

## Framing Generational Shifts: Vietnamese Media Portrayals of Generation Z in the Workplace (2022-2024)

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines how Vietnamese media portrays Generation Z (Gen Z) in the workplace, utilising framing theory to analyse 747 articles published by VnExpress, a leading online news platform, between 2022 and 2024. Employing quantitative content analysis, the research investigates the prevalence and evolution of media frames related to Gen Z's work ethic, workplace interactions, and skills. The findings reveal a dynamic media landscape, with portrayals shifting over time. While initial narratives presented a mixed image, emphasising both positive attributes, such as digital fluency and negative stereotypes like laziness, later portrayals increasingly focused on Gen Z's leadership potential and desire for work-life balance. However, the media also consistently highlighted potential intergenerational conflicts, suggesting a complex and potentially contradictory narrative. The study also identifies a significant emphasis on Gen Z's technological savviness, which potentially overshadows their other valuable skills. This focus reflects broader media trends but risks reinforcing a limited view of Gen Z's capabilities. The findings offer valuable insights for stakeholders across Asian countries grappling with similar generational shifts in their workforces. While the specific cultural context of Vietnam informs the analysis, the observed trends regarding media portrayals of Gen Z's work ethic, intergenerational dynamics, and skillsets resonate with broader discussions surrounding the integration of this generation into workplaces across Asia. This understanding is crucial for supporting Gen Z's successful integration and maximising their contributions to the diverse economies of Asia.

**Keywords:** *Generation Z, media framing, workplace, Vietnam, intergenerational relations.*

### INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (Gen Z), broadly defined as those born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, represents a significant demographic shift entering the global workforce (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022; Nichols & Smith, 2024). Their arrival is marked by a unique confluence of technological immersion, evolving societal values, and distinct economic realities, prompting considerable discussion and speculation about their potential impact on professional landscapes. Understanding how this generation is perceived and portrayed, particularly in rapidly developing economies like Vietnam, is crucial for fostering effective intergenerational collaboration, shaping organizational strategies, and anticipating future workforce dynamics.

The integration of Generation Z into the workforce presents both opportunities and challenges. Digitally native and accustomed to rapid technological advancements, Gen Z brings valuable skills in areas like data analysis, digital marketing, and innovation (Agárdi & Alt, 2024). Their familiarity with collaborative technologies and remote work arrangements also aligns with evolving workplace practices (Febriana & Mujib, 2024). However, alongside these strengths, perceived characteristics of Gen Z, such as a preference for work-life balance,

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a desire for purpose-driven work, and different communication styles, have also fuelled anxieties and stereotypes regarding their workplace integration. To discern true generational differences from those constructed by media narratives, it is essential to understand how the media constructs and disseminates these portrayals.

Media plays a powerful role in shaping public perception and influencing societal attitudes. By selecting, emphasizing, and excluding certain aspects of reality, media outlets frame issues and individuals, thereby influencing how audiences interpret and understand complex social phenomena. Framing theory, the guiding framework of this research, posits that media frames not only shape public understanding but also influence policy decisions and organizational practices (Borah, 2011). By analysing the dominant frames employed by VnExpress in its coverage of Gen Z in the workplace, this study aims to uncover the prevailing narratives surrounding this generation, trace how these narratives evolve over time, and assess their potential impact on Vietnamese workplaces.

Vietnam, a rapidly developing Southeast Asian nation, presents a particularly compelling context for this research. As the country undergoes significant economic transformation and rapid technological adoption, its workforce is experiencing a period of profound change (Kim, 2024). The integration of Generation Z into this dynamic landscape holds significant implications for the country's future economic growth and societal development. VnExpress, as one of the most widely read online news platforms in Vietnam, serves as a key source of information and shapes public discourse on a wide range of issues, including workforce dynamics. Analysing its coverage of Gen Z provides valuable insights into the prevailing narratives surrounding this generation's entry into the Vietnamese workplace.

This research investigates how Vietnamese media frames Gen Z in the workplace, drawing on a comprehensive content analysis of 747 articles published by VnExpress, a leading online news platform, between 2022 and 2024. It addresses several key research questions. First, what are the dominant frames employed by VnExpress in its coverage of Generation Z in the workplace? This question explores the recurring themes, narratives, and portrayals of Gen Z prevalent in the selected articles. Second, how do these frames shape the evolving image and identity of Generation Z as workers? This question explores the changing attributes, characteristics, and behaviours attributed to Gen Z over time (2022-2024), analysing how these contribute to the dynamic construction of their perceived workplace identity. Third, what are the potential implications of these media frames for intergenerational relations, organizational practices, and policy development in Vietnam? This question examines the broader societal impact of the identified media frames, exploring their potential influence on workplace dynamics, intergenerational understanding, and the development of policies related to employment and human resources.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring an area that appears to be relatively under-researched. While valuable studies like Aggarwal et al. (2022) offer important insights into the impact of human resource policies on Gen Z job satisfaction, using robust quantitative methods and established theoretical frameworks such as self-determination theory, they do not specifically address the influence of media portrayals. Similarly, Esposito and Raymond (2023) offer a broader discussion of media representations of millennials and Gen Z, but their work doesn't focus on specific regional contexts, such as Southeast Asia, or employ a systematic analysis of media framing. Most existing media studies on Generation Z are predominantly Western-centric (Gelech et al., 2024; Tirocchi, 2024), failing to account for the unique interplay of regional cultural values and socialist-oriented market dynamics that define the Vietnamese context. Consequently, a critical blind spot

remains regarding whether local media merely replicates global generational tropes or constructs distinct narratives tailored to these specific regional realities (Strelitz, 2001). Addressing this gap is essential for understanding how non-Western media systems negotiate the tension between traditional workforce hierarchies and the digital-first values of younger cohorts. This research seeks to build upon these existing contributions by offering a focused examination of dynamic media framing, specifically how narratives surrounding Gen Z's workplace integration are constructed and potentially shifts over time. This focus on a specific national context, combined with a longitudinal perspective, allows for a deeper understanding of how evolving cultural and economic factors influence media portrayals and, in turn, shape societal perceptions of this generation in the workplace. Ultimately, this study offers valuable insights for Vietnamese stakeholders, including employers, policymakers, and educators, by illuminating the dominant media narratives surrounding Gen Z and facilitating more informed and productive dialogue about intergenerational collaboration within Vietnam's unique socio-economic landscape.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *a. Generation Z in the Workplace*

Existing literature offers varied perspectives on Gen Z's integration into the workforce. Research often highlights their digital fluency, adaptability, and comfort with technology as valuable assets (Agárdi & Alt, 2024). This inherent technological proficiency is seen as a key driver of innovation and efficiency in increasingly digital work environments. As digital natives, Gen Z is considered to bring crucial skills in areas such as data analysis, digital marketing, and innovation, aligning well with the growing digitisation of workplaces (Jayatissa, 2023). Moreover, Gen Z's collaborative mindset and comfort with online communication tools contribute to their effectiveness in team-based projects and virtual workspaces. Furthermore, their preference for flexible and remote work arrangements corresponds with evolving workplace practices (Febriana & Mujib, 2024), potentially leading to increased productivity and employee satisfaction. This adaptability also positions them well to navigate the rapidly changing demands of the modern workplace.

However, despite these acknowledged strengths, the existing literature also reveals a complex and often critical portrayal of Generation Z in the workplace. While their digital fluency is acknowledged, narratives frequently emphasise perceived shortcomings, such as a lack of professionalism, an overreliance on technology (Priporas et al., 2024), and a perceived sense of entitlement (Gibson et al., 2024). These narratives often stem from differing values and communication styles between Gen Z and older generations, leading to misunderstandings and negative stereotyping (Appelbaum et al., 2022; Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). Critics also point to an alleged lack of work ethic and a prioritization of work-life balance over career progression, potentially contributing to intergenerational tensions in the workplace (Sultan Arar & Şahin, 2022). However, it is crucial to critically examine these narratives, as they may be shaped by pre-existing biases and generational stereotypes rather than reflecting objective realities. Understanding how such perceptions are constructed and disseminated, particularly through media, is therefore essential for fostering productive intergenerational collaboration.

*b. Framing theory and Media Portrayals of Gen Z in the Workplace*

Framing theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how media shapes public perception and influences attitudes towards social issues (Borah, 2011). The theory posits that media frames, by selecting, emphasising, and excluding certain aspects of reality, influence how audiences interpret and understand complex phenomena. Specifically, Entman (1993) argues that frames define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies, thereby shaping public discourse and influencing potential solutions. Furthermore, Entman (1993) emphasises the role of schemata of interpretation in organizing experience and shaping understanding, highlighting how pre-existing cultural frameworks influence the reception and interpretation of media messages. Framing therefore not only shapes public understanding but also influences policy decisions and organisational practices. By analysing the dominant frames employed by media outlets, researchers can uncover the underlying narratives and ideologies that shape public discourse.

Beyond defining problems, framing also operates through the mechanism of attribute agenda-setting (Weaver, 2007), whereby media outlets influence the salience of specific characteristics in the public mind by repeatedly linking them to a particular subject. When news narratives consistently associate distinct traits, such as technological proficiency or perceived entitlement, with a specific demographic group, they effectively prime audiences to evaluate that group through these selected lenses (Shin, 2022). This process is particularly potent in reinforcing generational stereotypes, as it transforms subjective media angles into cognitive shortcuts that employers and older colleagues may unconsciously use to interpret Gen Z's behaviour (Brečko, 2021). Therefore, analysing these framing mechanisms is essential not only for understanding editorial choices but also for explaining how workplace biases are structurally reinforced and maintained over time.

Empirical research applying framing theory to generational studies, particularly concerning Gen Z in the workplace, remains relatively limited. Existing studies tend to focus on broader media representations of generations, often exploring how media narratives contribute to intergenerational stereotypes and conflicts (Arras-Djabi et al., 2024). However, fewer studies specifically examine how media frames Gen Z's workplace behaviours, skills, and attitudes using rigorous framing analysis methodologies (Esposito & Raymond, 2023). This research gap highlights the need for more focused empirical investigations that go beyond simply describing media portrayals and instead examine the underlying framing mechanisms at play. Specifically, further research is needed to identify the types of frames used, their frequency, and their potential impact on audience perceptions of Gen Z as employees. This study seeks to contribute to this developing area of research by providing a systematic analysis of media frames employed by a prominent Vietnamese media outlet in its coverage of Gen Z in the workplace.

*c. The Vietnam Context*

The Vietnamese media landscape, characterized by a mix of state-controlled and privately-owned outlets (Jamieson, 2023; Thi Vi et al., 2023), plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions of Gen Z in the workplace. While state media often emphasizes the importance of youth contributions to national development and economic growth, it also tends to promote traditional values and expectations of workplace conduct, potentially framing Gen Z's differing work styles and preferences as challenges to established norms (Jamieson, 2023; Pandey, 2022). Privately-owned media, on the other hand, might be more inclined to cater to younger audiences, potentially portraying Gen Z as innovative and adaptable, but also

susceptible to consumerism and Western influences. This duality in media portrayals can contribute to a complex and sometimes contradictory image of Gen Z within the Vietnamese workforce. The influence of Confucian values, emphasizing respect for seniority and hierarchical structures, also permeates media narratives, potentially leading to portrayals that frame Gen Z's desire for autonomy and work-life balance as disrespectful or lacking commitment (Nadiyah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the rapid economic development and increasing integration into the global economy influence media portrayals of Gen Z in Vietnam. Media outlets often highlight the need for a skilled and adaptable workforce to compete in the international market, framing Gen Z's digital fluency and global awareness as valuable assets (Kim, 2024). However, concerns about maintaining cultural identity and navigating the challenges of globalization also surface in media narratives, sometimes leading to portrayals that frame Gen Z's embrace of global trends and technologies as a potential threat to Vietnamese traditions and values. This interplay between promoting economic progress and preserving cultural values (Choo et al., 2022) contributes to nuanced and sometimes conflicting portrayals of Gen Z's role in the Vietnamese workplace. This complexity underscores the need for research that examines how these diverse influences shape media framing and, consequently, public perceptions of this emerging generation of workers.

## METHODOLOGY

### *a. Sample*

This study employs purposive sampling to select its data (Robinson, 2023), focusing specifically on all articles related to Generation Z in the workplace published by VnExpress from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024. VnExpress was chosen due to its prominence and wide reach within the Vietnamese media landscape. As the most read online newspaper in Vietnam, boasting 139.5 million visits in a single month and commanding two-thirds of the online newspaper market share (*Vnexpress.Net Traffic Analytics, Ranking & Audience*, 2025), VnExpress holds significant influence in shaping public discourse and reflecting prevalent societal attitudes. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate as the research aims to analyse media framing within a specific context, targeting articles directly relevant to the research topic. The period of 2022-2024 was selected to capture contemporary portrayals of Gen Z as they increasingly entered the workforce, allowing for the observation of potential shifts in media narratives over time. This timeframe provides a snapshot of recent media discourse surrounding Gen Z's workplace integration, offering valuable insights into current perceptions and debates. Furthermore, this period captures a period of significant economic and social change in Vietnam, providing a relevant backdrop against which to analyse evolving media narratives. This focused approach allows for in-depth analysis of relevant content while acknowledging the limitations inherent in purposive sampling regarding generalizability to other media outlets.

The final sample comprises 747 articles published by VnExpress between 2022 and 2024, with a yearly distribution of 180, 257, and 310 articles, respectively. This sample reflects an increasing focus on Gen Z in the workplace over time, potentially indicating the growing significance of this demographic within the Vietnamese workforce. The articles within the sample predominantly focus on three key aspects of Gen Z in the workplace: work ethics and attitudes, intergenerational interactions, and digital skills. This thematic distribution aligns well with the scope of this research, which aims to examine how media frames construct the

image and identity of Gen Z as workers. The substantial sample size, combined with its focus on relevant themes and a multi-year timeframe, provides a robust foundation for analysing the dynamics of media framing and its potential influence on perceptions of Gen Z in the Vietnamese workplace. The increasing number of articles over the three years also allows for exploration of potential shifts in narratives and framing over time.

*b. Data Coding*

A two-stage coding process was implemented to ensure consistency and reliability. In the first stage, a pilot sample of 50 articles was selected from the total of 747, and independently coded by two trained coders. This initial phase allowed for the identification and resolution of any discrepancies in coding interpretations and the refinement of the coding scheme. Upon reaching a satisfactory level of intercoder agreement (Cohen’s kappa > 0.75), the two coders proceeded to independently code the remaining 697 articles. This two-stage approach, with its initial focus on establishing intercoder reliability, enhances the trustworthiness and rigour of the data analysis. This systematic approach minimizes potential biases and strengthens the validity of the findings derived from the coding process.

Content analysis (Riffe et al., 2023) was employed to systematically analyse the 747 articles, with each article serving as the unit of analysis. For each article, general information such as article title, publication date, and section within VnExpress was recorded. The coding scheme comprised 17 codes, grouped into three overarching categories: work ethics and attitudes (7 codes), workplace interactions (8 codes), and Gen Z skills (2 codes). These categories and their constituent codes emerged inductively from the data itself, reflecting the prevalent themes and topics within the articles. This inductive approach allows for a grounded understanding of the data, capturing the nuances of media portrayals without imposing preconceived theoretical frameworks. Each code was applied in binary form, indicating its presence or absence within each article, allowing for multiple codes to be assigned to a single article, reflecting the multifaceted nature of media representations. This approach acknowledges that articles can address multiple aspects of Gen Z’s workplace integration simultaneously. A detailed description of each code and its definition is provided in Table 1. This detailed coding scheme facilitates a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the prevalent themes and narratives surrounding Gen Z in the Vietnamese workplace.

Table 1: Categories, codes and operational definitions

Category	Code	Operational Definition
Work Ethics & Attitudes	Hard Work	Explicit mentions of dedication, putting in extra effort, long hours, going above and beyond, "work hard".
	Work-Life Balance	Explicit mentions of prioritizing personal time, setting boundaries between work and personal life, flexible work arrangements.
	Laziness/Lack of Motivation	Direct or indirect accusations of laziness, entitlement, lack of drive, not taking initiative, needing constant supervision, disinterest in work tasks.
	Job Hopping	Explicit mentions of changing jobs frequently, including reasons for leaving (better opportunities, dissatisfaction, company culture, etc.).
	Promotion/Leadership	Explicit desire for upward mobility, promotions, leadership positions, managing others, taking on more responsibility.
	Non-managerial Role	Explicit desire to remain in a non-managerial role, prioritizing expertise over management.

Workplace Dynamics & Interactions	Learning & Development	Active pursuit of new skills, seeking professional development opportunities, taking initiative to improve.
	Intergenerational Conflict	Explicit mentions of disagreements, misunderstandings, or clashes between Gen Z and older generations in the workplace.
	Respect Authority	Adherence to traditional hierarchies, respectful communication with superiors, following instructions.
	Challenge Authority	Questioning authority, pushing back against superiors, advocating for different approaches, expressing disagreement.
	Positive Teamwork	Descriptions of successful collaboration, positive team dynamics, effective communication within teams.
Skills & Capabilities	Negative Teamwork	Difficulty collaborating, preference for individual work, inability to work effectively in groups, communication breakdowns within teams.
	Workplace Bullying/Toxicity	Explicit mentions of harassment, discrimination, exclusion, hostile work environment, unhealthy competition, public humiliation.
	Effective Communication	Clear and professional communication, active listening, empathy, constructive feedback.
	Bad Communication	Miscommunication, poor written or verbal skills, inappropriate online behaviour, lack of clarity.
	Problem-Solving	Demonstrated ability to find solutions, adapt to challenges, think critically, analyse situations effectively.
	Tech Savviness	Examples of using technology effectively in the workplace, proficiency digital tools, leveraging social media for work-related purposes.

### c. *Methods of Data Analysis*

Quantitative content analysis was employed to analyse the coded data, enabling a systematic examination of the prevalence and distribution of different frames across the sample (Riffe et al., 2023). This method allows for the quantification of qualitative data, facilitating statistical analysis and comparisons across different time periods. Specifically, chi-square tests were used to examine changes in the percentage of each code over the three-year period (2022-2024). This statistical approach allows for the identification of statistically significant shifts in media framing over time, providing insights into how portrayals of Gen Z in the workplace might be evolving. This quantitative approach is well-suited to address the research questions regarding the prevalence and evolution of media frames, offering a robust and objective basis for interpreting the findings. By examining changes in code frequencies, this study aims to uncover how media narratives surrounding Gen Z in the workplace have potentially shifted in response to changing social, economic, and cultural contexts within Vietnam.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### a. *Article Statistics*

Table 2 presents the distribution of articles across different sections of VnExpress over the three-year period. The "Rhythm of Life" and "Life" sections account for a substantial portion of the sample, suggesting that coverage of Gen Z in the workplace is often framed within lifestyle and cultural contexts. "Lessons," "Current Affairs," and "News" sections have considerably fewer articles, indicating that these issues are less frequently discussed within explicitly political or analytical frameworks. The increase in articles within "Today VnExpress"

between 2022 and 2024 suggests a growing focus on this topic within the platform's flagship news section. Finally, the "Others" category encompasses a diverse range of sections, potentially highlighting the varied contexts within which Gen Z and work are discussed in Vietnamese online media. This distribution provides initial insights into how VnExpress prioritizes and contextualizes its coverage of Gen Z in the workplace.

Table 2: Article count over time by VnExpress section

Section	Year			Total
	2022	2023	2024	
Rhythm of life	46	89	134	269
Life	39	106	89	234
Lessons	26	15	16	57
Current affairs	25	7	9	41
Today VnExpress	0	13	19	32
News	5	8	13	26
Others	39	19	30	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>747</b>

*b. Gen Z Work Ethics and Attitudes in Media*

Table 3 reveals significant shifts in how VnExpress portrays Gen Z's work ethic and attitudes over time. The portrayal of "Hard Work" decreased from 41% in 2022 to 33% in 2024, while the focus on "Work-Life Balance" increased from 37% to 48% during the same period. This shift suggests a growing emphasis on Gen Z's desire for work-life integration. Interestingly, the portrayal of "Laziness/Lack of Motivation" decreased significantly from 22% to 17%, potentially indicating a softening of negative stereotypes. "Job Hopping" remained relatively consistent across the three years, suggesting continued attention to this perceived characteristic of Gen Z. The focus on "Promotion/Leadership" increased steadily, potentially reflecting growing recognition of Gen Z's leadership potential. Conversely, discussions of Gen Z in "Non-managerial Roles" remained marginal. Finally, the focus on "Learning & Development" slightly decreased, potentially implying a shift away from narratives emphasizing Gen Z's need for continuous skill development. These evolving portrayals offer valuable insights into the changing media discourse surrounding Gen Z's integration into the Vietnamese workplace.

Table 3: Gen Z work ethic codes in articles (counts & percentages)

Code	2022		2023		2024		Chi-square	
	# articles	%	# articles	%	# articles	%	$\chi^2$	
Hard Work	74	41%	139	54%	103	33%	25.2	***
Work-Life Balance	67	37%	130	51%	149	48%	8.3	**
Laziness/Lack of Motivation	39	22%	98	38%	53	17%	34.6	***
Job Hopping	50	28%	114	44%	95	31%	16.6	***
Promotion/Leadership	30	17%	83	32%	76	25%	13.9	***
Non-managerial Role	2	1%	3	1%	11	4%	5.1	*
Learning & Development	54	30%	85	33%	77	25%	4.8	*
Total	180	100%	257	100%	310	100%		

\*\*\*p-value < .01; \*\* p-value < .05; \* p-value < .1

Several factors could explain the shift in VnExpress’s framing of Gen Z’s work ethic. The increasing prevalence of "work-life balance" may reflect a growing societal acceptance of this concept in Vietnam, potentially influenced by global trends and changing workplace norms (Waworuntu et al., 2022). The decrease in "laziness/lack of motivation" could indicate that as Gen Z becomes more established in the workforce, initial negative stereotypes are being challenged by real-world observations of their contributions (Szabó & Maczó, 2021). The growing emphasis on "promotion/leadership" suggests a recognition of Gen Z’s potential to take on leadership roles in the future. The relatively stable prevalence of "job hopping" may reflect the ongoing dynamic between Gen Z’s career aspirations and the realities of the Vietnamese job market (Zahari & Puteh, 2023). Finally, the decrease in "learning and development" might indicate a shift in focus from skill acquisition to practical application as Gen Z gains more workplace experience. These evolving narratives potentially reflect both changing realities within the Vietnamese workplace and a broader societal shift in understanding and accepting Gen Z’s unique work values and aspirations.

*c. Media Narratives of Gen Z’s Workplace Relationships*

Table 4 presents the distribution of codes related to Gen Z’s workplace interactions. "Intergenerational conflict" shows a dramatic increase from 2022 to 2023 and remains high in 2024. "Respect for authority" remains consistently low throughout the period. "Challenging authority" demonstrates a significant increase, particularly from 2022 to 2023. "Positive teamwork" experiences a notable rise, while "negative teamwork" remains relatively low. "Workplace toxicity" sees a slight increase. "Effective communication" shows a decrease, whereas "bad communication" drastically declines from 2022 to 2024. The overall image presented is complex, with a notable emphasis on conflict and challenges in intergenerational dynamics. While positive teamwork increases, the dominant narrative appears to highlight friction and communication difficulties, suggesting a somewhat negative portrayal of Gen Z’s integration into existing workplace structures.

Table 4: Gen Z Workplace interaction codes in articles

Code	2022		2023		2024		Chi-square	
	# articles	%	# articles	%	# articles	%	$\chi^2$	
Intergenerational Conflict	31	17%	134	52%	138	45%	56.9	***
Respect Authority	11	6%	20	8%	21	7%	0.5	
Challenge Authority	8	4%	42	16%	48	15%	15.7	***
Positive Teamwork	5	3%	43	17%	28	9%	23.3	***
Negative Teamwork	4	2%	16	6%	12	4%	4.4	
Workplace Toxicity	8	4%	18	7%	23	7%	1.8	
Effective Communication	32	18%	62	24%	52	17%	5.3	*
Bad Communication	32	18%	12	5%	13	4%	34.7	***
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100%</b>		

\*\*\*p-value < .01; \*\* p-value < .05; \* p-value < .1

The significant increase in "intergenerational conflict" and "challenging authority" observed between 2022 and 2023 resonates with Gabrielova and Buchko's (2021) analysis of potential tensions arising from Gen Z’s differing work values and expectations within established workplace hierarchies. This heightened focus on conflict in VnExpress could

reflect an increasing awareness of these intergenerational dynamics within the Vietnamese context, potentially fuelled by both actual workplace experiences and broader global discussions on generational differences. The observed trend aligns with the premise of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, suggesting that navigating the evolving relationship between millennial supervisors and Gen Z subordinates requires addressing potential power imbalances and differing communication styles.

The subsequent decrease in "bad communication" aligns with Rathi and Kumar's (2023) findings regarding the potential for improved intergenerational understanding to mitigate communication challenges. This suggests that initial concerns about Gen Z's communication styles, often portrayed as informal or overly reliant on technology, may be lessening as workplaces adapt and intergenerational communication practices evolve. Similarly, the rise in "positive teamwork" supports Maan and Srivastava's (2023) observations regarding Gen Z's capacity for effective collaboration, particularly within team-based projects. However, the consistently low levels of "respect for authority" suggest a persistent tension between traditional hierarchical structures prevalent in Vietnamese workplaces and Gen Z's preference for more autonomy and flatter hierarchies, a dynamic explored in broader literature on generational differences in work values (Twenge, 2023). Finally, the slight increase in "workplace toxicity" may not be unique to Gen Z, but rather reflect a growing awareness of broader workplace challenges impacting all generations, requiring further investigation beyond the scope of this study. These evolving frames within VnExpress offer valuable insights into the complex interplay between generational dynamics, cultural context, and media representations in shaping the narrative of Gen Z's integration into the Vietnamese workplace.

*d. Media Narratives of Gen Z's Skillset*

Table 5 illustrates VnExpress's framing of Gen Z's skillset, focusing on "problem-solving" and "tech savviness." "Problem-solving" was initially prominent in 2022 but decreased significantly over time. Conversely, "tech savviness" saw a dramatic increase from 2022 to 2023 and remained high in 2024. This shift suggests a growing emphasis on Gen Z's technological abilities, potentially overshadowing their other valuable skills. The decline in "problem-solving" might be attributed to a narrowing focus on Gen Z's digital strengths, potentially overlooking their broader capabilities. The increase in "tech savviness" likely reflects the increasing importance of digital skills in the modern workplace and reinforces the stereotype of Gen Z as digitally native experts. This framing, while highlighting a key strength, could inadvertently limit perceptions of Gen Z's broader skillset and contributions.

Table 5: Gen Z skill codes in articles

Code	2022		2023		2024		Chi-square	
	# articles	%	# articles	%	# articles	%	$\chi^2$	
Problem-Solving	80	44%	86	33%	86	28%	14.2	***
Tech Savviness	28	16%	116	45%	110	35%	41.8	***
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100%</b>		

\*\*\*p-value < .01; \*\* p-value < .05; \* p-value < .1

The observed shift in VnExpress's framing of Gen Z skills, emphasizing "tech savviness" while downplaying "problem-solving," aligns with broader media trends identified by Reid et al. (2023) regarding the tendency to portray Gen Z primarily as digitally native experts. This

focus on technological prowess, while acknowledging a key strength, risks reinforcing a limited and potentially stereotypical view of Gen Z's capabilities, overlooking other valuable skills essential for workplace success. The decrease in emphasis on "problem-solving" contrasts with research highlighting Gen Z's aptitude for creative and innovative solutions (Rachmad, 2025), suggesting a potential disconnect between media representations and actual workplace performance. This discrepancy underscores the importance of critically evaluating media narratives and their potential to shape both employer expectations and Gen Z's self-perception. Furthermore, this finding highlights the need for future research exploring the broader range of Gen Z's skills and their application in diverse workplace contexts. By moving beyond simplistic stereotypes, a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's contributions to the workforce can be achieved.

### CONCLUSION

This study's findings contribute to framing theory (Entman, 1993) by demonstrating its applicability to understanding media portrayals of generational cohorts in the workplace. The observed shifts in framing over time highlight the dynamic nature of media narratives and their responsiveness to evolving social and economic contexts. The study also underscores the importance of examining media framing within specific cultural contexts, as the Vietnamese case demonstrates how cultural values and societal norms can influence media representations of work and generations. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the growing body of literature on Gen Z in the workplace by offering nuanced insights into how media shapes perceptions of their work ethic, interpersonal dynamics, and skillsets. This research highlights the potential for media framing to reinforce both positive and negative stereotypes, contributing to a complex and evolving understanding of this generation's role in the workforce (Borah, 2011). Finally, the study's findings suggest the need for further research exploring the interplay between media framing, cultural context, and generational identity.

The identified shift towards a more positive portrayal of Gen Z's work ethic and leadership potential, alongside the persistent emphasis on intergenerational conflict, suggests a complex and potentially contradictory media narrative (Twenge, 2023). This duality highlights the need for more nuanced theoretical frameworks that can account for the simultaneous reinforcement and challenging of generational stereotypes within media discourse. Furthermore, the study's findings raise questions about the long-term impact of these evolving media frames on intergenerational relations and workplace dynamics. Future research could explore how these portrayals influence employer expectations, recruitment strategies, and the development of workplace policies related to diversity and inclusion. Finally, the study's focus on a specific national context underscores the importance of cross-cultural comparisons in media framing research, allowing for a deeper understanding of how cultural factors shape media representations of generations and work.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for various stakeholders in the Vietnamese workplace. For employers, understanding the evolving media narratives surrounding Gen Z can inform recruitment strategies, onboarding processes, and the development of inclusive workplace cultures (Aggarwal et al., 2022). By recognizing the emphasis on work-life balance and leadership potential, employers can tailor their practices to attract and retain Gen Z talent. The findings also highlight the importance of addressing potential intergenerational conflicts and fostering effective communication strategies within the workplace. Policymakers can utilize these insights to develop targeted programmes and

initiatives aimed at promoting intergenerational understanding and collaboration. Furthermore, educators can leverage these findings to better prepare Gen Z for the realities of the Vietnamese workplace, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate intergenerational dynamics and succeed in their chosen careers.

The study's findings regarding the media's emphasis on Gen Z's tech savviness underscore the importance of investing in digital skills development and creating work environments that leverage these strengths. However, it is equally important to recognize and cultivate Gen Z's broader skillset, including problem-solving and critical thinking abilities, which may be inadvertently overshadowed by the focus on digital expertise (Szabó & Maczó, 2021). By addressing the potential for negative stereotypes to persist, particularly regarding work ethic and communication styles, organisations can create more inclusive and supportive environments where Gen Z employees can thrive. Finally, understanding the evolving media landscape and its influence on societal perceptions of Gen Z can empower stakeholders to actively engage in shaping more nuanced and positive narratives that foster intergenerational collaboration and contribute to a more productive and harmonious workplace.

This research provides valuable knowledge for those involved in managing the changing workforce demographics across Asia, particularly regarding the influx of Gen Z. Although the study focuses on Vietnam, the observed patterns in how media portrays Gen Z's work ethic, interactions between generations, and skills are relevant to wider conversations about Gen Z's integration into Asian workplaces. By recognizing how media influences perceptions and expectations of this generation, key actors like employers, policymakers, and educators can create more inclusive work environments and improve collaboration between different age groups. This understanding is essential for successfully integrating Gen Z and leveraging their full potential to benefit Asian economies.

#### BIODATA

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