

A STUDY ON GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE IN WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR AND THEIR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TECHNICAL INSTITUTES IN PUNJAB

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Abstract: People working in any organization are from different age groups and also possess different personality traits, and these traits are reflected from their behavior at the work place. In the current scenario, technical institutes offering courses like B.Tech., M. Tech., MBA etc. also consider themselves as corporate houses and are in the practice of hiring multi-tasking employees. It will not be an exaggeration to say that such employees are next to the working managers of a multinational organization. The sole objective of this present paper is to study the perception and motivation level of the employees of such institutes, belonging from different age groups. Data is collected from the various institutes situated in the state of Punjab, India. Likert scale is being used to collect the data, and one way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and Chi Square is being used as a tool to test the hypothesis.

Keywords: Generation Y; Generation X; Baby Boomers; technical institutes.

Introduction

New technology and increasing globalization reflect in the changing nature of work. Rising demand for product quality can be seen in order to meet customer needs at the highest level. Economy relies upon intellectual abilities more than upon physical labor. In the context of personnel management, work with people in various areas plays a key role. Managers at all levels are required to learn new skills. Their main task is to define a way of managing employees of various age groups that will result in contribution of the employees to the enterprise goals and achieving a higher level of employee performance. Each generation has its particularities, unique standards and different culture as well as behavior; therefore, the managing process is extremely demanding. Making an effective connection between communication and workforce means the ability to overcome cultural barriers in the work environment. Organizational culture comprises the fundamental values, assumptions, and beliefs held in common by members of an organization. It is stable, socially constructed, and subconscious. Employees impart the organizational culture to new members, and culture influences in large measure how employees relate to one another and their work environment. Theorists propose that organizational culture is among the most critical barriers to leveraging new knowledge and implementing technical innovation.

Managers are realizing that age has just as much to do with employees' hopes, learning styles and expectations as do culture, gender and other characteristics. By understanding each generation and by giving employees what they need to thrive, leaders can do more to increase productivity, morale and employee retention (Kogan, 2007).

As Generation X and Millennial Generation workers bring skills that some Baby Boomers may not possess, they end up finding themselves supervising older employees (Kogan, 2007). These generational differences are likely to create further conflicts in the workplace by dividing the workforce into an 'us vs. them' mentality (Leadership Advantage, n.d.; Yang and Guy, 2006).

Types of Generations

- a. **Traditional:** Born before 1945, they grew up dealing with economic hardships made them disciplined and self-sacrificing, with the reward being to live the American Dream. Today, most traditionals are retired and have done their share in the workplace.
- b. **Baby Boomers:** Born 1945 to 1964, they typically grew up amid economic prosperity, suburban affluence and strong nuclear families with stay-at-home moms. They are currently leading the workplace, with the youngest Boomer at age 52.
- c. **Generation X:** Born 1965 to 1980, they grew up as "latchkey" kids in a world of divorce and working moms. This led to independence, resilience, adaptability and a "I don't need someone looking over my shoulder" attitude. As a generation, they are at times overlooked because of the two loud and large generations on their either side.
- d. **Millennials:** Born 1981 to 1999, they were raised at the most child-centric time in our history. Due to the great deal of attention and high expectations from parents, they are confident and may appear cocky. Also known as Generation Y, they are the largest generation and are still growing.
- e. **I Generation:** Born since 2000, they are expected to be exceptional future employees due to their natural skills with technology and easy acceptance of new ideas. Also known as Generation Z.

Basic Causes of Conflict

This is a well known fact that in all the organizations, people of different age group use to work together and they all are having different perspective for any given work culture. These differences in the thought process might result in the conflict of these generations. As a matter of fact these differences in the thought process might become very important for the trainers and top management, so that they can frame the policies accordingly to smoothen the work culture. (Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak, 1999)

Research Objectives

- To identify the demographic characteristics of the three generations that is involved with this issue.
- To identify various environmental factors that constitutes the workplace behavior of employees.
- To identify the differences in the workplace behavior of the three generations.
- To analyze occurrence of positive & negative workplace activities where generational differences play a role.

Hypothesis of the Study

Hypothesis 1

H₀: The frequency of generational conflicts is higher in case of Females as compared to Males.

H₁: The frequency of generational conflicts is lower in case of Females as compared to Males.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: Occurrence of positive workplace activities where generational differences play a role is comparatively lower than such negative workplace activities.

H₁: Occurrence of positive workplace activities where generational differences play a role is comparatively higher than such negative workplace activities.

Research Methodology

Sampling

Simple random sampling method is being used in this study; the total sample size of the study was 200 respondents belonging to five engineering institutes of Punjab, of the same stature. In this study, the respondents from the different engineering colleges of the Indore and Bhopal city were included.

Data collection

In order to level of motivation and perception of various generation at the work place a questionnaire of 35 questions was prepared and all the questions were based on the likert 5 point scale. The same has been exercised on selected 200 respondents, face to face.

Measures

Chi square test and one way ANOVA were used a tool to test the respective hypothesis.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1

Summary of ANOVA Results

	F	Sig.
Work Ethics		
Affected from office politics	.050	.823
Abide all the office rules	3.023	.083
Promotions and increments are fair	2.768	.097
Not tried to switch the job in last one year	.050	.823
Likes to work in the current organization	.064	.800
Attitude towards reporting		
Comfortable in reporting	.276	.599
Always ask for help	.025	.875
Believe in the present reporting system	.059	.808
Working for recognition	.012	.911
Willing to accept authority	.632	.427
Work Life Balance		
Enjoying quality of life	.000	.996
Gain respect from others	3.737	.054
Consider this organization as a stepping stone of your career	.034	.853
Suffering from job stress	.875	.950
Work life is more important for you	.000	.996
Adaptability to change/ Adjustment		
Accept every change in your way	.163	.687
Always keen to learn	.130	.718
According to you overtime is justified	.051	.822
Find difficult to accept change	.011	.917

Interpretation

The calculated value 'F' is less than the table value 'Sign.' Which means that our null hypothesis is rejected and in all the above cases we can conclude that respondents were invariable of their gender, while talking on the issues related to work ethics. As can be seen from the above table of ANOVA, maximum of the critical values i.e. Sig. Values are greater than the calculated value i.e. 'F' Value so we can conclude that as far as gender is concerned employees are invariable in responding to the issues related to their attitude towards their current supervision or the reporting authority. As can be seen from the above table of ANOVA, maximum of the critical values i.e. Sig. Values are greater than the calculated value i.e. 'F' Value so we can conclude that as far as gender is concerned employees are invariable in responding to the issues related to their responses against their quality of life.

Summary of ANOVA Results

	F	Sig.
On the basis of Gender		
Workers from different generations work effectively together	.050	.823
Workers from different generations learn from each other	3.023	.083
Quality of work improves when there is a variety of generational perspectives	2.768	.097
Workers of different generations have conflicts about acceptable work hours	.050	.823
Senior employees feel coworkers from other generations do not respect them	.064	.800
Communication breakdowns among workers are attributed to difference in generations	.949	.331
Young generations are keen to learn through mentoring initiatives	1.645	.200
On the basis of Education		
Workers from different generations work effectively together	1.439	.231
Workers from different generations learn from each other	.488	.485
Quality of work improves when there is a variety of generational perspectives	6.735	.010
Workers of different generations have conflicts about acceptable work hours	.436	.509
Senior employees feel coworkers from other generations do not respect them	.002	.963
Communication breakdowns among workers are attributed to difference in generations	3.479	.063
On the basis of Age		
Workers from different generations work effectively together	3.248	.072
Workers from different generations learn from each other	3.334	.068
Quality of work improves when there is a variety of generational perspectives	.377	.825
Workers of different generations have conflicts about acceptable work hours	1.258	.286
Senior employees feel coworkers from other generations do not respect them	.565	.688
Communication breakdowns among workers are attributed to difference in generations	.377	.825
Young generations are keen to learn through mentoring initiatives	1.876	.113

Summary of Chi Square Results

	Workers from different generations work effectively together	Workers from different generations learn from each other	Quality of work improves when there is a variety of generational perspectives	Workers of different generations have conflicts about acceptable work hours	Senior employees feel coworkers from other generations do not respect them	Communication breakdowns among workers are attributed to difference in generations	Young generations are keen to learn through mentoring initiatives	Inputs from workers of different generations balance one another	Employees feel that coworkers from other generations are over- or under-reliant on technology	Environment conducive to innovation & creativity is created due to presence of different generations
Gender										
Table Value	.159	.243	.159	.063	.943	.445	.2000	.053	.146	.035
Calculated Value	3.67	2.827	3.67	5.537	2.860	1.621	1.643	5.878	3.851	6.705
Education										
Table Value	.943	.631	.703	.936	.339	.939	.560	.687	.779	.352
Calculated Value	2.86	6.145	5.504	2.981	9.040	2.917	6.781	5.641	4.795	8.882

As can be seen from the above table that all the table values of the chi square test are less than the calculated values, this shows the occurrences of positive or negative workplace activities are not the outcome of disparity in Gender, Education and income. For this differentiation some other factors are responsible, which will be clarified in the further details of this section, the proposed test for such analysis will be one way ANOVA.

Summary of ANOVA Results

	F	Sig.
On the basis of Gender		
Workers from different generations work effectively together	.050	.823
Workers from different generations learn from each other	3.023	.083
Quality of work improves when there is a variety of generational perspectives	2.768	.097
Workers of different generations have conflicts about acceptable work hours	.050	.823
Senior employees feel coworkers from other generations do not respect them	.064	.800
Communication breakdowns among workers are attributed to difference in generations	.949	.331
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Communication breakdowns among workers are attributed to difference in generations	.377	.825
Young generations are keen to learn through mentoring initiatives	1.876	.113

Interpretation

As far as the gender is concerned in most of the cases the table value is more than the calculated values, which proves that certainly there are more chances of the occurrence of positive workplace activities as compared to the negative workplace activities. Gender differences are not the reason of any conflict, in most of the cases it was found that conflict is the outcome of the distinct point of views between the employees of the different generation, at times the ego state of the employees from different generations is the reason. As far as the Educational Qualification is concerned most of the cases the table value is more than the calculated values, which proves that certainly there are more chances of the occurrence of positive workplace activities as compared to the negative workplace activities. Basically we can quote that the impact of the education qualification is neutral as such, when it comes to the generation of negative workplace activities and if the chances of negative workplace activities are then the overall situation can be considered as positive, except some of the cases like the promotion of the less qualified worker of the same generation, ego clashes for the senior positions in the said time frame, importance given to the employee ready to take more of the administrative workload, etc. As can be seen from the above table that the most of the table values are less than the calculated values, which reflects that the income is the major issue when it comes to the generation of the negative workplace activities, here we can state that employees from the Gen. X which are coming from the high end institutions like the M.Tech. and MBAs from IITs or NITs are being recruited on high packages and the employees working in the institutions from last five years are also being promoted to the same package now the issue which occurs is that the Gen. X is like the fresher and the Baby Boomers with experience of few years.

Result of Hypothesis Testing (Hypothesis 2)

As per the above results of the Chi square and One-Way ANOVA the Null Hypothesis stands true that the occurrence of the positive workplace activities is more than the occurrence of the negative workplace activities.

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Annexure-I Questionnaire Instructions

- The following survey is aimed at understanding generational differences
- Please complete this questionnaire on your own and in quiet conditions.
- Please answer each statement below by putting a circle around the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. *There are no right or wrong answers.*
- Try to answer as accurately as possible.
- You have five possible responses
- 1= Strongly disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly agree (SA) **Please circle the number that you choose.**
- Many thanks for your time and interest.

		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I am comfortable in embracing with ease all types of diversity (gender, race, religion etc)	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am comfortable in taking the steps needed to achieve a goal without explicitly being told about them by a supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am comfortable with applying new things learnt by me	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am comfortable with multitasking of roles and responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
5	I am comfortable with working on new technologies	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am fine with asking for help when needed and do not consider it to be a sign of weakness	1	2	3	4	5
7	I am keen to constantly learn new things in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
8	I am not very comfortable using new methods of communication so I prefer to communicate through traditional methods.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I am often more concerned with my quality of life than with money	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am respectful of organizational hierarchy and do not bypass it	1	2	3	4	5
11	I am respectful towards others mostly for someone's personal qualities than for his/her designation.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I am self motivated to give maximum effort	1	2	3	4	5
13	I am usually more concerned about end results of tasks irrespective of the method being used to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5
14	I am willing to navigate office politics by trying to avoid it constantly	1	2	3	4	5
15	I am willing to wait for my turn for promotions and rewards	1	2	3	4	5
16	I believe how a person does his/her job is indicative of the individual's worth	1	2	3	4	5
17	I believe on the job training is more effective than classroom training	1	2	3	4	5
18	I consider continued learning and skill development to be an important reward	1	2	3	4	5
19	I consider each organisation as a stepping stone to something better	1	2	3	4	5
20	I constantly try to maintain a balance between my personal & professional life	1	2	3	4	5
21	I do not let job related stress affect my personal life	1	2	3	4	5
22	I expect my organization to give me immediate recognition through title, praise, promotions and pay	1	2	3	4	5

23	I feel abiding by the rules to do a task is more important than the task itself	1	2	3	4	5
24	I feel I am unable to grasp technology quickly	1	2	3	4	5
25	I feel I can rely only on myself for work related activities	1	2	3	4	5
26	I feel I learn better when taught in a traditional classroom setting	1	2	3	4	5
27	I feel informal methods of communication must strictly not be used for communication in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
28	I feel job switching is a valid career advancement method	1	2	3	4	5
29	I feel loyalty to an organization is a thing of the past	1	2	3	4	5
30	I feel loyalty to my skill (skill enhancement) is more important than loyalty towards organization	1	2	3	4	5
31	I feel reverse mentoring can make senior generations insecure	1	2	3	4	5
32	I feel technological advancement has made us more dependent rather than independent.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I feel working overtime is justified	1	2	3	4	5
34	I generally accept the authority figure and his decisions in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
35	I give much importance to work life balance	1	2	3	4	5
36	I have difficulty in accepting changes in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
37	I intend to stay with my organization over the long term	1	2	3	4	5
38	I like structured work, clear instructions, explicit end results etc.	1	2	3	4	5
39	I like to incorporate fresh ideas in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
40	I look forward to learning opportunities in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
41	I normally do not prefer to work in teams	1	2	3	4	5
42	I prefer immediate communication including constant feedback regarding jobs done	1	2	3	4	5
43	I prefer informality of instructions and interpersonal behavior at my workplace	1	2	3	4	5
44	I prefer to work alone rather than under constant supervision	1	2	3	4	5
45	I prefer to work under supervision rather than working autonomously on my own	1	2	3	4	5
46	I prefer when my superior acts as a guiding hand rather than a micromanager	1	2	3	4	5
47	I prefer working independently towards a predetermined goal	1	2	3	4	5
48	I rely heavily on technology for day to day tasks in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
49	I tend to learn new things quickly and with ease	1	2	3	4	5
50	I want my opinions to be given due weightage & respect	1	2	3	4	5
51	I will take up a second career post retirement	1	2	3	4	5
52	I would prefer a job that recognizes performance and not tenure.	1	2	3	4	5
53	When learning new things I must know “why” I have to learn it	1	2	3	4	5
54	Reverse mentoring helps in creating a healthy work environment	1	2	3	4	5

Frequency of occurrence of positive & negative workplace activities where generational differences play a role

		Never	Sometimes	Always
1	Workers from different generations work effectively together	1	2	3
2	Workers from different generations learn from each other	1	2	3
3	Quality of work improves when there is a variety of generational perspectives	1	2	3
4	Workers of different generations have conflicts about acceptable work hours	1	2	3
5	Senior employees feel coworkers from other generations do not respect them	1	2	3
6	Communication breakdowns among workers are attributed to difference in generations	1	2	3
7	Young generations are keen to learn through mentoring initiatives	1	2	3
8	Inputs from workers of different generations balance one another	1	2	3
9	Employees feel that coworkers from other generations are over- or under-reliant on technology	1	2	3
10	Environment conducive to innovation & creativity is created due to presence of different generations	1	2	3
11	Resentment regarding decisions is common between workers of different generations	1	2	3
12	Employees complain about improper mode of communication used by coworkers from other generations	1	2	3
13	Employees state that knowing the perspective of other generations has given them a new insight	1	2	3
14	Senior employees take coworkers from other generations less seriously	1	2	3
15	Employees state that coworkers from other generations have a very different perspective about authority & supervision	1	2	3
16	Senior generations look forward to reverse mentoring initiatives	1	2	3

