

COMPETENCE OF CONFIDENCE –ASSERTIVENESS AS A RIGHT OF “Z” GENERATIONS

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Abstract:

Research background: The background of the research was provided by the NICE+ project of Erasmus+ KA2 –Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices –Strategic partnerships for school education. The transfer of knowledge necessary for high school students to become entrepreneurs in partnership with Hungarian, Polish, Czech and Slovak universities. In connection with the project, it was possible to examine the competences of becoming an entrepreneur through university lecturers' presentations and control questions.

Purpose of the article: The purpose of the article is to point out, based on the international scientific literature and own research, a competence and skill that is especially a defining tool for the age group of high school students. Aim is to emphasize the advantages attributed to assertiveness.

Methods: An exhaustive review of the literature on assertiveness, entrepreneurship and competences has been carried out. In addition, a questionnaire supported the research and filled the place of primary research.

Findings & Value added: The questionnaire answered by secondary school students and teachers provides that the article is able to mediate new mark. Added value of the paper, that it reflects the direct answers of future entrepreneurs. The paper is addressed to teachers, university lecturers, students, researchers, leaders, employers and employees.

Keywords: competence; skill; assertiveness; student; “Z” Generations

JEL Classification: K19; K39; L26

1. Introduction

The concept of assertiveness arises in the examination of the behavior of persons, in communication between persons, in relation to organizations and finally in relation to society as a whole. "Assertive rights" can be seen and heard in many situations, authors list our assertive rights (McBride, 1998; Maogoto 2000), and we were curious about how important assertiveness is to today's high school students. Considering the current challenges of Generation Z (Garai et al., 2021; Menendez et al., 2020; Hameed et al., 2020), how conscious is the assertiveness of the students. Absolutely: can assertiveness be learned by itself, or can students gain it by learning other subjects and knowledge materials? Becoming a successful entrepreneur requires

assertiveness as one of the outstanding competencies. Lubis (2019) emphasizes that assertiveness is useful for generation Z as their guide in entering the work world to complete the competencies needed in the industrial revolution 4.0 era. Most of the composition of employees both from the lower, middle and top level manager level is occupied by human resources from generation Y (millennial generation) (Lubis, 2019). Generation Z is a generation of modern workers who will enter the workforce. The company is ready or not ready to accept the Generation Z as a workforce with personal characteristics and traits that will certainly be very different from previous generations. Generation Z develops in the environment infused by technology, communication and information and can be defined as a hyper-connected generation. Generation Z grows in a world surrounded by technology and the internet, with smartphones, games and social media (Haddouche and Salomone, 2018).

2. Methodology

Assertivity is measured in societies, in countries (Hofstede, 2006). Assertiveness (ASS) refers to people who are dominant, assertive, and tough (House et al., 2004). According to the GLOBE, societies that score high on assertiveness value competition, success and progress, and believe that anybody can be successful in case of hard work. Assertive societies value taking initiative, and having control over the environment. In addition, as mentioned before, ASS is a specific trait of masculine societies, normally considered supportive of entrepreneurship. In assertive societies, individuals emphasize results over relationships. They expect demanding and challenging results, and the desire for self-affirmation makes them more decisive (Calza et al., 2020).

GLOBE authors report there is a significant negative correlation between practices and values for seven of their nine national culture dimensions: assertiveness, institutional collectivism, future orientation, humane orientation, performance orientation, power distance and uncertainty avoidance (Brewer-Venaik, 2010).

In an effort to extend theory and research linking personality to team effectiveness, Pearsall et al. (2006) study used the workflow networks literature to investigate the effects of critical team member dispositional assertiveness on team performance and satisfaction. Results from 64 teams working on a command-and-control simulation indicated that critical team member dispositional assertiveness positively affected team performance and team satisfaction. Results also indicated that both of those effects were due to improvements in the team's transactive memory system (Pearsall et al., 2006). Others aim to look at the relationship among Assertiveness, a National Value Dimensions (NVD) component, CSR practices, and brand association (Bari et al., 2021).

Assertive leadership as an emerging domain of inquiry in leadership research has been portrayed as a new phenomenon in analyzing the role of leaders in organizations. The concept of assertive leadership has recently developed as an amendment to ethical and transformational leadership (Moutangili, 2020).

The results in the survey of author Raisle (2021) showed that groups of Gen Y and Gen Z were similar in their general characteristics, which included preferences for group-work, affirmation, clear rules, and for their opinions to be valued. They liked face-to-face communication, and using visuals for online communication. There were significant differences in some of their study and work habits, that is, the Gen Y are better than Gen Z at analyzing information obtained from the Internet, and handling a lot of work at one time, whereas Gen Z expected more instantaneous feedback than Gen Y. As for communication style, they were amiable communicators who were low on assertiveness, prioritized relationship over

task in task completion, and had a slow-paced communication style. The results showed that Gen Y and Gen Z had some style-typing ability, whereby they compared their communication style with their peers. More practiced style-flexing, as in fitting their communication to the target group but Gen Y had a stronger information-focus. Their demographic background (gender, ethnic group, socio-economic status) did not influence their communication style, indicating the stronger influence of their generational cohort. The study suggests that employers who require goal-oriented communication need to make their expectations clear to Gen Y and Gen Z employees (Raisle, 2021).

The technical and technological development of the 21st century presents new challenges to all actors of the labor market. In accordance with the changed needs, higher education must be able to develop labor market competencies that employers expect, and that make their graduates more valuable and in demand among domestic employers. The 21st century needs such skills. 21st century worker, among others, such as independence, responsibility, effective cooperation with others - for the development and mastery of which, it is not necessary to develop new subjects, but to be able to apply new methodological elements during the teaching of the subjects (Nyéki, 2019).

Organizational norms in high assertiveness cultures are therefore likely to signal that assertive behavior is appropriate because it can maximize instrumental outcomes, beyond being concerned about harming social relationships. These norms therefore signal to employees that voice behaviors that actively express employee opinions and concerns are positive and key to organizational success. Therefore, management is likely to encourage employees to speak out by establishing and supporting both informal and formal voice channels. Authors, like Kwon-Fardale (2020) therefore propose for example, that organizations in high assertiveness cultures embrace the use of both informal and formal voice channels in line with cultural norms, whereby associated organizational norms signal both voice channels to be safe and effective. Authors highlighted that employee voice is a behavior aimed at improving work-related issues or resolving complaints through formal or informal voice channels. Organizational norms related to different voice channels signal to employees about voice safety and effectiveness (Kwon-Fardale, 2020).

3. Results

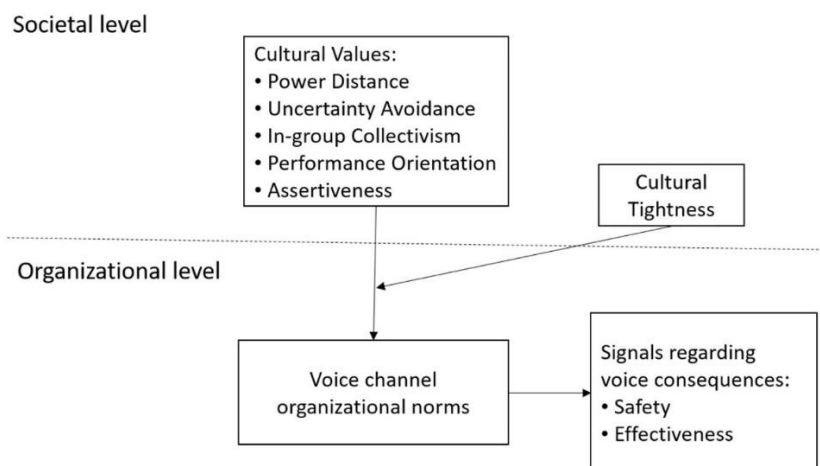
Author came to the conclusion that assertiveness, as an important competence for youth to be a successful entrepreneur, playing an important role in communication individually and in the society too, did not appear at the forefront of the answers given by secondary school teachers. Research also contains a contradiction at this point, since assertiveness appears as an important element in the international and domestic literature when we examined the competencies of becoming an entrepreneur. However, it was not among the competencies rated as the most important by secondary school teachers. However, this phenomenon is not unique when examining becoming a successful entrepreneur or being a successful entrepreneur, since as a study by Lukovszki (2011) points out, research has revealed quite a large number of qualities that are necessary for entrepreneurial success. At the same time, different authors consider different traits or combinations of traits to be important (Lukovszki, 2011). Author therefore came to the conclusion that assertiveness is far from the only and most important element of the self-confidence of Generation Z, the components of self-confidence.

Table 1: Competences developed in the context of education, according to secondary school teachers (% of mentions; relative frequency, more than one response was possible)

Competences	Teacher's opinion (mentions in %)
1. Logical thinking	57,0
2. Effective problem solving	50,5
3. Creativity	46,0
4. Group work	40,5
5. Building good relationships with clients, partners	36,5
6. Communication skills	35,5
7. Leadership skills	34,5
8. Openness	19,0
9. Computer skills	18,5
10. Negotiation skills	16,5
11. Time management skills	15,0
12. Ability to perform under time pressure	11,5
13. Assertiveness	6,0
14. Implementation of initiatives	4,0

Source: Garai-Fodor et al. (2022) Competences for young people to become successful entrepreneurs - as seen by teachers, N=200

Figure 1: Multilevel conceptual framework of employee voice signals



Source: Kwon, B., Farndale, E. (2020). Employee voice viewed through a cross-cultural lens. *Human Resource Management Review*, 30(1), 100653.

Logical thinking, creativity, effective problem solving and group work are those competences were the highest mentioned by teachers. They are key competences which help and support students according to teachers’ opinion. This presents that teachers consider it important that students’ thinking is logical thinking, they have to able for effective problem solving, their creativity is the third in the importance level and it is followed by group work.

Kwon-Fardale (2020) developed a multilevel conceptual framework as presented in Fig. 1, in which authors posit that organization norms for voice channels signal to employees about voice consequences in terms of safety and effectiveness, but that these norms are established at least in part by societal-level cultural values.

4. Discussion

Five things that companies need to know about facing the Z generation include Generation Z, the first generation that is truly a genuine digital generation; Diversity is common for generation Z; Generation Z is more pragmatic; Generation Z is more entrepreneurial and still hopes for harmonious interpersonal relationships among coworkers (Lanier, 2017). Whereas according to Chillakuri and Mahanandia (2018) the characteristics of the z generation are among those who are active in using social media, very ambitious to achieve their goals, have an entrepreneurial spirit naturally, multitasking, flexible and able to work with colleagues from various countries and culture, and greatly take advantage of technological developments (Lubis et al., 2019).

A next possible level of investigation of assertiveness is communication. From the point of view of our study, it is worthwhile to get a glimpse of the already revealed communication habits of Generation Z. Communication style plays a crucial role in managing the multigenerational ecosystem of the present world. Raisle (2021) examined the communication style of Gen Y and Gen Z with 311 youth (Gen Y, 68; Gen Z, 243) participants.

Table 1 shows scores of communication style types examining assertiveness versus responsiveness. For the statement When we meet for projects, I usually start the discussion and I talk more than I listen, furthermore ‘When I talk, I need to express my feelings’, average assertiveness score in case of Gen Y 2.60, while in case of Gen Z it is 2.64. (N=311).

Figure 2.: Mean scores showing the communication style of Gen Y and Gen Z participants.

Types of communication style						
Assertiveness versus responsiveness	5	When we meet for projects, I usually start the discussion.	3.52	1.01	3.42	1.02
	6	I talk more than I listen.	2.46	1.06	2.76	1.09 *p=0.04
	7	When I talk, I need to express my feelings. ^R	3.16 ^R	1.13	3.25 ^R	1.06
Average Assertiveness Score			2.60		2.64	

Source: Part of Table 4. Raslie, H. (2021). Gen Y and gen Z communication style. Studies of Applied Economics, 39(1).

To help the Gen Y and Gen Z to become better communicators, they need to be trained to recognise communication styles. Next, the results on the four communication types are described, focussing on the assertiveness-responsiveness, and task-relationship priority dimensions. Figure 2 shows that the Gen Y and Gen Z were significantly different on one out of three aspects of the assertiveness-responsiveness dimension examined. There were significant differences between the two groups on whether they talked more than they listened

at $p = 0.04$ (Gen Y, $M=2.46$, $SD=1.06$; Gen Z, $M=2.76$, $SD=1.09$). Both groups listened more than they talked, but the mean values indicated that Gen Y participants expressed greater disagreement with the statement, that is, Gen Y listened more than Gen Z. According to Hartman and McCambridge (2011), talking more than listening reflects assertiveness whereas listening more is a responsive communication style. Both groups were responsive, but Gen Y talked less than Gen Z. Gen Y and Gen Z participants were similar on the other two aspects of the assertiveness-responsiveness dimension. When they met for projects, they usually took the lead and started the discussion. This is a characteristic of assertive behavior and reflects a need to be in control. They were also emotionally expressive, characteristic of a responsive behavior (Hartman and McCambridge, 2011). Taken together, both groups reported both assertive and responsive behavior in communication (Raisle, 2021).

5. Conclusions

Author came to the conclusion that the concept of assertiveness is one of the first concepts to be clarified and taught. The meaning of assertiveness and its areas of applicability are not necessarily widely recognized in the middle school age group. Among the students participating in higher education, there was no question about the applicability of the concept. Analyzing the answers received, it can be stated that the students interpret the concept correctly and broadly.


The results of the research clearly show that, in the case of business education, there is a strong emphasis in secondary education on the development of the key competences that are most needed to start and run a successful business according to today's market expectations. The importance of financial and labor law skills, as well as business planning and negotiation skills, is seen by both teachers and students as unquestionable today when it comes to starting a business.

I believe that the results show that there is a growing emphasis in secondary education on so-called 'life education', on imparting knowledge dictated by real market expectations and circumstances, which is welcome. However, I believe that the way in which such knowledge is imparted should be tailored more to the needs of the students and that generation-specific, differentiated solutions, rather than standardized solutions and methods, are absolutely the most effective way to achieve this.

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