Generational Diversity : An Exploratory Study on Managing Multigenerational Workforce, A Sustainable Solution

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EDITORIAL BOARD EXCERPT Initially at the Time of Submission (ToS) submitted paper had a 44% plagiarism and after rectification it was reduced to 7%, which is an accepted percentage for publication. The editorial board is of an observation that paper had a successive close watch by the blind reviewer's which at the later stages had been rectified and amended by the authors (Namita, Shweta & Bhavya) in various phases as and when required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeable related to **Generational Diversity** both subject-wise and research-wise. The manuscript provides detailed view about differences in work motivators of different generations, leadership styles preferred by different generations their impact on organisational goals. The authors have crafted the paper in a structured manner. By and large all the editorial and reviewer's comments had been incorporated in paper at the end and further the manuscript had been earmarked and decided under **"Theme Based Paper"** as paper studies the impact of different work values, work motivators and leadership styles preferred by different generations on the organizational goals.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: In thispaper, a modest attempt was made to check whether there are significant differences in work values among different generations at workplace. This paper will give detailed view about differences in work motivators of different generations, leadership styles preferred by different generations their impact on organisational goals.

Design /Methodology /Approach: Secondary Research based on existing studies.

Findings: This research gives us the insight about work values, work motivators and leadership styles preferred by different generations at workplace. From the analysis we can say that all the generations possess different characteristics.

Originality/Value: This research paper studies the impact of different work values, work motivators and leadership styles preferred by different generations on the organizational goals.

KEYWORDS Generation | GenX | Gen Y

Introduction

Background

At present, three generations working together. These are Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. The baby boomers were born between1946-1964, the Generation X was born between 1965-1980 and Generation Y was born between 1981-1999.The Baby Boomers are on the verge of retirement.The Gen X and Gen Y form the majority of the workforce and therefore are the pulse of the economy. Though having multiple generation at work are beneficial but the organisations are having many problems due to this. There are three generations working together. This has led to multifaceted environment.It is becoming very difficult for the organisations to keep up with different needs of different generations.A lot of research has been done in the area of diversity namely cultural backgrounds, gender etc. But there is a need for research in the area of generational diversity.In the last few decades,there has been a significant change in the composition of workforce. This is the reason organisations need to understand the expectations of employees from different generations.There is a need to understand the differences in generations.At present the attention should be given to recruitment and retention of different employees in the organisation (Ali,2002; Gephart,2002; Grossman,2005; Jennings, 2000; Karp, Fuller, & Sirias,2002; Losyk, 1997; Loughlin & Barling, 2001; Mackay, 1997; Reynolds, 2005;).

Generationis defined as a group of people who are born around the same time and share significant life events."(Davis et al., 2006;Westerman& Yamamura, 2006) .A research conducted by Smith &Clurman, A (1998) defines generation as a group of people who share similar experiences during their life such as political conditions and state of economy.

Characteristics of Different Generations

• Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers were born between 1946-1964. The baby boomers are eldest workers in the organisation(Eisner, 2005; Morton, 2001; Zemke et al., 1999). They give topmost priority to their work. They are devoted towards the organisation in which they work. They preferpersonal communication. They like to work in teams ie they believe in teamwork (Hammil, 2005).

• Generation X

These are the ones who were born between 1965-1980. In comparison to baby boomers, they have lower level of work ethic.They prefer autonomy and authority at work. They preferhaving work-life balance (Twenge 2010). This generation gives more priority to their individual goals rather than organisational goals (How HR, 2005, Sturges & Guest, 2004). They like to take up challenges at work.Therefore, they are attracted by organisations which have interesting and challenging work. According to a studyconducted by Chen & Choi in 2008 concludes that there are differences in work values of different generations. Gen X have grown up in a transition phase of technology. They are ambitious, independent and more confident than their predecessors. The work motivators for this generation are recognition, promotions, pay etc. They were born in the era when information technology was at boon. This is the reason they prefer technology based communication as compared to baby boomers (Crumpacker and Crumpacker 2007 ; Martin 2005).

• Generation Y

This generational cohort was born between 1981-1999. They are also known as millennials and echo boomers. This generation is well educated and are participative in nature. They prefer to have a balance between their work and life (Hammil, 2005). They are hardworking and expect high rewards for the work done. This cohort is goal oriented(Murphy, 2010). A study conducted by Eisner, 2005; Zemke et al., 1999, this group is dependable andenthusiastic. A research conducted byTwenge, J.M. & Campbell, S.M.,2008 reveals that this generation is technologically educated and desire leisure than work. A research conducted by Süssmuth-Dyckerhoff, Wang, & Chen, Women Matter An Asian Perspective, 2011 concludes thatmillennial woman is considered no less than Gen Y males in terms of educational achievement and professional capabilities.This group is open to feedbacks by their bosses. Also, they rectify mistakes as soon as possible. This generational cohort iscategorized as optimistic, talented, social, multitaskers (Raines, 2002). They are technologically literate. They prefer technology based communication such as video calls and e-mails.

Review of Literature

Values and Work Values

A study was conducted by Dose in 1997. He defined values as"what people think to be right or wrong". A research conducted by George and Jones 1997 defines work values as the "values which give an insight about the things which are right or wrong at the workplace". All three generations which are working together possess different work values because they were born in different eras(Fyock, 1990). A research conducted by Ros, Schwartz, and Surkiss 1999 tells us that work values are based on discrete values. Brick (2011) conducted a research and revealed that baby boomers prefer security in employment. On the contrary, Generation X and Generation Y have an inclination towards professional growth. A research by Smola and Sutton in 2009 concluded that loyalty towards the organisation is highest in baby boomers.For Baby Boomers recognition at work is of utmost importance. Whereas, Gen X is more concerned about fulfilment of their personal goals.

Motivation and Job Satisfaction

A study by Michell, 1982 defines motivation as "those psychological processes that direct the voluntary actions that are goal oriented". This research reveals the motivators for employees working in the organisation. The organisations can use these motivators for encouraging the employees at work. As a result, the goals of the organisations can be achieved.A study by Rudolph & Kleiner in 1989 defines motivation as"inner feeling which encourage a person to completea particular task ". The employees working in the organisation shouldbe motivated in such a way that they themselves work towards the accomplishment of goals of the organisation(Locke & Lantham 2004, Michaelson 2005).

Leadership

Leadership is defined as the capability of a superior to encourage his/her subordinates to work in a particular manner. It also means to direct its employees to accomplish a task. It is very important for the leaders to identify work characteristics possessed by different generational groups. Arsenault in 2004 conducted a research and revealed that different generations prefer different styles of leadership. The baby boomers prefer leaders who are caring, capable and honest. The leaders who are determined, goal oriented and confidant are preferred by Gen X and Gen Y. Yu and Miller in2005 conducted a research about Taiwanese workforce working in manufacturing sector and revealed that different styles of leadership are favoured by different generations. Thisresearch also reveals that the baby boomers are very loyal towards the organisation in which they work. As a result they prefer goal oriented style of leadership. Generation X on the other hand prefers to have autonomy at work. Therefore participative style of leadership is preferred by them.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research study are as follows:

• To know the work values possessed by different generations at workplace.

• To understand the work motivators of different generations at workplace.

• To know what leadership style is preferred by each generation at workplace.

• To identify the best ways to manage multiple generations working in the organisation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The Analysis of the Literature Review is as Follows:

1. Work Values Among Different Generations

• **Baby Boomers**

Table 1.1: Work Values of Baby Boomers

Author	Year	Work Values
Crampton & Hodge	2007	Loyal and competitive workaholics
Patota, Schwartz & Schwartz	2007	Dedicated towards work
Lyons	2005	Feeling of entitlement
Massey	1979	Value work, team oriented and rule challenging

• **Generation X**

Table 1.2: Work Values of Generation X

Author	Year	Work Values
Lyons, 2005	2005	Independent, fun loving and self -reliant
Crampton & Hodge	2007	Less loyal than baby boomers.They are more concerned about work-life balance and career options.
Patota, Schwartz & Schwartz	2007	Computer literate and fun loving.
Johnson & Lopes	2008	Change jobs easily for improving careers.

- **Generation Y**

Table 1.3: Work Values of Generation Y

Author	Year	Work Values
McNamara, 2005	2005	Optimistic, realistic, inclusive by nature
Alch	2008	Less indulged than generation X
Yeaton	2008	Value work life balance , independent

Differences in work values among generations

Table 1.4: Differences in work values among generations

Baby Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y
Baby Boomers are loyal towards the organization in which they work. They consider work as their utmost responsibility.	Gen X is independent and fun loving. They like autonomy at workplace. These are the ones who prefer work-life balance.	This generation is optimistic, reliable, and independent. They prefer participative approach to work.

2. Work Motivators for different Generations

- **Baby Boomers**

Table 2.1: Work Motivators of Baby Boomers

Author	Year	Work Motivators
Chen & Choi	2008	Lay emphasis on selflessness and intellectual motivation.
Cennamo & Gardener	2008	Preference for status and extrinsic values.
Leschinsky & Michael	2004	Preference towards pension schemes and security benefits.

- **Generation X**

Table 2.2: Work Motivators of Generation X

Author	Year	Work Motivators
Ringer and Garma	2006	Higher preference for intrinsic motivators
Leahy et. al.	2011	Higher preference for intrinsic motivators
Lourdes et. al.	2011	Higher preference for intrinsic factors such as recognition of their work and sense of achievement.
Shea	2012	Motivated by intrinsic factors.

- **Generation Y**

Table 2.3: Work Motivators of Generation Y

Author	Year	Work Motivators
Ringer and Garma	2006	Motivated by extrinsic factors such as pay
Jang	2008	Higher preference for extrinsic factors.
Leahy et. al.	2011	Mixed preferences for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.
Lourdes et. al.	2011	Higher preference for extrinsic motivators such as fixed working hours and job security.

Differences in work motivators among different Generations

Table 2.4: Differences in work motivators among different Generations

Baby Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y
This cohort is on the verge of retirement. Therefore they are more concerned about pension schemes and security benefits than any other generation. The baby boomers lay emphasis on status and recognition.	Gen X consider intrinsic values such as appreciation of work as their priority. This cohort is motivated by intrinsic factors such as sense of accomplishment.	This cohort is new at work. They are motivated by extrinsic factors such as pay and allowances. They are ready to change jobs easily for the monetary benefit.

3. Leadership styles preferred by different generations

• **Baby Boomers**

Table 3.1: Leadership Styles Preferred by Baby Boomers

Author	Year	Leadership Styles
Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal & Brown	2007	Prefer leaders who are influential.
Murphy	2010	They want to be involved in decision making process. They prefer participative style of leadership.
Gursoy,D Maier T & Chi C G	2008	Respect authority and formal chain of command.

• **Generation X**

Table 3.2: Leadership styles preferred by Gen X

Author	Year	Leadership Styles
Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal & Brown	2007	Prefer leaders who are experienced enough to give feedback.
Hammillin,2005	2005	Prefer leaders who can provide instant feedback.

• **Generation Y**

Table 3.3: Leadership styles preferred by Gen Y

Author	Year	Leadership Styles
Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal & Brown	2007	Prefer leaders who care about employees on individual basis.
Blom	2010	Prefer leadership dimensions that involve intellectual stimulation
Aslop	2008	Prefer leaders who are supportive.

Differences in leadership styles among different Generations

Table 3.4: Differences in leadership styles among different Generations

Baby Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y
Baby boomers respect formal chain of command. They prefer leaders who are influential, capable and honest.	Gen X prefers leaders who give them authority and autonomy at work.	This cohort prefer leaders who are ambitious, knowledgeable and confident. They want their leaders to provide instant feedback. They prefer participative style of leadership.

Summary and Conclusion

This research gives us the insight about work values, work motivators and leadership styles preferred by different generations at workplace. It is evident from the research that baby boomers lay more emphasis on pension schemes and job security as compared to other generations. They are very loyal towards the organisation in which they work. They like to work in teams. Baby boomers prefer leaders who allow them to take part in the decision making process. They give respect to formal chain of command. The Gen X are independent and fun loving. They lay more emphasis on work life balance. They are motivated by intrinsic factors such as recognition and status. The Gen X prefers leaders who are optimistic and supportive. The millennials or Gen Y are optimistic, realistic, and inclusive by nature. They give more importance to extrinsic factors such as pay and bonus than any other generation. They prefer leaders who take care of them on individual basis. They also prefer leaders who can give immediate feedback. The millennials are open to rectifying their mistakes. Therefore, we can say that all the generations possess different characteristics.

Implications of the Research

At present there are three generations which are working together ie Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. As discussed above these generations have differences in work values, work motivators and leadership styles. All three generations have unique needs and therefore 'one-size-fits-all' policy will not work in this environment. To avoid becoming a failure, the HR managers need to understand the differences in work values, leadership styles and motivators for each generation.

There are some recommendations for the HR managers to manage multigenerational workforce which are as follows

- The HR managers should communicate the organisation's mission and vision in such a wayso that important values of each generation are highlighted. These issues should be included in the policies of the organisation. This will lead to increased job satisfaction and reduced employee turnover.

- Baby boomers are on the verge of retirement. Therefore pension schemes and security benefits should be planned appropriately. Gen X prefer status and recognition at work. Gen Y like to do work in their own way. The HR managers should consider these unique needs of each generation.This will lead to higher job satisfaction of the employees.

- The HR managers in the organisation should ensure that all the employees are treated equally irrespective of their position and status at workplace. This will help in avoidance of generational conflicts at the workplace.

- Appropriate styles of leadership should be adopted by the organisation for each generation. This will help in increased job satisfaction.

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Annexure 1

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Reviewers Comments

Reviewer's comment 1:
The introduction part is very well written. The authors have lucidly explained three generations and their characteristics.

Reviewer's comment 2:
The tables presented in the paper are making it more presentable as well as easily understandable. And the recommendations for the HR managers to manage multigenerational workforce given at the end of the paper are noteworthy and interesting.

Reviewer's comment 3:
The review of literature portion is well supported with appropriate citations. Overall the paper is very well structured.

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