



## GENERATION Z: FROM UNIVERSITY TO THE JOB MARKET, THE CHALLENGES AND CONTRADICTIONS

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### SUMMARY

By bringing up the topic of generation Z: from university to the job market, the challenges and contradictions, we hope to understand how this generation has been dealing with the main characteristics of this new era, which is innovation and technological advances, which aim to characterize the generation Z and describe what are the important work values for this population to the detriment of current academic training and the digital reality that the world experiences. Generation Z was characterized as being the generation born between 1990 and the beginning of the 21st century, that is, they had access to technology since childhood. The main characteristics identified in young people of this generation are the passion for technology, agility, multifunctionality, and the preference for living in the virtual world. Furthermore, it was found that these Generation Z students have important work values that differentiate them from other generational strata, but they also appreciate work values in common with other generations, even linked to the digital world, they present possibilities of meeting the purposes of job market in relation to digital access, and the use of social networks as a niche market that technology offers. Through a literature review, the document is a bibliographic and documentary research, which will investigate the main challenges faced by generation z in relation to university education and the job market. As a result, it is possible to understand that these subjects are still beginning to walk the path of work and changing ideas or plans is part of professional development, requiring educational institutions and the work field to appropriate digital knowledge and innovation facilities to adapt to the new model of life.

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### ABSTRACT

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1

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## INTRODUCTION

The present work with the theme of generation Z from university to the job market aims to characterize generation Z and describe what are the important work values for this population to the detriment of current academic training and the digital reality that the world experiences.

Generation Z is the generation born at the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, starting in 1995, having characteristics that highlight its evident and striking digital sense that generate ease in interacting with the globalized world, making it different from others. According to studies and data based on the United Nations (UN), this is the largest population group in the world, and in 2019 and 2020, they already account for 31.5% of the total population.

Because they live in the midst of *boom* of digital transformation a time, where technological resources are common, they talk in a technological language, they are always connected to the universe of social networks and different applications, where they communicate easily through abbreviated messages, full of slang and figures, but they also become object of this digital transformation assuming a fundamental role in social, cultural and economic development and growth, which due to so many resources and opportunities for transformation, different tools are increasingly being created that modernize human and machine actions.

This need for searches and discoveries becomes inherent to generation Z, which is characterized by innovation because they feel challenged and which provides essential actions of competitiveness, creation and innovation that become much more precise due to these individuals capturing information quickly, finding practical solutions to challenges that other generations would spend a lot of time thinking about how to proceed.

But personal training is not always combined with these transformations, with a gap between what the world expects from the new professional and what is being offered in undergraduate courses. Innovation and adaptation permeate a modernization in the way of understanding the importance of appropriating digital knowledge since training so that the job market can develop to meet the demands of a more demanding population.

These aspects become of great importance for the progress of humanity because today's world is driven by high competitiveness and lack of jobs. Socialization via the internet created a new social configuration, leading to a generation with new consumption habits.

A new consumer society has emerged in which the internet, which is no longer the network accessible only at home via computers, has become a constant tool through smartphones, which today are the main means of communication between most people.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATION Z

Known as digital natives, those born in generation Z have an intimate relationship with the digital world, the internet and information technology. These are people who grew up playing video games, who closely followed technological innovations and who like to consume these innovations when possible.

According to Ciriaco (2009), people born from 1990 to 2009 are called generation Z (Z for Zapping2), they are particularly communicative and adept at technological advancement, they are always looking for recognition from people and they care about the environment. Most opt for practical things and enjoy everything that is more modern. This is a generation that cannot imagine life without state-of-the-art computers, televisions with incredible images, video games, cell phones with countless functions, iPods, etc.

The characters of this generation take on peculiar characteristics that refer to their technological self-knowledge and their absolute omnipresence with social networks, adapting perfectly to online media. This situation is an effect susceptible to the evolution of society and generations, highlighting the way in which people communicate and interact, standing out as a part of great importance in the process that it shapes evolution by associating itself with the concept of generation (PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2019).

According to Dias (2022), this is a generation that is more engaged and concerned about societal issues, climate change, more critical, plural and connected. They seek to understand their role, information consumption practices, the relevance of disinformation and acceptance of conspiracy theories as a protagonist generation of their time, with non-negligible attitudes.

However, they have peculiar characteristics, especially in relation to the way they seek to live their achievements in isolation as this is a generation that does not tend to create many lasting bonds with people. This generation does not know how to live in a uniform way and does not follow a routine, and it is also difficult to keep them focused for a long time without their mind being challenged by the unknown and the new that comes their way.



it sharpens the mind and makes them feel challenged (NETO 2010).

Young people of Generation Z are individuals who learned to relate to each other through social networks and apps, avoiding leaving home. Most avoid going out and staying in public places, using delivery services so they don't have to go out and stay in contact with other people.

The majority of Generation Z boys and girls never conceived of a planet without computers, chat rooms, and cell phones. His way of thinking has been influenced since birth by the complex and fast-paced world that technology has created. Unlike their parents, they feel comfortable when they turn on the television, radio, telephone, music and internet at the same time. (FREIRE FILHO, J; LEMOS, J. 2008, p.1)

It is then understood that the way generation Z consumes content is different from previous generations, as the evolution of technology and the increasing spread of social networks makes them more connected with advances and new possibilities. With this, new habits and behaviors emerge that need to be considered by companies looking for professionals who wish to reach and engage in a future focused on new discoveries and the possibilities of technological growth, to guarantee themselves in the field of activity in which they live, or still to innovate and create new ways to stay in the market (PREZIOSI,2021).

**Main characteristics of Generation Z**

The Insider Intelligence platform names four specific characteristics about how Generation Z consumes content. These data are of great importance so that we can understand the changes that globalization and the technological factor influence human development, and according to Goldacker (2023) the profile of the majority of young people who make up generation z stand out from the others based on the following evidence:

**The. Less daily time spent accessing traditional TV than other groups of people soas**

A survey carried out in the USA with individuals between 18 and 24 years of age found that they spend less time watching traditional TV than any other group, with the majority of them spending less than an hour a day watching any television content. Instead of engaging in this form of entertainment, they use much of the time they would dedicate to the event by surfing the internet and participating in social networks, streaming platforms and online games.

**B. Use social media more**

As they are people highly engaged in technological events, most of this generation's communication is highlighted through social networks, with more than 90% of young people between 13 and 22 years old using these platforms regularly as a form of communication and to solve everyday problems. . This is a significant change compared to previous generations, who used social media more passively.

Nearly 9 in 10 U.S. Gen Z adults spend more than an hour a day on social media, and nearly half spend more than 3 hours on the platforms. Gen Z youth in the US will spend about 1 hour and 15 minutes on social media each day this year, making the average Gen Z adult a heavy social media user, especially when compared to older generations. (GOLDACKER, 2023, sp)

**w. Opening to test new platforms**

Goldacker (2023) presents the third characteristic of generation Z as the ease and openness to testing new platforms and technologies, especially those that offer unique and interactive experiences. This is a very important factor when it comes to the objectives and goals of the production market and the majority of companies in the sector, which, in order to meet the current interests of this segment of the population and those close to it, need to maintain adequate innovations and form with which they offer new forms of content, new devices and technological material that meets expectations and the search for something new, characteristics evident in this generation.

3

Regarding the platforms most used by generation z, studies by Goldacker (2023) highlight that around a quarter (25.7%) of Generation Z adults use YouTube more than any other social platform, closely followed by TikTok (25.0%) and via Instagram (20.0%). This finding leads to the understanding that generation Z looks for platforms where they can create and consume content.

**d. Suitability for purchases on social networks**

Another of the points of differentiation between generation Z and previous generations is the way in which they



goods and services add up, from everyday consumer products such as courses and virtual material. These young people have greater confidence and willingness to make their purchases directly on social media than people from previous generations. Most take into account the practicality and ease that the platforms offer, as well as the greater confidence in the security of online transactions.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of Gen Zers' social media behaviors, especially as they age with more purchasing power. About half of U.S. Gen Z and millennial users make purchases directly on social media, compared to 38% of the general population (GOLDACKER, 2023, sp)

Given these changes in behavior, companies need to adapt to the modern world, rethinking their marketing and content strategies, in addition to looking for ways to always be present on social networks in a dynamic and attractive way, using different platforms that make that reaches a larger segment of customers that your audience increases (PREZIOSI,2021).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study's method of execution is a literature review, carried out in the main sources of scientific research in material available on academic study websites, from platforms such as Google Scholar and *SciELO*. The elaboration of textual production follows the descriptive model whose purpose is to describe the systematic and logical steps that guide all scientific investigation, with the aim of collecting reliable and valid information, to generate new knowledge (NORONHA and PEREIRA, 2000).

In this way, it is understood that the research methodology defines the way of conducting research, being an instrumental concern, as it is related to the ways of doing science; highlighting procedures, tools, and the paths taken. For the development of this study, the research methodology used addresses a qualitative nature.

This is a scientific research work whose purpose is pure methodology based on bibliographic studies, according to Gil (2010, p.29-31) "bibliographic research is prepared based on already published material". This procedure is conceptualized by Gil (2010, p.37) as "a deep and exhaustive study of one or a few objectives, in a way that allows broad and detailed knowledge".

The literature review is the research method that seeks to analyze a field of knowledge in search of an answer to a specific question. Therefore, "Literature" covers all relevant material that is written on a specific topic, whether through books, periodical articles, newspaper articles, historical records, government reports, theses and dissertations and other types. (NORONHA and PEREIRA, 2000).

According to Alves Mazzotti, (2002) the literature review or bibliographic review therefore exalts two primary purposes that can be described as the construction of a scenario for the problem and the analysis of the possibilities present in the literature consulted to design the resolution of the problem. problem presented now.

In the work proposed here, it is clear that the most appropriate literature review is a literature review, which consists of constructing a broad analysis of the literature on the problem, contributing to discussions on research methods and results, as well as reflections on carrying out future studies on the topic.

Through bibliographic and documentary research methodology, active methodologies will be investigated, bring positive and significant results when it comes to teaching and learning. The research presented here will have a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory characteristic, as the modality of this investigation will be carried out by the researcher through a process of non-participant observation, as it aims to provide a more direct communication between the researcher and the phenomenon by doing an observation, however aiming at the components in a complete description of the problem, seeking experiences, understanding and the Verified state movement.

4

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Prakash Yadav & Rai (2017) report that generation Z goes from 1991 to the present, however, there is disagreement from other authors regarding the beginning of this phase, especially considering the reality of Brazil, in which the digital era gained strength only in the last years of the 20th century, therefore, the oldest individuals of this generation are now in their teens or early 20s.

years (FIETKIEWICZ, et.al 2016; PRIPORAS, et al, 2017; STEINMETZ, 2017).

However, it can be seen that generation Z came to break different paradigms, and one of them is the way of searching for information or content online, thus forming a new generation fully integrated into the digital era, as it is different from previous generations in their search. Innovation is taking great strides, and expects nothing more or less from consumerist society to rapidly evolve and let go of theories that are not useful to them, however society is not yet ready for so many changes and with the speed at which they happen and this generates a great dichotomy between what is offered and what is intended (FRIEDRICH, PETERSON, KOSTER, & BLUM, 2010).

The clash between generations and the accelerated evolution of technological resources brought people into the world with a new profile and interests that were very different from previous generations. The social, cultural and humanitarian challenges that have arisen with the expansion of technological knowledge present developments that cover not only the expanding area, but that interfere with every form of expression present in society as a whole, and that have changed history (ZOMER, et.al, 2018).

In family and social life, everything has changed, from the way of communicating to the objectives and interests of this new population, and this new generation Z has the need to control the events in the lives of the individuals they follow and get involved in their activities (ESPINOZA; JUVONEN, 2011).

If, on the one hand, being born and growing up in a completely digital environment, and not having to adapt to the use of digital equipment, was one of the greatest advantages, the relationship with previous generations was marked by a distance and a difference in the way of acting and thinking that makes them be on another level of reality, as generation Z is realistic, materialistic, liberal on a cultural level (FIETKIEWICZ ET AL., 2016; FRIEDRICH ET AL., 2010, ZOMER, et.al, 2018).

In other words, generation Z wants and values an informed, creative, productive, entrepreneurial humanized culture. Furthermore, they are very adapted to the remote work model, from total home office to hybrid. Flexibility is important, they want the autonomy of not having to take traffic and they also have the prospect of growth. The world has undergone drastic changes in recent decades with the expansion of technologies and the advancement of media content, forming a generation of people who are more individualistic and focused on their interests (MERRIMAN, 2015).

With an exaggerated dependence on technological resources and the advances they provide, the generation of people born in the late 90s of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century worries most social organizations, as their intimacy with new technologies sometimes alienates them. The profile that society is used to living with becomes interested in innovation and feels a constant need to escape the reality in which they live (WOOD, 2013).

The online environment has become a unique alternative, which is established as a space for communication, an expression in which the consumption of information changes and shapes people's profiles and behavior. From there, spokespeople emerge, which are individuals and groups who seek, share and interact with information from the most varied segments and subjects through web pages and social networks, discussing and presenting information with the aim of informing themselves or maintaining being informed (DIAS, 2022).

According to the Pew Research Center, (2021) in its studies, it concluded that social media in recent decades has assumed an important role as a way of accessing information, with the platforms that individuals use and the way in which news is conveyed, however, have changed considerably in this period: Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have adapted to new generations and have changed and evolved in terms of functionality, offering new experiences and important information for their users. In this sense, according to Dias (2022, p 4) reports that

Studies have found positive relationships between the use of social media as a primary source of information and the acceptance of forms of misinformation and how this can contribute to fostering conspiracy theories, amplifying misinformation on social media.

5

However, it can be seen that this technological environment has developed rapidly in an active way, which in addition to benefits generates some implications that are now reflected as concerns, as the exaggeration of the use of technologies and the distance from personal communication, in which networks Social organizations develop content that is not always in accordance with what the majority of people are prepared to access or what they want or do not want to interact with, a fact that has caused new generations to encounter conflicts that they are not able to resolve in relation to the consumption of content (BOLTON, PARASURAMAN, HOEFNAGELS, 2013), According to Bolton et al., (2013) generation Z wants to explore and socialize on social networks, they can

They post waiting for feedback, just like comments from their followers.

Living through social networks can bring complications, the desire for popularity makes young people spend more time online and reduces their contribution in the real world. Preferences for social networks may vary, depending on the group, age and activities of the individuals who use it. Generation Z prefers to use the internet, social networks and websites for their interactions, unlike previous generations, they feel much more comfortable giving feedback and commenting on brands and the use of social networks has already changed the virtual market (COELHO,2018, p.10)

Therefore, when offering unique and interactive experiences that meet the expectations of generation Z, it is essential that companies seek to invest in practical and online ways of selling to win over this audience. Therefore, content strategies aimed at these young people must permeate more attractive models and faster formats, with short videos, and on multiplatforms that offer online ease of purchase, in order to be successful and reach a large part of the intended audience (ZOMER , et.al, 2018).

This fact is evident from schooling to the job market, which most of the time does not know how to harness the potential of this generation. However, in recent years, especially at the beginning of this new decade, from 2020 onwards, there has been a great perception of this reality offered by the digital world, as the Covid-19 pandemic that devastated the planet and the need for social isolation, offered as a means of Safeguarding health has made human contact this greater space in the digital world. Oliveira defines the situation of education in relation to the factors generated by the pandemic:

The pandemic caused by the new coronavirus has brought a series of challenges to higher education and education as a whole. It resulted in the closure of activities nationwide, interrupting the traditional face-to-face teaching format and forcing teachers and students to stay at home. As a result, educational institutions were compelled to think of alternative ways for continuity of the teaching-learning process (OLIVEIRA, et.al,2023, p.2)

This reality changed the way in which most educational institutions began to perceive digital advancement, in addition to the appropriation of tablets and computers to reproduce content, a fact that increasingly leaves generation Z displaced between what they really hope to learn and what is offered to you. In this sense, it is very important for professionals to know how such resources can have the desired effect efficiently and bring satisfactory answers (ZOMER, et.al, 2018).

When using media in their teaching, teachers must understand that they play a very important role in the context and that it is important to know how to use them sparingly so that they produce the desired results.

Thus, it has stood out in different sectors, especially in recent years, in the post-pandemic period, in which all sectors of the economy had to adapt to the cultural and technological changes that were necessary, especially in relation to the educational field, which experienced a variation significant with the inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), to change the entire way of conceiving the different forms of teaching (COELHO, MENDES,2024, p.17).

Schools and companies began to perceive themselves in a new format and work dynamics and this led to the awareness that the digital world has much more to offer than most generations before Generation Z used. These young people look for differences, such as a good education in so-called first-rate colleges and fluency in a second language.

6

Therefore, it is necessary to discuss elaborating, developing and evaluating understanding how students see it and how they filter what interests them and seems useful, because only then will it be meaningful for the teacher to enter a computer laboratory where students use their computers to undertake a subject. If they are not given the opportunity to use their resources in a concrete way, it is also necessary to coherently plan activities in the pedagogical context that may be intertwined according to the students' need to use the technological means available for meaningful learning in an approach reflective and current (COELHO; MENDES,2024, p.12)

Realizing the need for adaptation means that the world is moving towards adapting the forms

of teaching and different work possibilities, looking for new platforms to adapt existing activities to the current reality, with the use of online search engines that can demystify the prejudices and setbacks that generation Z has experienced.

### GENERATION Z IN THE JOB MARKET

Because they have social and personal characteristics that are disconnected from most people from previous generations, and are sometimes even extreme in their interactions, many Generation Z individuals have found it very difficult to enter and remain in the job market. This incompatibility generally leads to underemployment and exploitation, mainly due to high competitiveness and the increasing flexibility of laws and labor relations (MELO et al., 2019).

In Brazil, generation Z encounters great difficulties when entering the job market, with several factors influencing this situation. The impacts of training disconnected from professional reality, the lack of opportunities in relation to the first job, the diverse demands of the job market in relation to the experiences required and the disarticulation of jobs with the digital reality that permeates the globalized world are some of the evident factors (CAVAZOTTE et.al 2012; SALTORATTO et al., 2019).

It can still be said that at a time when there is a period of serious crisis, strongly impacted by the political environment full of precedents of corruption, this generation's relationship with reality becomes somewhat troubled, a fact that means that despite From being a generation that presents generally very positive behavioral characteristics, it is now considered pessimistic, mainly as a result of the macroeconomic, political and professional scenarios, in which it is necessary to deal with the frustration of, after years of study and academic training, not being obtain the desired return according to the characteristics of the generation, originating different needs that influence motivation and perspectives in relation to personal and professional life (FANTINI & DE SOUZA, 2015).

Gartner (2020a), reports that the arrival of Generation Z in the job market is one of the trends that will bring the greatest long-term change in the relationships between organizations and their workers. Attracting and retaining workers from this generation may require a more proactive stance from organizations, implying planned change processes capable of overcoming any adversities that may arise.

It is a generation that needs to learn to face a job market with a shortage of jobs and low professional career prospects in the short term. This led to many young high-performance professionals seeking international career development programs or even underemployment in more developed countries, generating a serious loss of potential professionals in the job market (AMIS; AÏSSAOUI, 2013).

Thus, because they are always dependent on technological resources in their daily lives, what they have left are the professions that keep them in constant contact with technologies. Professions such as app drivers, delivery drivers and virtual customer service are what they have left (CAVAZOTTE et.al 2012).

Another way that many find to remain in the job market is through the use of intermittent contracts, where services are provided on a daily basis (day laborers) and other ways of exploiting work so as not to generate burdens for companies and the generate a lot of loss for workers (BEZERRA et al., 2019).

The situation is very common in relation to the majority of the generation Z population, who, because they are from a less favored social class and have fewer resources, become hostage to a system managed by the dominant class. In this way, their worldview is influenced by these aspects, as highlighted by Grubb (2018, p. 11):

Compared to their predecessors, this group is more cautious and more anxious (especially in relation to paying for college and finding good jobs). So far, life experiences of Generation Z can be characterized by technology and caution.

Regarding the behavior of individuals of this generation in the workplace, Formenton and Stefano, (2017, p.4), comment:

7

They balance work and position with self-esteem, they are quite competitive in the workplace. They are smart, resourceful and strive to win. Boomers believe in hierarchical structure and ranking and may have difficulty adjusting to workplace flexibility trends. work.

Another factor that makes these individuals the most affected is the possibility of guaranteeing academic training in the digital area, as this is the demand of most young people in generation Z

who already have a higher economic level, that is, the middle class, being privileged for not being hostage to this system and the upper class is the owner of the system. In this way, it can be seen that the number of people working with the production of digital content is increasing among middle and upper class people. (PREZIOSI, 2021).

If, on the one hand, the difficulty of adapting to the existing job market is a reality that causes many entrepreneurs to move away from professionals with the Generation Z profile, the need to invest in the potential they carry is already a reality, given that Companies increasingly need to innovate and adapt, therefore, they need the knowledge that it is important for managers to know how to take advantage of the opportunities provided by chaos and transformation and engagement that are characteristic of most of these subjects (DIAS, 2022).

However, it is still necessary to adapt many elements as the school content leaves aside essential elements for adequate training that meets the new profile of the 21st century professional. In this environment, the demands on generation Z are high and it is difficult to go against this, mainly due to the extremely competitive market in search of high-performance professionals. (MAURER, 2013, p. 36)

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Studies on generation Z in relation to university education and the job market, highlighting the challenges and contradictions, highlight that the characteristics of this new generation strengthen their uniqueness in relation to previous generations, as they are people more connected to social and cultural and digital transformations. more prepared for the technological advances that the new social culture presents.

Communication, the way in which they perceive themselves and how they relate to social and cultural situations, makes them different from the generations that educational institutions were prepared for and that society in general was focused on assuming in its standards of evolution. .

This group is already digital native and has characteristics that are sometimes questioned and even contradictory to what was desired. They are individualistic, creative and seek the new, comparing their ideas and desires with what was expected of them, as this need for the new takes them to a different level from that proposed, whether in schooling where they seek dynamism in their daily lives, or whether in the field of work, where they want and desire a new format.

Subjects related to finance, fashion, various forms of art, investments and especially technology are still far from many curricular syllabuses that need to adapt to the population that is already there, consuming all the variety of content from the most futile that exposes an empty daily life meaningful and full of money, including essential services such as education, health and the purchase and sale of goods and consumption, to those who increasingly make a career out of offering this digital content via social networks and YouTube. This is how we perceive the reality of a new professional niche never imagined and understood only by millennials.

Because of the environment in which this generation emerged, other things are also important, such as work-life balance, flexible schedules, perks and benefits. However, the Generation Z workforce is focused on innovation, on new models and parameters that increase as new technological advances emerge, making it necessary for the job market to take a more in-depth look at the aspects that these professionals seek most. .

However, in addition to countless questions about the needs and priorities of the modern world and the professional contribution of generation Z to economic, social and cultural development and growth in this new millennium, great difficulties are still perceived in adapting these interests, as the arrival of generation Z to the job market coincided with a period of serious crisis on the national scene, strongly impacted by the political environment and the various cases of corruption, and due to so many situations that

8

surround the social political scenario, makes this generation considered by many as pessimistic, mainly in relation to the macroeconomic, political and professional scenarios, as he had to deal with the frustration of, after years of dedication to academic training, not obtaining the desired return.

However, this is a generation that needed to learn to face a job market with lack of employment and low professional career prospects in the short term. This factor has led many young professionals to seek to develop high performance by joining international career development programs, even looking for underjobs in more developed countries that value their initiatives.

Currently, this is a generation that seeks to place itself in the job market, demonstrating its



potential from the use of social networks, such as LinkedIn, to highlight your qualifications and know exactly what companies require from professionals working in the area of interest, they can stand out from the competition and obtain great opportunities, looking for those who value management horizontal, in which it is possible to take ideas directly to the highest positions in the hierarchy wishing to work in ethical companies, both from a sociocultural and environmental point of view.

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