

## **When Gen Z Leads Millennials: The Intergenerational Communication Gap at PT Nutrifood**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the dynamics of intergenerational communication gaps between Generation Z as leaders and Millennials as employees at PT Nutrifood Indonesia, East Kalimantan Region. The communication gap was analyzed in relation to the internalization process of the ICARE culture (Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation, Respect, and Excellence) owned by PT Nutrifood Indonesia. The purpose of this study is to understand the dynamics and identify the factors of communication gaps between Gen Z Leaders and Millennial employees and also analyze how organizational culture values are internalized through intergenerational communication processes. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method, with data collected through in-depth interviews and direct observation. The analytical framework utilized the concept of communication barriers and structuration theory as the theoretical foundation. For the data analysis technique, this study employed the Miles and Huberman technique, consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying. The findings revealed that Gen Z and Millennials tend to conform whenever they face communication barriers. Such conformity is manifested in cultural, language, and physical barriers that occur in PT Nutrifood Indonesia. The results shed light upon the dialectics of agency and structure in managing the generation gap in which a shift in values occurs towards the ICARE values as a structure that can be reproduced as a result of the duality that takes place.

**Keywords:** *Communication Barriers, Gap Communication, Generation Z, Millennials, Organizational Communication.*

### **Introduction**

In the last decade, studies about communication gaps between different generations have largely focused on either how older generations attempt to break the communication barriers to the younger one and mode of adaptations such as empathy (Ariola et al., 2025), transparency, and common understandings required to solve the problems (Anggraeni et al., 2021). While these studies provide a fruitful discussion, none of the studies have

analyzed the case in which the younger generation leads the older generation in an office setting, specifically between Gen Z and Millennials.

This study aims to fill the gap by analyzing the dynamics of communication gaps in a *Fast-Moving Consumer Goods* (FMCG) company in a multicultural setting in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, named PT Nutrifood Indonesia, in which Gen Z becomes the leader for the older, Millennial Generation. The company has

set an organizational culture called ICARE. This enables Gen Z not only to lead but also to implement the values of *Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation, Respect, Excellence* in their subordinates.

To analyze the dynamics, we use Bahrain et al. (2023), who concluded that communication barriers in the workplace encompass language barriers, cultural barriers, and physical barriers. The study identified that to build a collaborative work environment, open communication, training, empathy, and use of different communication channels are required. In this case, communication barriers are also listed among the main sources of communication gaps, as Rink (2024) states.

In a similar fashion, Rizkiyana et al. (2024) studied communication gaps in social media and argued that communication barriers could prevent the flow of information which would lead to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of messages. To address these barriers, the authors emphasized credibility, openness, and consistency in communication. Similarly, Ariola et al. (2025) investigated communication barriers among four generations in the workplace. They highlighted empathy, adaptability, and mutual understanding as key factors for effective intergenerational communication.

Research on the communication gap has also been conducted by several previous researchers, including Julieta & Putri (2023) who highlighted the intergenerational communication gap in companies, and Anggraeni et al. (2021) who demonstrated the phenomenon of communication gaps within community radio in urban areas. Both studies offered solutions through transparency, openness, and joint discussion in overcoming the communication gap. However, none of these studies have highlighted the phenomenon of the communication gap when Gen Z becomes the leader of the millennial generation in the workplace.

Furthermore, this study also adopts Anthony Giddens' Structuration Theory as a framework to examine the phenomenon, thereby offering a theoretical contribution that has not yet been used from previous research. Structuration theory is relevant for understanding how communication gaps emerge and are negotiated in organizational settings. This theory explains how social practices are constantly produced and reproduced by the interplay between agency and structure (Falkheimer, 2018). In this study, structuration theory will explain the duality of agency and structure that plays a role in the dynamics of the communication gap occurring at PT Nutrifood Indonesia, East Kalimantan Area.

Looking more closely at this phenomenon, the communication gap is closely related to the broader issue of generation gaps, which have become increasingly prominent in the era of rapid digital development (Hariyadi et al., 2021; Maharani & Hermanu, 2024). Differences in age groups often produce variations in experiences, values, attitudes, and communication styles, creating challenges in the exchange of information (Budi, 2021; Rosyidi et al., 2021; Widyaputri & Sary, 2022).

As a result, communication gaps may emerge when communication preferences across generations are not aligned, leading to misunderstanding, miscommunication, and potential conflict (Ansori et al., 2021; Widyaputri & Sary, 2022). In this context, organizational culture serves as common in providing shared values and norms that facilitate communication and reduce intergenerational tensions (Budi, 2021; Nordin et al., 2021; Yuwono et al., 2023).

These challenges about communication gaps in the workplace become particularly relevant when Gen Z assumes leadership roles. As digital natives born between 1997 and 2012 (Fajriyanti et al., 2023), Gen Z employees often face stereotypes and challenges in professional settings (Wijoyo et al., 2020). Such conditions are evident at PT Nutrifood Indonesia East Kalimantan Area, where

several Gen Z employees serve as leaders or PIC (Persons in Charge) who are responsible for internalizing the company's ICARE values among teams predominantly consisting of Millennial employees. Although ICARE has been formally institutionalized throughout the organization, in practice, however, tensions between these two generations still surface in everyday workplace interactions, which potentially affecting how organizational values are interpreted and implemented.

Even so, existing studies on communication gaps have primarily focused on identifying communication barriers and proposing solutions such as transparency, openness, empathy, and dialogue. Yet, few studies have looked at communication gaps within the process of organizational culture internalization, particularly in situations where Gen Z leads Millennial employees. Moreover, what remains unclear is how intergenerational communication dynamics influence the interpretation, negotiation, and implementation of organizational values in everyday workplace practices. This study addresses that gap by focusing on the dynamics of intergenerational communication in the internalization of organizational culture at PT Nutrifood Indonesia, East Kalimantan Area.

Accordingly, this study aims to understand the dynamics of

communication gaps between Gen Z Leaders and Millennials employees, identify the factors contributing to these gaps, and analyze how organizational culture values are internalized through intergenerational communication processes. This study's results may help expand understanding of organizational communication studies, particularly in relation to intergenerational communication gaps within workplace settings.

In addition, theoretically, this study adds to existing discussions by bringing the concept of communication barriers and the use of Structuration Theory in examining organizational communication phenomena. Lastly, the study is expected to generate practical insights and applied innovations that can assist organizations, which in this case is PT Nutrifood Indonesia East Kalimantan area in addressing the challenges associated with multigenerational workplaces.

### **Research methods**

This research uses the qualitative approach, which according to Corbin & Strauss (2015) is an approach based on the researcher as an inseparable part of the research. The type of this research is descriptive research that focuses on the problems that occur based on existing facts through observation, interviews, and document analysis (Fatchurrohman &

Aisyanti, 2022). Furthermore, the research method used in this research is a case study. The type of case study used is a descriptive case study, which aims to describe a social phenomenon as thoroughly as possible based on what is observed and recorded in the field (Creswell, 2009).

The data collection technique used is fieldwork research in the form of in-depth interviews, a technique used to dig deeper into what the informants actually experienced and thought about the issue (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Additionally, observation is also carried out to directly witness and note how interactions unfold in the workplace (Sugiyono, 2018). This study analyzes data inductively, starting from the data collected in the field and building toward broader theoretical propositions.

For this purpose, the Miles and Huberman data analysis model is applied, which in practice involves collecting, condensing, and displaying data before drawing conclusions (Zulfirman, 2022). The research location is in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, where most of the research subjects or informants are based in the city of Samarinda. Meanwhile, the rest are in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, where the researcher conducted interviews via Zoom Meeting for informants based in

Balikpapan and face-to-face interviews with informants in Samarinda.

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

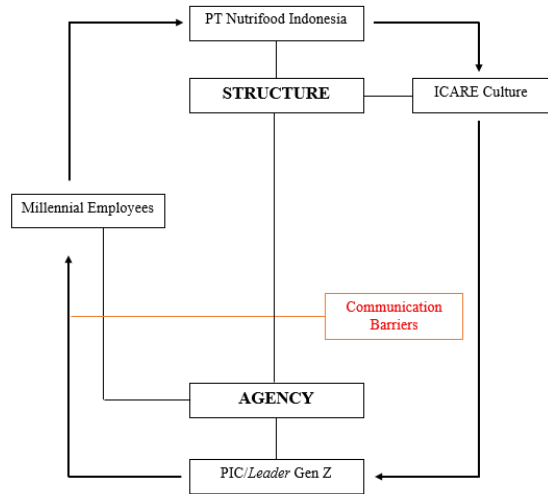
According to the company's official website, PT Nutrifood Indonesia established its headquarters in the Pulogadung Industrial Area, Jakarta, in 1979. The company aims to become an innovative enterprise that produces and markets a wide range of internationally acclaimed healthy food and beverage products, as evidenced by its distribution to more than 30 countries. Furthermore, PT Nutrifood Indonesia is widely recognized through several prominent brands that are familiar to Indonesian consumers, including Tropicana Slim, NutriSari, HiLo, W'Dank, Lokalate, and L-Men (Nutrifood Indonesia, n.d.).

ICARE, which serves as the organizational culture of PT Nutrifood Indonesia, encompasses five core values: Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation, Respect, and Excellence. The results of the author's preliminary observation and interviews with several informants who are employees of PT Nutrifood Indonesia in the East Kalimantan region provide an overview of how ICARE values are understood and internalized at the practical level.

The value of Integrity, for instance, is interpreted as honesty, transparency,

individual responsibility, and trustworthiness in carrying out one's work. Furthermore, Collaboration is defined as open communication among individuals, teams, and divisions. Innovation is intended as a driving force for employees to think creatively and adaptively. Respect, or the attitude of mutual appreciation, is reflected in interpersonal relationships among employees, teams, leaders, and external parties. Lastly, Excellence is interpreted as employees' commitment to delivering their best results across various aspects, not merely as the achievement of work targets.

In this study, there are 7 informants who were interviewed at PT Nutrifood Indonesia, East Kalimantan Area. The informants consist of Gen Z leaders and Millennial employees working in the Area Marketing and Distribution Development division. The questions explored were based on the research focus of communication barrier indicators according to Bahrain et al. (2023), namely language barriers, cultural barriers, and physical barriers. The interview results obtained will be linked to Anthony Giddens' structuration theory as the research framework that has been established in this study.

**Figure 1.** Research framework

Source: Compiled by the researchers

### Analysis of Communication Barriers Between Gen Z and Millennials

According to Bahrain et al. (2023), the main communication barriers at PT Nutrifood Indonesia in East Kalimantan are language barriers and cultural barriers. Physical barriers are not as important. This occurs because language barriers and cultural barriers are closely interrelated, where language barriers focus on issues of communication ethics, while cultural barriers encompass issues related to boundaries and ethics in the work environment, as well as differing communication styles and work cultures. In contrast, physical barriers only focus on differences in communication technology usage preferences and environmental or workplace condition obstacles.

The interconnection between language and cultural barriers lies in how the ethics of language use within each

generation cannot be separated from the values, norms, and culture that shape the way each generation expresses messages through their choice of words. On the other hand, the findings regarding physical barriers are limited to differences in communication technology preferences as well as environmental or working condition constraints. Furthermore, the results of data codification conducted by the author reveal several recurring statements across multiple informants. Within language barriers, one of the highlighted obstacles is the use of various contemporary terms, slang words, and code mixing by Gen Z PICs, which frequently impedes the communication process due to Millennial employees' unfamiliarity with such terms.

*"Yes, especially the terms they use. So, I was kind of confused, like what does that mean? Then they explained it, oh, and then there was CMIW. Yes, CMIW (Correct Me If I am Wrong). That is just how they talk." (Informant 5/Gen Millennial, Nutrihub Samarinda, 22/01/26).*

A related study that also addresses this matter was conducted by (Julieta & Putri, 2023). They argued that the diffusion of messages in the workplace is often ineffective and potentially leads to misinterpretation, as Gen Z employees frequently use contemporary terms or trends that are unfamiliar to Millennials. This phenomenon is inseparable from Gen

Z's background as Digital Natives who are characterized as practical and unconstrained by formal communication norms (Lestari & Yulianita, 2025), in contrast to Millennials who only recently transitioned into the digital era. This is further reinforced by the findings of IDN Research Institute (2025) which state that Gen Z is far more digitally immersed, accustomed to fast-paced content such as TikTok, actively creating viral content, and massively exposed to global language trends. These conditions naturally shape their habits of abbreviating words, adopting new terms, and engaging in code mixing, both in digital spaces and in everyday work environments.

In addition, the findings within language barriers also encompass differences in language style between Gen Z and Millennial Generation. The language style of Gen Z PICs tends to be casual, while Millennial employees tend to be more polite and formal. This barrier manifests in the way Gen Z leaders, who often call other employees, including Millennials, by their first names.

On the other hand, Millennials still address Gen Z leaders as Mr. or Ms. Additionally, Millennials still maintain the practice of using greetings and polite expressions such as “please”, “excuse me”, and “thank you” in their interactions. These differences frequently give rise to

conflicts related to differing language ethics between generations, ranging from feelings of being disrespected and the emergence of negative sentiments, to being perceived as displaying discourteous behavior.

*"We also really respect them, even though they are young, we do not call them by their first name. Sometimes there are a few who ask to just be called by their name to be more familiar, but I do not. I also set an example, well not exactly set an example, but I tell them that even though they are young, we still call them 'Mas'." (Informant 6/Gen Millennial, KS Tubun Samarinda, 29/01/26).*

A similar case study was found by Anggraeni et al. (2021) who discovered that the clash between Millennials and Gen Z in the workplace stems from value disorientation, wherein Millennials tend to uphold older language norms and patterns as a standard of politeness, while Gen Z is more flexible and favors contemporary language approaches. These conditions ultimately shape Gen Z's language orientation toward being concise and explicit.

From the various language barriers identified, it can be observed that the differing linguistic characteristics and preferences between Gen Z and Millennials are inseparable from the dynamics of cultural development. This is consistent with the study proposed by Francis & Hoefel (2018), wherein Gen Z,

having grown up in the modern era and amid digital advancement, tends to align their language style with evolving cultural trends. Therefore, intergenerational language barriers cannot be detached or separated from cultural developments, which also frequently give rise to broader emerging issues, namely cultural barriers.

One of the most frequently mentioned cultural barriers relates to differences in ethics and the interpretation of boundaries within working relationships. In this context, Gen Z PICs tend to approach their team with a relaxed demeanor interspersed with humor, as reflected in the informal communication style they commonly employ. These efforts, on the other hand, are interpreted differently by Millennial employees. They tend to perceive the informal communication carried out by Gen Z as impolite, unethical, and overly casual. Furthermore, Millennials interpret work ethics and professional boundaries with using a formal communication in the workplace.

This distinction between formal and informal communication is also reflected in the working styles and patterns within the professional sphere. In this regard, Gen Z PICs tend to exhibit a more flexible, relaxed, and adaptive work pattern in response to dynamic situations. One form of this practice is when Gen Z frequently

contacts and attempts to communicate with Gen Millennial outside of working hours. Meanwhile, Millennials tend to work in a more serious and rigid manner, which leads them to communicate in a more formal way and highly values professional boundaries, including communication only during working hours.

*"For example, I think I tend to be more flexible. Whereas they are more rigid, like if it is A then it must be B, and if it cannot be done then it simply cannot be done, something like that." (Informant 3/Gen Z, Via Zoom Meeting, 30/01/26).*

This phenomenon's are consistent with the survey results from IDN Research Institute (2025) which indicate that Millennials' work patterns tend to be more formal and structured, while Gen Z exhibits a considerably faster, more flexible, and they have a greater preference for social interaction (Lestari & Yulianita, 2025). The differences in work styles that give rise to formal and informal communication between Gen Z and Millennials are rooted in the values and norms shaped by their respective generational backgrounds.

This is in line with the research by Francis & Hoefel (2018) which describes that Gen Z, as a generation that is not bound by conventional standards, has a relaxed work style, and tends to express personal closeness as an effort to build emotional connections. In contrast,

Millennials who have structured routines, perceive professionalism through more formal work patterns and communication styles (IDN Research Institute, 2025).

Another difference is also reflected in the social media content preferences consumed by each generation. Social media content is frequently used by employees at PT Nutrifood Indonesia in the East Kalimantan region as a tool and entry point to initiate communication and build bonding within the team. However, differences in social media content preferences pose a distinct challenge to the process of intergenerational communication and rapport-building within the company.

In this regard, Gen Z tends to favor content related to work, investment and stocks, sports, and entertainment such as tutorial content and film reviews. On the other hand, Millennials' content preferences are more centered around entertainment, such as trending content, gossip, and travel or tourism information. These differences in social media content preferences render the communication approach efforts less effective.

This finding supports the survey results conducted by IDN Research Institute (2025) which reveal that 70% of Gen Z prefer content that is detailed, informative, and educational, with 22% of them being more aware of investment and

stocks. This tendency is shaped by their upbringing in a digital environment that demands openness to impactful information (Lestari & Yulianita, 2025). Conversely, Millennials as the "Sandwich Generation," who bear considerable responsibilities outside of work, tend to prefer lighter entertainment content such as gossip and travel information as a means of relaxation (IDN Research Institute, 2025).

Beyond differences in content preferences, there are also fundamental differences in communication styles. Statements regarding these communication style differences emerged as a top-of-mind concern that recurred across multiple informants. Gen Z itself possesses a fast and straightforward communication style, or in other terms, tends to be to the point. Meanwhile, on the other hand, Millennials exhibit a more polite, specific, and detailed communication style.

*"...Whereas I— I do not know, I mean in my opinion it is not blunt, but in their opinion, it is blunt (communication style). Even though in my opinion, that is just a fact that needs to be delivered straight to the point, directly, without any disclaimer or unnecessary filler words, something like that. Maybe that is just it, straight to the point. So, in my opinion, they (Millennials) don't communicate directly to the point. There are layers to the way they communicate. Everything is kind of wrapped up, you know." (Informant 2/Gen Z, Nutrihub Samarinda, 23/01/26).*

This finding is consistent with Lestari & Yulianita (2025) and Rizkiyana et al. (2024) who state that Gen Z's communication tends to be practical, instant, and concise. These characteristics are shaped by their identity as Digital Natives and The Communaholic, who are accustomed to a fast-paced, interactive, and multitasking communication rhythm (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Conversely, Millennials' communication is rooted in strong hierarchical values, wherein formality and politeness serve as their means of demonstrating respect toward organizational values and pillars (IDN Research Institute, 2025).

The final case study within the cultural barriers indicator is found in the differing interpretation of messages between Millennials and Gen Z, particularly within the dynamics of online communication. Gen Z PICs frequently send messages as reminders and work references to Millennials. In contrast, Millennials often perceive the messages delivered by Gen Z PICs as direct work commands.

Millennials' tendency to interpret messages as commands is inseparable from their highly professional disposition, leading them to regard messages from superiors as instructions that must be carried out (IDN Research Institute, 2025). Furthermore, in online communication, the

absence of nonverbal cues renders the meaning of messages vulnerable to differing interpretations by each generation in accordance with their respective systems and values (Julieta & Putri, 2023). These barriers in online communication will further influence the subsequent indicator, namely physical barriers.

*"Yeah, sometimes there are misunderstandings. My intention is simply to make sure I don't forget things, you know. But sometimes they are (Millennials) misinterpreting it." (Informant 2/Gen Z, Nutrihub Samarinda, 23/01/26).*

The results of interviews with Millennial employees also indicate that the majority of them spend 80% to 90% of their working hours in the field. Meanwhile, Gen Z PICs spend the majority of their time in an indoor or office environment. This condition leads to communication between the two generations being predominantly conducted through online channels.

The dynamic field conditions, ranging from exposure to high temperatures, environmental noise, and other physical obstacles, render the process of receiving and responding to messages through online communication ineffective. In such situations, differences in levels of understanding, knowledge, and preferences regarding technological proficiency

become one of the fundamental barriers in a physical sense.

Gen Z, recognized as digital natives, are accustomed to a responsive digital environment (Lestari & Yulianita, 2025). On the other hand, Millennial employees who are frequently stationed in the field will not always be in a position conducive to receiving messages properly and effectively. This is further compounded by their identity as a generation that is still growing and adapting to technological advancements, including online communication (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; IDN Research Institute, 2025). It is this clash that gives rise to intergenerational misinterpretation as a result of physical barriers reinforced by the differing characteristics of each generation.

*"Whereas that is just the thing of being in the field, reading messages under the heat of the moment." (Informant 5/Gen Millennial, Nutrihub Samarinda, 22/01/26).*

Beyond the barriers of message misinterpretation caused by environmental factors, Millennial employees at PT Nutrifood Indonesia in the East Kalimantan region also exhibit a unique characteristic in delivering messages during online communication. This is evident in how Millennials frequently send messages in many bubbles, accompanied by a rather disorganized typing pattern with excessive abbreviations. Gen Z PICs

find this quite disruptive and at times obstructive to online communication, as they often struggle to comprehend the intended meaning of Millennials employees' messages.

This type of case study has previously been identified by (Julieta & Putri, 2023), whose research notes that online communication becomes a barrier because messages from Millennials are often unclear and lead to misunderstandings. Furthermore, Millennials' typing patterns reflect their limited proficiency as a generation that is still in the process of adapting to digital communication. This difference is also inseparable from Gen Z's characteristic role as a generation that is more knowledgeable and proficient in technology compared to Millennials (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; IDN Research Institute, 2025), making them considerably more adept and flexible in communicating effectively online than Millennials.

### **The Dynamics of ICARE Cultural Internalization: The Duality of Agency and Structure**

Institutionally, PT Nutrifood Indonesia proactively and consistently instills ICARE values in the workplace. These cultural values have been embedded since the employee introduction phase, specifically during the employee orientation program. This is further

evidenced by the results of interviews with several Gen Z PICs, who emphasize that supervisory sessions serve as their primary focus, given that ICARE values are institutionally instilled in every employee during the onboarding process.

Furthermore, the internalization of ICARE culture can be understood more deeply through the structuration theory framework proposed by Anthony Giddens (1984). Structuration theory fundamentally addresses the relationship between individuals and organizations, wherein individuals are referred to as agents who possess the capacity to shape, reproduce, and transform structure (Achmad, 2020). Meanwhile, structure or a set of rules and resources functions to regulate and influence the behavior of each agent within the organization (Falkheimer, 2018). More than that, structure is not solely defined as norms or rules, but also encompasses everything that both constrains and enables agents to act (Maretatyas et al., 2024).

In the context of PT Nutrifood Indonesia in the East Kalimantan region, Gen Z PICs and Millennial employees serve as agents who actively interpret and internalize ICARE values at the practical level. Meanwhile, the ICARE culture and other values that constrain or enable agents to behave function as structure. Giddens emphasizes that agent and structure are an inseparable and dialectical duality

(Achmad, 2020). Regarding the language barriers, the barrier that influences the internalization process of ICARE as structure is the difference in language styles. This difference gives rise to tension in the internalization of the value of Respect, wherein Gen Z interprets respect through openness and equality, while Millennial associates it with politeness and professionalism.

Within structuration theory, Giddens notes that agents possess two levels of consciousness, namely discursive consciousness and practical consciousness (Achmad, 2020), which is in this case both agents possess discursive consciousness of the differing meanings attributed to structure from the language barrier factor. This awareness subsequently drives the emergence of practical consciousness, manifested as Millennials' efforts toward conformity in order to begin interpreting the value of Respect in a more contextual and adaptive manner.

Meanwhile, barriers related to the use of contemporary terms and code mixing by Gen Z do not give rise to significant tension. This is because both agents do not perceive it as a threat to their core values, but rather as part of the adaptation process towards the advancement of the digital world. Consequently, the duality of agent and structure is able to proceed without

meaningful conflict and does not directly affect the process of internalizing ICARE values.

On the other hand, cultural barriers in the internalization process of ICARE culture at PT Nutrifood Indonesia in the East Kalimantan region are reflected in differences in communication styles, work relationship ethics, and work patterns. These cultural differences directly give rise to tension in the internalization of the values of Respect and Collaboration. The tensions that emerge range from sentiments of feeling disrespected and violations of professional boundaries, to a sense of disrespect that disrupts order. This obscures the value of Respect and affects the effectiveness of the value of Collaboration, as messages conveyed are not properly received and work patterns remain misaligned.

However, at this level both agents experience discursive consciousness, wherein they recognize that these differences stem from differing value orientations. This awareness serves as the fundamental reason why conformity efforts are ultimately chosen as a response. This level then transitions into practical consciousness, where conformity efforts subsequently manifest in various recurring adaptive actions. For instance, Gen Z begins to pay greater attention to their communication approach with Millennials,

while Millennials extend accommodation toward Gen Z's flexible work style. This recurring dialectical process is consistent with Falkheimer's (2018) assertion that actions between agents that occur repeatedly across space and time will ultimately reproduce structure.

As a result, the value of Respect is no longer interpreted narrowly as formality and hierarchy, but is also understood as a form of openness and equality. Meanwhile, Collaboration is reinterpreted as a more flexible and contextual form of cooperation. This shift in meaning serves as tangible evidence of the duality of agent and structure, wherein the ICARE structure shapes the actions of agents, while simultaneously being reshaped by the adaptive responses of both generations as they continuously negotiate within it.

As for the two remaining cultural barriers, which is differences in social media content preferences and misinterpretation in online communication, these do not significantly influence the internalization process of ICARE values. Neither barrier escalates into meaningful conflict, as the differences that arise are more rooted in each generation's characteristics towards the digital world, rather than in fundamental clashes of values or structural meaning. Consequently, attitudes of accommodation

and reconciliation efforts are relatively straightforward to undertake.

Lastly, physical barriers also do not escalate into significant tension. This is because the differences that arise do not directly intersect with the fundamental interpretation of ICARE structural values. At the level of discursive consciousness, both agents recognize that these barriers are more rooted in the environmental conditions and each generation's characteristics in digital communication. This awareness subsequently drives practical consciousness in the form of mutual conformity and adaptation, without the need to renegotiate the values of ICARE itself.

From all the communication barriers that occurred, the dialectical process between both agents ultimately gives birth to a new culture that represents the result of the re-reproduction of ICARE values in everyday practice. The value of Respect, which was previously interpreted rigidly as formality and hierarchy, has now evolved to become more contextual, encompassing openness, equality, and tolerance towards differences in interpretation and practice. Likewise, the value of Collaboration has transformed from merely structured cooperation into a more flexible and adaptive form of collaboration.

In other words, this situation gives rise to forms of conformity that become a

meeting point in the dynamics of the communication gap. Millennial employees who demonstrate their adaptive attitude are not separate from their identity as the "Sandwich Generation," which is a generation that occupies the 'middle position' and is burdened with the financial responsibilities of two generations above and below them. This condition encourages them to adopt a more realistic and pragmatic stance in reproducing the meaning of structures that clash with other agents through daily practices.

Meanwhile, Gen Z as another agent also contributes by making compromises regarding the dynamics that occur. They provide more tolerance and flexibility to Millennial employees, recognizing that they have more life factors outside of work. One of them is by trying to implement a more participative leadership style and not overly micro-managing. The communication and leadership approaches adopted by Gen Z reflect Giddens' concept, which is to keep the dialectical space open so that the duality of agency and structure operates healthily and is more flexible towards change.

Thus, it is found that the communication gap caused by communication barrier factors that influence the ICARE internalization process is centered only on two values, namely Collaboration and Respect.

Meanwhile, Integrity, Innovation, and Excellence do not encounter barriers in their internalization process. This is because the implementation of the values of Integrity, Innovation, and Excellence does not directly intersect with communication patterns, work styles, work ethics, language styles, and other barriers that constitute the primary source of communication gaps between both agents.

The novelty of this research finding lies in how intergenerational communication gaps serve as a catalyst for the reconstruction of organizational cultural meaning. Distinguished from previous studies that tend to regard generational differences as barriers to be eliminated, this research demonstrates that intergenerational tension, when responded to through discursive consciousness and practical consciousness, yields a more contextual interpretation of values. Furthermore, this research contributes to the development of Giddens' structuration theory by demonstrating that structure actively performs its enabling function when agents with differing value backgrounds negotiate with one another. Therefore, the communication gap that influences the internalization process of ICARE undergoes conformity efforts that reflect the process of the duality of agency and structure as conceptualized by Giddens.

## **Closing**

The research reveals that communication gaps between Gen Z and Millennials at PT Nutrifood Indonesia's East Kalimantan Area stem from three key barriers, namely language barriers, cultural barriers, and physical barriers. Among these three, language and cultural barriers significantly impact ICARE internalization, while physical barriers play a minor role. Language barriers themselves are rooted in differences in language styles, the use of contemporary terms, slang words, and code mixing by Gen Z, which clash with the polite and formal language style maintained by Millennials. On the other hand, cultural barriers go deeper: they involve divergent communication styles, different work ethics, contrasting social media habits, varying work approaches, and frequent misunderstandings in digital communication.

These barriers subsequently influence the internalization process of ICARE culture. The values that experience barriers consist of the values of Collaboration and Respect. This is because both of these values directly intersect with work patterns, work ethics, and daily communication and language styles between agents. Conversely, the values of Integrity, Innovation, and Excellence do

not experience significant barriers as they do not directly intersect with these conflicts.

Using Giddens' structuration theory as a lens, we see Gen Z PICs and Millennials as active agents. They continuously reshape, interpret, and renegotiate the meaning of ICARE values through their daily workplace practices. In other words, their efforts to align with organizational values emerge directly from the interplay between individual agency and organizational structure.

As a practical recommendation, the researchers suggest that PT Nutrifood Indonesia establish regular, periodic FGD sessions. This serves as part of the monitoring and evaluation process of the internalization of the ICARE culture. The FGD can serve as a dialogical space that brings together Gen Z PICs and Gen Millennial employees to openly discuss how ICARE values are understood and implemented during the specified period. Through this forum, each agent has the opportunity to voice their views, obstacles, and interpretations of the ICARE values directly, so that the process of conformity, which has been running organically, can also be strengthened institutionally. In this way, the duality between agents and structure can be managed more strategically, and ICARE values can continue to be constructed relevantly in

accordance with the generational dynamics present in the work environment.

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