerning emigration in search of work (Wasiluk & Bańkowska, 2021, p. 142).

For Generation Z, the quality of relationships at work and a good workplace atmosphere are also essential (Lev, 2023, p. 464). Managers perceive them as having a strong need for work-life balance and entertainment balance at work (Lev, 2022, pp. 10–11). Many prefer to work with their team in person (Kronos Incorporated, 2019, p. 4). And indeed, they emphasise that in-person and face-to-face socialisation in the workplace is essential (Raymond, 2023).

In terms of common values, Gen Z employees prioritise maintaining good health, resourcefulness, life without material problems, career development, professional work and friendship (90% of respondents indicated these values) (Gajda, 2017, p. 165). These values are reflected in their professional expectations, among which they indicate: a flexible approach to work, i.e. the use of flexibility in terms of the place, hours and form of work, satisfactory remuneration and bonuses (Wasiluk & Bańkowska, 2021, pp. 150–154). They view the workplace as a "temporary station" where they want to develop personally and professionally and spend time with people in a pleasurable way (Lev, 2023, p. 467).

Because Gen Z-ers have been in the labour market for only a short time, relatively few studies have been done on their expectations towards employers or superiors. However, analysis of the available data enables a preliminary, working characterisation of these expectations. Z-ers expect a supportive and progressive working environment (Lev, 2023, p. 468). Singh and Dangmei pointed out the importance of anticipating the needs and adapting recruitment strategies, motivation, and remuneration to the expectations of the youngest employees (Singh & Dangmei, 2016, p. 2). Managers should keep their word, avoid favouritism, treat employees fairly,

respectfully and, to the extent possible, as partners, support development (Gajda, 2017, pp. 168–169) and be honest (Schawbel, 2014). Gen Z-ers want to be treated personally (Gomez, Mawhinney & Betts, n.d., p. 18). They expect commitment from managers (Gomez, Mawhinney & Betts, n.d., p. 18) and openness to their ideas (Wasiluk & Bańkowska, 2021, pp. 150–154), and their mental health to be taken care of. They have also expressed a desire to work in an organisational culture that benefits the organisation and its employees (Raymond, 2023). They seek personal growth in the workplace (Lev, 2022) and expect to receive continuous feedback, both on what they can do how they can improve their work (Karasek, 2022, p. 214; Lev, 2022). Employees from Gen Z are motivated by the importance and meaning of tasks (Mahmoud *et al*., 2021, p. 205).

When in contact with managers, despite their technological proficiency, they prefer in-person communication (Schawbel, 2014), especially when receiving feedback (Kronos Incorporated, 2019). In their study, Dwidienawati, Syahchari and Tjahjana show that the employees from Generation Z expect empowerment, humility, authenticity, acceptance, direction and stewardship. They conclude that for Z-ers, a servant leadership style could be the most effective (Dwidienawati, Syahchari & Tjahjana, 2021, p. 901).

Here it should be emphasised that this "catalogue" of expectations was developed based on research conducted mainly before COVID-19 and the changes in work organisation that the pandemic accelerated. The question arises, then, what a manager who performs their duties remotely should be like, especially according to Generation Z.

3. Competencies of a Manager Working Remotely

A remote manager should have several competencies to perform their job effectively: flexibility, the ability to provide support, attentiveness to employee well-being, availability, communication skills and the ability to check the performance of tasks. Among these elements, employees have emphasised flexibility, support and check-ins (Henke, Jones & O'Neill, 2022). The manager's ability to see to employee well-being and mental health was also addressed in the report *People at Work 2022* (Richardson & Antonello, 2022). 64% of British, 61% of the Dutch, and only 47% of Italians surveyed felt they received such support. With 58% in the Netherlands, 77% in Germany and 68% in Poland experiencing stress at least once a week (Richardson & Antonello, 2022, p. 37), the need to address mental health issues is clear.

In other research, Manko and Rosinski focused on the success factors of remote work management, including the need to be "mindful of remote workers' emotional issues and needs" (Manko & Rosinski, 2021, p. 45). Emotional intelligence is also an important competency of virtual leaders (Alward & Phelps, 2019, p. 72). Among the success factors in managing remote work, they also indicate elements

such as giving employees access to the information they need for their tasks, along with transparent information about management decisions and providing a means for questions to be asked, suggestions to be made, and feedback to be submitted (Manko & Rosinski, 2021, p. 45). This suggests the need for specific procedures to be introduced, as well as willingness and communication skills from managers.

Davies, Fidler and Gorbis (2011, pp. 6–12) examined factors that will cause the professional competencies that are required to change. The globally-connected world and super-structured organisations are two factors that have enabled work to be done in hybrid mode. Such work call for crucial competencies from remote managers and employees alike, including cross-cultural competencies and the ability to collaborate virtually (the latter meaning being able to work productively, keep engaged, and demonstrate presence as a virtual team member). Cross-cultural competencies involve language skills, adaptability to changing situations and an ability to sense and respond to new contexts. In the case of a remote team manager, virtual collaboration will also mean an ability to engage and motivate a dispersed group, provide immediate feedback, and precisely formulate objectives.

When considering the competencies of remote managers, we can also use the achievements of researchers looking at the competencies of leaders in global environments. Due to similar job requirements, the competencies of such leaders are to some extent similar to those of remote managers. The most important competencies of managers in global environments include communication skills, emphasising the importance of knowing tools that enable effective virtual communication (Lönnblad & Vartiainen, 2012, p. 31; Alward & Phelps, 2019, p. 88; Figaro, 2021). Understanding (cultural) differences is another important skill, according to the respondent group. Researchers also point to the importance of being open-minded, both to novelties and the ability to maintain relationships with people one knows only virtually (Lönnblad & Vartiainen, 2012, p. 33). Flexibility (including with one's working time) and organisation skills (Figaro, 2021), proactivity (in communication, active listening, and asking the right questions), sociability and regularity in work are other important qualities. The competencies leaders should have included focusing on the bigger picture and strategy, management (including monitoring and tracking progress), people skills (motivating, communicating and dealing with different people), being available, and having the ability to use different approaches to different people (Lönnblad & Vartiainen, 2012, pp. 34–35; Mehtab *et al*., 2017, p. 189). Patience for the demanding and time-consuming communication of a global leader and interpersonal trust are also mentioned as essential skills in virtual management (Figaro, 2021).

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Aim, Research Questions and Methodology

The aim of the present research is to categorise the expectations of Generation Z towards managers of remote teams. The study group consisted of first-year students pursuing an undergraduate degree in management, all of whom are members of Generation Z.

The research question was: What are Generation Z's expectations regarding the competencies a remote team manager should have? Respondents were asked one open-ended question: In your opinion, what should a manager leading a team working remotely be like? List the desired competencies (as well as skills, knowledge, personality traits, temperament). There was a fear of excessive self-censorship of the respondents and referring only to those traits they had no doubt could be called "competencies". It was believed that widening the criteria beyond "competencies" would provide a fuller picture of Generation Z's expectations.

The research was conducted using a non-standardised written expression technique, one based on indirect communication and analysis of the material thus obtained (Lutyński, 1994, pp. 120–122). This made it possible to penetrate respondents' reasoning and current living situation, and for them to express a subjective attitude (Lutyński, 1994, pp. 126–128). In principle, analysis of content gathered this way allows the subject's features and characteristics to be recognised – in this case, respondents' opinions on the essential competencies of remote managers.

The study was conducted on Moodle, a remote teaching platform, in March 2022. The respondents had one week to send their answers, so everyone could provide them at the most suitable time after having duly reflected on the subject. The data were stored, coded and further analysed in compliance with the rules. Analysis of the collected data was performed with the use of text-analysis software NVivo Pro and, for quantitative analyses, MS Excel.

The process of coding and analysing statements provided by the respondents consisted of several stages. Initially, the names of competencies provided by the respondents were used without creating group categories. These were later organised into groups and aggregated into categories.

4.2. Study Group

Written statements provided by 287 respondents (172 women and 115 men) were analysed. After the first stage of the analysis, 21 statements (13 women, 8 men) were rejected, on grounds that they made no reference to remote work. That left 266 statements (159 women, 107 men) for analysis. The pool comprised only full-time students, all of whom were members of Generation Z, aged 19–20. Some had experience in virtual education and virtual cooperation with their colleagues

and teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the limited age range and the method of sample collection, the group cannot be said to be representative of Generation Z as a whole.

5. Research Results

Analysis of the statements collected made it possible to extract the characteristics respondents believed managers managing remote teams should have. They were grouped into skills, personality traits and attitudes. While these categories are not always fully separable, detailed analysis of the statements justifies their distinction.

Table 1. Skills a Remote Manager Is Expected to Have

Skill Group	Skills	Women	Men	Sum
General	communication skills	92	53	145
	digital skills	68	48	116
	time management	31	18	49
Task-oriented skills	work organisation	40	29	69
	planning and dividing work	23	13	36
	work control	19	13	32
People skills	motivating	51	33	84
	team support	29	13	42
	ability to care for the well-being of employees	21	10	31
	team building	20	10	30

Source: the author.

Table 1 summarises the skills managers of remote teams should possess, divided into three categories. The first is "general" skills, which are needed not only by managers working remotely. Respondents emphasised communication and digital skills.

Justifying the importance of communication skills, the respondents stated that management could not be accomplished without good communication, as the following quotes show:

Constant flow of information is the foundation of efficient team management [M111[2]].

Specific communication of information definitely facilitates cooperation. A good manager should be able to give specific and understandable instructions and adjust the way of communication to each of the recipients [W126].

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[2] The opinions were coded as M (man)/W (woman) plus the sequential number of the statement.

(...) express your expectations even more clearly, because an employee with reduced concentration (which can be expected when working from home) may perform the assigned tasks incorrectly [W142].

When working remotely, a team leader should talk to co-workers a lot more and say even the things that seem obvious [W21].

Thanks to communication skills, the manager will be able to effectively find out how well the employee is coping with the task and whether they will manage to complete it on time. The manager also provides the necessary feedback on the achievements [W8].

They also emphasised the importance of communication for building good relationships:

In remote work, this is an essential feature because it is difficult to build relationships with employees without seeing them daily [W115].

Good communication with the team is one of the most important factors of successful cooperation [W16].

At the same time, the respondents express the belief that communication is crucial in remote work because it is more difficult to maintain than in in-office work:

Face-to-face meetings have such a specific character; we can present our views and emotions more [W10].

It is more difficult than with face-to-face contact, as we have limited eye contact, which can often lead to some misunderstandings [W118].

(…) especially in remote work, where communication is hindered by the lack of live contact, sometimes by technical problems, etc. Therefore, a manager should communicate each matter clearly enough so that there is no need to ask questions or to guess, so that employees always know what is needed [M3].

Digital skills for proficiency in the use of software for remote communication and to organise work and office suites was the next set of skills that were regularly cited by respondents. Listing statements supporting the respondents' positions, Table 2 illustrates why these skills were considered particularly important.

Table 2. Reasons Why a Remote Manager Should Have Digital Skills

Reason	Sample Utterances
The need to properly organise the team's work	"The manager must properly select and configure the programme so that the team works comfortably and efficiently" [M108]. "This will allow him to choose such technological solutions that improve task performance by team members" [W113]. "Shortcomings in this area can lead to delays and many misunderstandings. This is also an obstacle for the manager, who cannot obtain information from his team. There may also be deficiencies in integration

Table 2 cnt'd

Reason	Sample Utterances
	and communication, as the manager may not be aware of one or another of the possibilities the equipment offers. All this can lead to organisational problems" [M154].
The need to control/ monitor work	"They will also be useful for monitoring the remote work of their employees" [W61]. "He will be able to effectively monitor the actions of his charges" [M199]. "To be able to coordinate the team's activities efficiently and control them properly" [M134].
Motivating employees	"Will serve as an example for the team, and the group will also try to meet the challenge of efficiently using IT tools" [W113].
Employees expect help	"Such a manager must be a kind of »technological guide« for his co-workers, who do not always have great IT skills. This should help them find their way in the virtual world and quickly adapt to such a mode of work, which would make it as efficient as possible" [M108]. "IT issues should not be alien to him, as he should help employees who are less familiar with working with a computer" [W121].
Saving time	"Should be able to deal with minor technical problems related to the operation of the software so that there is no need to wait for help from the IT department" [M108]. "Thanks to this knowledge, we will save significant time when we encounter a problem, because we will be able to solve it ourselves and it will not require assistance from people with these competencies" [W178].
Image considerations	"Without this, the manager will lose his authority in the eyes of employees" [M103].

Source: the author.

In turn, the ability to organise working time is crucial for home-based work, where there are a lot of disruptive factors and work-life balance is more easily lost. The respondents felt the manager should work to address this.

The remaining skills a remote manager needs, according to respondents, have been divided into two groups. Respondents put more emphasis on skills related to working with people, while analysis of personal traits also shows that "relational" features also received higher priority (Table 3). Therefore, in the case of skills and features, I will take a closer look at those related to interpersonal relations.

Motivation is especially important in remote work, given the lack of direct contact with colleagues and a supervisor as well as any number of distractions. Respondents expressed the opinion that "People who work remotely lose the motivation to work and enthusiasm" [M2] and "It is easy to get distracted or shift attention to another stimuli" [W8].

The ability to support the team was most often related to helping perform duties and thus was associated with managers being available to employees:

> The manager should support the group. He should be present during the conversation (during the performance of tasks) or on the phone (if the tasks are long-term) so that employees know that they can rely on him [I12].

> The manager is the pillar of the whole team. He is responsible for a team and should be the greatest support for employees. Remotely, there are more problems the manager must help his employees with [W184].

In turn, expecting managers to take care of employee well-being, the respondents expressly mention mental health:

> Take care of their mental health, talk to them, give them mental support so that they do not become depressed [M108].

> Taking care of their employees despite this "remoteness", so that people nevertheless feel supported by the manager in what is happening and what should be taken care of in connection with the correct work ethics [M195].

> (…) "good word", a good attitude or ordinary interpersonal conversation. Sometimes you have to become not only a manager but also a friend. Everyone in their lives, it happens, is left alone with their problems, and this starts to have a very negative impact on work, and even when we work remotely, and we are alone at home all the time, we start to think even more about all kinds of advantages and disadvantages of our life, so in order to get out of such a state, we absolutely need someone who will extend "a helping hand" and support us with a "kind word" [W96].

Table 3. The Personality Traits Respondents Expect a Remote Manager to Have

Group of Traits	Traits	Women	Men	Sum
"Efficiency" (concerning work)	resistance to stress	25	13	38
	creativity	24	14	38
	flexibility	18	8	26
	self-discipline	12	8	20
"Relational" (concerning people)	indulgence	43	27	70
	empathy	38	25	63
	patience	25	8	33
	openness to others	21	12	33
	self-confidence	16	17	33
	calm	14	18	32
	resoluteness	9	12	21
	assertiveness	9	9	18

Source: the author.

We now turn to the personal traits that representatives of Gen Z indicated as particularly important in the work of a remote manager. The most frequently mentioned were indulgence, empathy, openness to others, patience, and self-confidence. This clearly shows that the respondents see, in the position of a remote manager, a person who can not only achieve the assumed organisational goals but, above all, does not lose sight of individuals or difficult situation, where they carry out his professional duties.

Table 4 presents statements about the five features employees most expect a remote manager to have.

Table 4. Utterances about a Remote Manager's Most Expected Traits

Trait	Sample Opinions
Indulgence	"A good manager should be aware that we are only human and each of us has our problems, such as illness" [M110]. "A team manager's job is to lead colleagues to accomplish the goal. This would be impossible if he did not understand that everyone is different and may find it difficult to complete certain tasks, especially when there is no technical support" [W138]. "Forbearance in such a situation will reduce our stress, which definitely reduces productivity" [M197].
Empathy	"Through a calm approach and willingness to understand the other person, he can find a convenient way out for both parties. This ability is key, as it makes the foundations of the manager-employee relationship strong and stable. On such a basis, you can build a healthy, sincere and conflict-free bond with your employee, which is the goal of every successful team" [W117].
Openness to others	"It is easier to work with a person who willingly and extensively answers our questions, never refusing to help" [W115]. "Maintaining good relations with employees and staying in constant contact with them will definitely keep morale at a higher level than leaving the group alone" [W150].
Patience	"You have to explain, show (and as in life – show so the person can see with their eyes – that something isn't going to work); answer all questions" [W30]. "Patience is needed due to technical problems related to the imperfection of the network or the general course of the next "day at work" [W90].
Self-confidence	"It creates an image of a man who can be perceived as the authority of his employees" [M246]. "Thanks to this feature, the manager is able to take risks and accept defeat" [M110].

Source: the author.

The analysis of the respondents' statements also made it possible to identify certain expectations Gen Z has of remote managers' attitudes. Table 5 presents the two most often indicated attitudes – trust and readiness for development.

Table 5. Remote Manager's Expected Attitudes

Attitude	Women	Men	Sum
Trust	32	16	48
Readiness for development	15	8	23

Source: the author.

Although relatively few respondents mentioned the attitudinal aspects, it is worth emphasising that Gen Z-ers see a need to trust staff. According to the respondents, such an attitude is necessary for five reasons (see Table 6).

Table 6. Why Trust Employees? Respondents' Opinions

Arguments for Trusting Employees	Sample Opinions
No complete control while working remotely	"One of the key elements of remote work is the lack of direct control by the supervisor over the employee's actions" [W39]. "(…) because it is harder to control working remotely" [W38].
Perceived positive effects of management extending trust to employees and the organisation (positive impact on the morale of employees and their willingness to work and increase their work efficiency)	"(Trust) may result in the subordinate becoming more responsible for a project or task and putting in more effort" [W119]. "A much better solution is to trust the employee and give them considerable autonomy to perform duties. This helps them become more responsible for the project and more involved" [W39].
Perceived negative effects for employees and organisation of management lacking trust (stress, reluctance to work, decreased efficiency)	"Constantly checking in on employees can make them feel stressed" [W116]. "This attitude builds tension, leading to conflicts and a lack of willingness and mobilisation to work" [W117]. "Excessive control can worsen efficiency" [M160].
Perceived negative effects of the superior's lack of trust associated with the impossibility of complete control for superior	"Lack of trust makes the manager feel anxious all the time and wonder what his employee is doing and whether he has done his job" [M190].
Perceived positive effects of managers' trust in employees both for managers and the organisation	"(…) you as a manager do not think about what and how the team is doing all the time. It allows you to focus on your work and responsibilities" [M72].

Source: the author.

6. Conclusions

The research shows that the expectations concerning the characteristics of a remote manager of the surveyed representatives of Generation Z do not fully match the results of previous research on effective remote managers, nor do they match the expected competencies of onsite supervisors. These differences concern more than just replacing some competencies with others based on their perceived importance.

The respondents in this study expect competence in the areas which they consider themselves to excel in – for example, digital skills, which managers engaging in remote work should have, both for purely practical reasons, such as work organisation, and also for the sake of their relations with others. The analysis also shows that remote managers need several qualities and skills a people-oriented manager would have. The young people's expectation of understanding, empathy, patience, and support in performing one's duties shows that, despite their willingness to work remotely, representatives of Generation Z are afraid that such a mode of work may generate additional difficulties that they may not be able to fully cope with.

Respondents relatively rarely mentioned management competencies. Unlike in previous studies, they treated managerial qualities such as fairness and honesty rather marginally, focusing instead mainly on areas where they identified the main problems managers face when they work remotely: motivating employees, communication, team building, organising work, dividing tasks and auditing work. In these areas, they expect excellent skills from managers. They also note that good remote managers trust subordinates, particularly in the context of motivating them. Trust is indicated as an element of efficiency and systemic stimulation. At the same time, trust allows managers to avoid becoming frustrated by a lack of continuous control and to gain time for other tasks. Expecting a supervisor's trust is consistent not only with the need for independence and autonomy, both of which build job satisfaction among young people (Kawka, 2021, p. 44), but also with other conditions this age group thrives in in working virtually in teams (Mehtab *et al*., 2017, p. 187; Samul, Szpilko & Szydło, 2021, p. 99). In turn, team-building skills, communication, understanding and empathy all suffer when work is done remotely, due mainly to the lack of social contacts (Mierzejewska & Chomicki, 2020, p. 42).

Research also shows that Gen Z-ers are convinced that a range of difficult-to--predict situations make a manager's work, especially remote work, stressful. They believe that possessing the ability to cope with stress is essential, as is flexibility, which they associate with greater ease of changing one's behaviour and adopting operating patterns depending on the situation and the employee.

The research also shows some differentiation of respondents' answers by gender. When presenting their expectations of remote managers, women and men each more

often considered the features and skills stereotypically regarded as the strengths of their gender.

Women more often emphasise patience, team-building and team-support skills, the need to trust employees and care for employee well-being. This may indicate that women attach more importance than men to relationships and teams, a conclusion other studies have also found (Rakowska, 2018, p. 137; Wilk *et al*., 2020, p. 134). Women indicated that care for relationships is a feature of a female management style (Wilk *et al*., 2020, p. 138). Women also more often indicated flexibility as an essential quality to have. In turn, men proportionally more often underline self-confidence, calm, resoluteness and assertiveness, which is partly in keeping with the stereotypical perception of a male manager (Moczydłowska, 2017, p. 15).

To sum up, the study results reveal the image of the remote manager expected by representatives of Generation Z, particularly at the age of 19–20. That image is of a manager-psychologist who is proficient in computer operations, will organise work and also take care of their subordinates. The set of features and skills the youngest generation expects shows that meeting its expectations in the labour market can be challenging.

To confirm the differences in what young women and men expect will require additional research due to the limited and unrepresentative research sample. Moreover, because the research was qualitative and included representatives of Generation Z, mainly aged 19–20, there is a need to conduct further research that covers younger and older representatives of this generation, taking into account their work experience.

I hope that the research presented in this article fills the cognitive gap regarding Generation Z and its expectations. Developing knowledge in this area is essential because Gen Z will play an increasingly important role in the labour market.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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