



The Need for Enhancing work Competencies of Generation Z Government Employees: A Case Study in Thailand

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Abstract

This study aims to: (1) examine the level of core work competencies among Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok; (2) investigate their needs for competency development; (3) analyze the influence of personal characteristics on their competency development needs; and (4) explore the impact of core work competencies on the need for competency development among Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok. A quantitative research approach was employed using a questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 400 Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized, and hypothesis testing was conducted using independent t-tests and one-way ANOVA. The findings revealed that the overall need for competency development among Generation Z public sector employees was at a high level. Personal characteristics including gender, age, education level, length of service, and job position had no significant effect on their competency development needs. Furthermore, core work competencies—namely achievement orientation, service-mindedness, professional expertise, integrity and ethics, and teamwork—were not found to have a statistically significant effect on their competency development needs at the 0.05 significance level.

Keywords: Work Competency, Development Needs, Generation Z

Introduction

In recent years, the world has experienced unprecedented and volatile transformations across various domains, including economic, social, political, and technological spheres. A particularly disruptive event was the global outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, which significantly affected nearly every aspect of daily life. Governments around the world implemented strict public health measures, including lockdowns, border closures, crowd control regulations, and the suspension of mass gatherings, in an effort to contain the spread of the virus and minimize its impact. As a result, organizations across sectors were forced to modify their operations to adapt to the rapidly changing environment caused by the pandemic (Manee Sukprasert *et al.*, 2022). Thailand, like many other countries, experienced severe impacts from the pandemic. The government introduced emergency measures such as border closures, workplace density reduction, social distancing protocols, mandatory face mask usage, frequent handwashing, and the use of alcohol-based sanitizers. These measures, while essential for public health, disrupted economic activities and altered daily routines. Organizations and institutions were compelled to undergo rapid adjustments to ensure their survival. Many businesses were forced to cease operations temporarily or permanently, reduce working hours, downsize their workforce, and adopt new modes of work to comply with health guidelines. Consequently, the unemployment rate surged during this period. At present, Thailand is undergoing rapid changes in the labor market.

Among the key groups poised to play a significant role in driving future economic growth is Generation Z (Gen Z) (PEW Research Centre, 2019). This generation is now entering the labor force in large numbers and is expected to become a crucial component of the Thai economy (Kattaliya Dusomsak *et al.*, 2023) ^[1]. Gen Z comprises students who are in the process of completing their higher education and preparing to enter the workforce. Members of this generation have grown up in well-connected environments, possess rapid learning capabilities, and demonstrate a high degree of adaptability to changing circumstances.

As such, organizations must understand and accommodate the unique needs and expectations of this generation, which differ from those of previous cohorts. Effectively attracting, developing, and retaining Gen Z employees will be critical to enhancing organizational performance. According to Dr. A.P. Singh and Jianguanglung Dangmei (2016) ^[8], Generation Z is characterized by their deep integration with technology and reliance on digital media as a central component of daily life, making them true digital natives. As Gen Z gradually becomes a larger presence in the labor market, they bring with them distinctive values, expectations, and lifestyles. Organizations, therefore, must identify and respond to the specific needs of this generation to foster engagement, develop supportive work environments, and cultivate organizational cultures that enhance competitiveness and attract high-potential Gen Z talent. Doing so will position organizations for future success. Gen Z individuals are not only knowledgeable and quick to learn but are also highly adaptable to change. As noted by the Kasikorn Research Center (2021), members of this generation possess unique competencies that distinguish them from other age groups. Despite these differences, Gen Z employees can collaborate effectively with colleagues from other generations and contribute meaningfully to the long-term development and innovation of organizations.

Human resource development is a critical aspect that organizations must prioritize in response to the dynamic global landscape, which is continuously shaped by various forces, trends, and external influences. Human capital is regarded as a fundamental variable in driving organizational success across all sectors. As such, no organization can afford to overlook the significance of its workforce in ensuring competitiveness and long-term survival (Pornchuda Somkhiew, 2021). Human resource development is considered the most essential factor in helping organizations achieve their objectives and maintain sustainable operations. Organizations must urgently enhance the knowledge, competencies, skills, and work practices of their personnel to effectively meet institutional goals (Chayanuch Saman, 2018). Within this context, the concept of competency has received considerable attention, as it serves as a key indicator of individual potential and performance within the organization. Organizational capability is inherently linked to the competencies of its workforce, and thus, individual competency development is instrumental in driving organizational success. This study recognizes the pressing need to explore the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees, particularly those working in Bangkok—a rapidly evolving economic and professional environment. Bangkok is characterized by continuous development and intense competition across various domains, including business, technology, and

industry. Generation Z, as an emerging workforce segment, requires dedicated attention from all organizations and agencies. This is especially true for public sector organizations, which play a pivotal role in national development and must ensure continuity and efficiency in governance and public services. Members of Generation Z are typically fast learners, highly adaptable, and capable of keeping pace with changing societal demands. Their development is therefore vital to formulating effective human resource strategies and practices that can be applied across institutions and public agencies.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the level of core work competencies among Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok.
2. To investigate the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok.
3. To analyze the influence of personal characteristics on the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok.
4. To explore the impact of core work competencies on the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok.

Research Methodology Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised Generation Z public sector employees working in Bangkok. Given the unknown total population size due to its large scope, the researcher employed the formula developed by W.G. Cochran (1977) to determine an appropriate sample size at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. As a result, a sample size of 384 participants was required to ensure representativeness with a permissible error not exceeding 0.05 at a 95% confidence level. To enhance the robustness and reliability of the data analysis, the researcher selected a total of 400 participants using convenience sampling. Data were collected via an online questionnaire distributed through various digital platforms, including Facebook and the LINE application.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire, administered through an online survey. The questionnaire was divided into three parts:

Part 1: Personal characteristics of respondents, comprising 5 items: gender, age, education level, years of work experience, and job position. This section employed a checklist format.

Part 2: Core work competencies of Generation Z public sector employees, consisting of 5 items: (1) achievement orientation, (2) service excellence, (3) job-specific expertise, (4) integrity and ethics, and (5) teamwork. This section also used a checklist format.

Part 3: Competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok, comprising 11 items: (1) problem-solving, (2) critical thinking, (3) creativity, (4) personnel management, (5) collaboration, (6) emotional intelligence, (7) decision-making, (8) negotiation, (9) cognitive flexibility (10) leadership, and (11) information

technology skills. This section used a 5-point Likert scale rating format.

Data Collection Procedure

- **Secondary data:** The researcher reviewed academic literature, online databases, published articles, journals, and prior studies relevant to the research topic. All sources were documented and cited appropriately for use in the study.
- **Primary data:** The researcher developed a structured questionnaire and collected data from a total of 400 respondents. A screening question ensured that all participants were members of Generation Z working in the public sector in Bangkok, regardless of gender.

Data Analysis

The researcher verified the completeness of the returned questionnaires prior to data analysis. The data were then analyzed using SPSS software, applying the following statistical techniques:

1. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to summarize demographic information and core work competencies.
2. Mean scores ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviations (SD) were used to assess opinions regarding competency development needs.
3. Independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were conducted to analyze the effects of personal characteristics on competency development needs.
4. Independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were also employed to examine the influence of core work competencies on the need for competency development among Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok.

Research Findings

General Information of Respondents The majority of the respondents were female, accounting for 208 individuals or 52.00%. Most respondents were aged between 26–27 years (232 individuals or 58.00%) and held a bachelor's degree (381 individuals or 95.30%). Regarding work experience, most had been employed for 1–2 years (228 individuals or 57.00%). In terms of job position, 183 respondents (45.80%) identified as government officers or public sector employees.

Core Work Competencies of Generation Z Public Sector Employees The results indicated that most Generation Z public sector employees demonstrated core work competencies at varying levels. In terms of achievement orientation, 182 respondents (45.50%) exhibited Level 1 competency under Level 2 performance, which reflects the ability to perform tasks in alignment with established goals. Regarding service excellence, 181 respondents (45.30%) were capable of resolving issues for service recipients, also reflecting Level 1 competency within Level 2 performance. For professional expertise, 161 respondents (40.30%) demonstrated knowledge of information and emerging technologies relevant to their professional field, indicating Level 1 competency at Level 2 performance. With respect to integrity and ethics, 141 respondents (35.30%) showed Level 2 competency through strong adherence to principles. Finally, in terms of teamwork, 183 respondents (45.80%) exhibited Level 2 competency by effectively coordinating

and collaborating with team members. These findings suggest that while many Generation Z public sector employees operate within foundational levels of competency, their performance reflects readiness for continued development.

Table 1: Presents the mean scores and standard deviations reflecting the overall perceptions regarding the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees.

Competency Development Need	$\bar{x}$	SD	Level
1. Problem-solving	4.09	0.40	High
2. Critical thinking	3.64	0.36	High
3. Creativity	4.07	0.49	High
4. Personnel management	3.96	0.55	High
5. Collaboration with others	4.03	0.53	High
6. Emotional intelligence	4.04	0.51	High
7. Decision-making skills	4.06	0.49	High
8. Negotiation skills	4.07	0.51	High
9. Cognitive flexibility	4.06	0.52	High
10. Leadership	4.08	0.51	High
11. Information technology skills	4.07	0.49	High
Overall	4.03	0.34	High

Based on the results presented in Table 1, it was found that most respondents expressed a high level of overall need for competency development among Generation Z public sector employees ($\bar{x} = 4.03$, S.D. = 0.34). When examined by specific dimensions, the highest mean score was observed in problem-solving ($\bar{x} = 4.09$, S.D. = 0.40), indicating a strong need for development in this area. This was followed by leadership ($\bar{x} = 4.08$, S.D. = 0.51), creativity ($\bar{x} = 4.07$, S.D. = 0.49), negotiation ($\bar{x} = 4.07$, S.D. = 0.51), and critical thinking, which although ranked lower, was still considered to be at a high level of importance ($\bar{x} = 3.64$, S.D. = 0.36). These findings suggest that cognitive, interpersonal, and leadership-oriented competencies are among the top priorities for development within this workforce segment. The analysis revealed that personal characteristics—including gender, age, education level, years of service, and job position—had no statistically significant effect on the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok at the 0.05 significance level, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of Personal Characteristics of Generation Z Public Sector Employees in Bangkok and Their Influence on Competency Development Needs

Hypothesis	Sig. Value	Test Result	Statistical Test
Gender	0.710	Rejected	t-test
Age	0.290	Rejected	ANOVA
Education level	0.482	Rejected	ANOVA
Years of service	0.996	Rejected	ANOVA
Job position	0.222	Rejected	ANOVA

At the 0.05 level of statistical significance

The analysis of core work competencies—including achievement orientation, service excellence, accumulated professional expertise, integrity and ethics, and teamwork—revealed that none of these factors had a statistically significant effect on the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok at the 0.05 level of significance. These results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Analysis of Core Work Competencies Influencing the Competency Development Needs of Generation Z Public Sector Employees in Bangkok

Hypothesis	Sig. Value	Test Result	Statistical Test
Achievement orientation	0.076	Rejected	ANOVA
Service excellence	0.090	Rejected	ANOVA
Accumulated professional expertise	0.732	Rejected	ANOVA
Integrity and ethics	0.057	Rejected	ANOVA
Teamwork	0.708	Rejected	ANOVA

At the 0.05 level of statistical significance

Discussion

1. The findings revealed that the core work competency in achievement orientation among Generation Z public sector employees was at a high level. This result is consistent with the study by Netnapa Talad and Aram Uengpuang (2017) ^[10], which explored strategies for developing the core competencies of academic support personnel at Khon Kaen University. Their research also reported that achievement orientation was rated at a high level. The competency related to integrity and ethics was also found to be at a high level, aligning with the findings of Wilawan Putti (2019) ^[6], who examined perceptions of core competencies among personnel at Ban Pong Hospital. Her study indicated that employees rated integrity and adherence to ethical principles highly, which corresponds with the present study's findings. Regarding service excellence, the overall competency level was also rated high. This concurs with Wilawan Putti's (2019) ^[6] research, which found that hospital staff demonstrated strong perceptions of the importance of providing quality service. The competency in teamwork was similarly rated at a high level in this study. This is consistent with the findings of Wilawan Putti (2019) ^[6], who noted that the staff at Ban Pong Hospital recognized teamwork as a critical core competency. Lastly, the competency in accumulating professional expertise was also reported to be at a high level. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Sawangwong Maitiamklang and Napaporn Wongwichit (2019), which investigated the core competencies influencing work performance among support staff at Kalasin University. Their research concluded that the competency related to building professional expertise was perceived at a high level by university personnel.
2. The comparison of competency development needs among Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok, categorized by personal characteristics, revealed no significant differences across gender, age, educational level, years of service, or job position. Both male and female respondents demonstrated comparable work performance and equal potential for professional success, with no notable variation in assigned responsibilities. As a result, performance outcomes did not differ between genders or personal circumstances. In terms of age, many government agencies regularly provide training and development programs to enhance employee competencies, and most personnel exhibit a proactive attitude toward continuous learning. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Prapakorn Phengwiphat *et al.* (2021) ^[3], which examined

competency development needs among military officers in the Psychological Operations Unit in Lopburi Province. That study concluded that differences in gender, age, and marital status did not significantly affect competency development needs. Similarly, Supaporn Suwanchara (2021) studied personnel development at the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), a public organization, and found that gender differences had no influence on the need for competency development among ONESQA personnel.

3. The comparison between core work competencies and the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok showed no significant differences. Specifically, achievement orientation, service excellence, accumulated professional expertise, integrity and ethics, and teamwork were not found to influence the perceived need for further competency development. These findings may be explained by the standardized competency framework established by the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC), which is applied uniformly across public sector institutions. Generation Z employees appear to understand their roles and responsibilities within their respective organizations, and supervisors tend to emphasize high-performance expectations and effective execution of assigned duties. This consistent emphasis has likely contributed to the broad development of core work competencies within this population. As a result, there was no variation in perceived competency development needs, regardless of the levels already attained. These findings are consistent with the study by Alisara Piamthawon (2017) ^[4], who examined strategies for enhancing professional competencies among digital technology practitioners in the private sector and concluded that core work competencies had no significant effect on the need for additional competency development.

Recommendations

Practical Recommendations

1. Since the study found that personal characteristics—such as gender, age, education level, years of service, and job position—did not significantly influence the competency development needs of Generation Z public sector employees in Bangkok, training and development programs may be designed as standardized modules. These programs can include core content necessary for effective job performance without the need for differentiation based on demographic factors such as age, gender, or work experience.
2. The study also revealed that existing core work competencies—namely achievement orientation, service excellence, professional expertise, integrity and ethics, and teamwork—did not significantly affect the perceived need for further competency development. This may suggest that the current levels of competency do not sufficiently stimulate the motivation for additional growth. Therefore, human resource administrators should focus on designing development activities and training courses that are aligned with practical work contexts, policy changes, or emerging trends. Examples include cross-functional collaboration,

the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace, and communication strategies within modern bureaucratic systems. Such initiatives may help raise awareness about the importance of continuous learning and skill enhancement.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future studies should consider examining job-specific competencies relevant to particular roles and responsibilities. This includes analytical thinking, mentoring and developing others, flexibility and adaptability, and understanding of organizational structures and bureaucratic systems. Incorporating these factors will allow for more targeted insights into the effectiveness of competencies within specific occupational functions.
2. As this research represents a cross-sectional study conducted during a single point in time, it is important to acknowledge that employee perceptions and competency development needs may evolve over time. Therefore, it is recommended that longitudinal or follow-up studies be conducted periodically to capture these changes and provide actionable insights for ongoing organizational development.

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