

A Comparative Analysis of the Values and Attitudes of Generation X and Generation Y in India

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Abstract—The overall purpose of the study was to identify, compare and analyse the attitudes and behavior of Generation X and Generation Y in India. For this study the age cohort of the generation X and generation Y was identified. The people born in between 1965-79 are classified as Generation X while those born in between 1980-96 are classified as Generation Y. After a vast literature review Rokeach Value Survey was selected for data collection purpose. The survey consists two sets of values, i.e. Terminal Values and Instrumental Values with each set containing 18 work values. The questionnaire was shared with 200 people from generation X and Y each. Out of 200, 82 people responded from each generation.

On the basis of the survey, a comparative analysis was done and the traits with the highest and the lowest frequency were identified. Among the terminal values Health, Family Security were the top 3 values for generation X whereas for generation, Health, Family Security and Self Respect (Comfortable Life, Equality and Family Security) were the most voted values. For the instrumental values and the results were Honest, Helpful, Capable among generation X and Ambitious, Honest and Broad minded among generation Y.

Keywords: Generation X, Generation Y, Terminal Values, Instrumental Values.

INTRODUCTION

Generational differences, especially between Gen X and Gen Y have been an important subject of many academic researches for years (Acar, 2014). People born in between 1965-79 are classified as Generation X while those born in between 1980-96 as Generation Y for the purpose of this study. Generation X or “Baby Busters” is more likely to focus on family and quality of life, rather than exerting their efforts in their careers (Patterson, 2007). Known by the names “the Net Generation”, “Millennials”, “Echo Boomers”, “iGeneration”, Generation Y is believed to be confident, optimistic and multi-tasking which brings with

it technical competence, high speed and energy into the workplace (Kim 2008). Do both Generations X and Y have different values and attitudes? This study aims at finding out the differences in values of Gen X and Gen Y if any.

Due to increasing pace of Globalisation, Generation Y got everything they could ask for, ranging from international exposure to setting up of corporate carriers online and economic independence, as it was the period when India’s economy was at its peak, whereas, on the other hand, Generation X had to go through a lot of struggling phases which also shaped it that way. This made them become more self-sufficient & resourceful in nature. In comparison to previous generations, Generation X was exposed more to a higher level of education, which was lacking before and hence, they tend to become more cynical. Migration from rural to urban areas led to emergence of nuclear families, demonstrating change in family structure for Generation Y which gave it a new sense of freedom and identity and made it collectivist in nature.

Existence of political instability in their period led Generation X to grow up under the umbrella blanket of fear and violence altogether. During this phase, they learned to raise their voices, and became more liberal to other’s perspectives. Generation Y, on the other hand, grew up in a more civilized & economically sound society. Both the Generations saw the rise in technical innovations due to drastic growth in the technology sector. Generation X began to adapt to things like Televisions, telephones and tape recorders while Generation Y saw the rise in social networking sites and stood stronger than ever in raising their voices.

Objectives

The main objectives of this research work can be summed up as:

1. To comparatively analyse values and attitudes of Generation X (1965-79) and Generation Y (1980-95) in India.

2. To examine what instrumental and terminal values Generation X and Y have.
3. To study the extent to which each factor vitalizes and incentivizes Generation X and Y (to work).

This research work deals with inspection of various characteristics of *Generation X and Y* which will be helpful to Human Resource Practitioners in formulating strategies for employees belonging to Generation X and Y which amount to more than 40% out of the total population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Managers of the 21st century are dealing with a new problem of managing multi-generational diversity in the organization (Ivancevich, 2000). Gursoy emphasised that although age-diversity can bring new perspectives and add significant value to an organization, it also poses interesting challenges for leadership and effective management (Gursoy et al., 2008).

That's why the researchers today argue that organizations need to pay close attention to their multi-generational workforce, including their corresponding stereotypical behaviors (Salopek, 2000; Smola and Sutton, 2002; Tulgan, 2004). Efforts made by managers to understand where the employees are coming from would help them effectively manage and deal with employee issues, conflict-resolution and leverage that knowledge to bring out the best of their potential.

For the purpose of the study we will put our focus only on two generations i.e Generation X also known by the names, "Baby Busters", "Twenty something", and the "F-you generation" (Roberts & Manolis, 2000) and Generation Y or millennials, the youngest generation in the current workforce that are believed to be socially conscious, yet highly cynical and narcissistic (Twenge et al. 2008). Table 1 shows a comparison of chronologies used to assign people born in a certain year to a generation as defined by the sources listed in column one.

Table 1: Research studies mentioning range of birth for Generation X and Generation Y

Authors, Years	Range of birth years for Generation X	Range of birth years for Generation Y
Strauss & Howe, 1991	1965-1980	1981-2000
Jurkiewicz, 2000	1963-1981	
Lancaster and Stillman, 2002	1965-1980	1981-1999
Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Patterson, 2007; Reynolds, 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002		The birth year is variously stated as beginning between 1979 and 1982 and ending in the late 1990s
Lancaster, 2004	1965-1981	1982-2002
Sheahan P, 2005		1978-1994
Benckendorff et al., 2010, Howe and Strauss, 2000		1978-1994
Barton & Skiba, 2006; Patterson, 2007; Smola & Sutton, 2002	1965-1977	1978-2000
Fernandez, 2009	1965-1977	1978-1990
Howell, Lydia Pleotis; Joad, Jesse P., Callahan, Edward; Servis, Gregg; Bonham, Ann C., 2009	1961-1981	1982-2005
Crampton S.M & Hodge J. W, 2009	1965-1979	1980-1999
Angeline, 2011	1965-1980	1981-2001
Gurau, 2012	1961-1979	1980-1999
Raina, 2013	1965-1979	1980-2000
Bejtkovsky, Jifi, 2016	1965-1976	1977-1995
Khera, S.M. & Malik, S. 2017		1981-1991
Arora, N & Dhole, V, 2019		1980-2000

It is important to acknowledge that there is a great deal of variance among the distinguishing characteristics within any generation stated, and thus it is unjustified to assume that if a person was born in 1985, he/she would have most of the characteristics of the Generation Y and likewise for

Generation X. Something that is universally true doesn't necessarily translate to be true for each individual.

For the purpose of the study we have considered those born between 1965 to 1979 as Gen X and those born between 1980 to 1996 as Gen Y.

According to Hammill (2005), the first thing to consider is the individual and his or her underlying values, lifestyle

characteristics and workplace characteristics, which seem to correspond with each generation, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Research Studies mentioning values of Generation X and Generation Y

Views Towards	GEN X	GEN Y
Core values	IndividualismAmbitious Self Reliant & Pragmatic(Chen & Choi, 2008)	Most independentEthical and socially responsible (Howe & Strauss,2000)
Work Attitude	Calm and composed(Anitha, J 2014)	Self-motivated, efficient, and proactive. (Anitha, J 2014)
Family	Focus on family and quality of life (Gibson, Greenwood, andMurphy ,2009)	Family-oriented, open minded in that they tend to overlook differences among people and treat everyone the same, deeply committed to authenticity (Leo, 2003; Raines, 2002).
Work ethics & values	Hardship, self-sufficient, belief in hierarchy and a socialist economy (Beutell and Witting-Berman 2008)	Fun working environment, non-monetary perks as well as flexible hours are important (Cole et al., 2002).
Nature	Pessimistic (Cole et al., 2002).	Optimistic (Cole et al., 2002).
Education	Highly educated (Chen&Choi, 2008)	Most affluent, educated, and diverse,willing to take up challenges (Howe & Strauss, 2004)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research work is to do a comparative analysis of the values and attitudes that affect *Generation X and Y in India*. In this study, we try to examine the factors of attraction, motivation and retention of *Generation X and Y also known as post boomers and millennials* in an organization.

Type and Source of Data

Primary and secondary data have been used for the study. The primary data has been collected through circulation of questionnaire which was designed as per the *Rokeach Value System* which consisted of two sets of values, i.e. Terminal Values and Instrumental Values with each set containing 18 work values. The questionnaire was taken from an existing study of the Rokeach Value survey and is secondary in nature.

Tools and Techniques

In this study, various tools and techniques have been used ranging from varied statistical tools for analyzing and interpreting the responses of the respondents. Measures of central tendency were used to analyze data from the questionnaire by using the frequency of each value wherein weights were assigned as per the responses using ordinal approach. The study also incorporated tools like percentage for analyzing and representing the data.

In order to present the data in a simple, clear and effective, yet attractive manner, charts and graphs have been used for the purpose of representation of quantitative facts. Microsoft Excel was used for all these calculations.

Population

The population targeted for this study was Generation X and Y. People born in the years from 1965 to 1979 (Crampton S. M & Hodge J. W,2009) were considered Generation X (aged 42 to 56) and the ones born from 1980 to 1995 were considered Generation Y (aged 26 to 41).

For the purpose of this report, unless indicated otherwise, the focus is on Generation X and Y who are at least 26 years old and at most 56 years old, working or not working. This study examines their work preferences, lifestyles and life priorities. Most of the information in this report is based on the findings derived from the survey.

Sample

For the purpose of this study, Non-Probability Sampling has been used. Convenience Sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, wherein both questionnaires were circulated among colleagues, family and friends. The rationale behind choosing this method was its speed, cost- effectiveness and ease of availability of the sample. Also because the population has similar traits.

Furthermore, snowball sampling has also been used which involves a primary data source nominating other potential data sources that will be able to participate in the research studies. This method is also enabled to include hidden populace. Moreover, it was also helpful in collecting data in a cost-effective manner, consuming less time.

Sample Size

The questionnaire was shared with 200 people from generation X and Y each. Out of 200, 82 people responded from each generation. These filled questionnaires have

been used to analyse the attitudes and values of both the generations to draw logical comparisons between them

Analysis

Table 3: Rank Table of Generation X for Terminal Values

Rank of Terminal Values of Generation X			
S. No	Terminal Values	Total	Rank
1	A Comfortable Life (a prosperous life)	1155	3
2	Equality (equal opportunity for all)	851	7
3	An Exciting Life (a stimulating, active life)	670	11
4	Family Security (taking care of loved ones)	1282	2
5	Freedom (independence and free choices)	918	6
6	Health (physical and mental well-being)	1286	1
7	Inner Harmony (freedom from inner conflict)	971	5
8	Mature Love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	645	13
9	National Security (protection from attack)	602	15
10	Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	630	14
11	Salvation (saved, eternal life)	440	16
12	Self-Respect (self-esteem)	980	4
13	A Sense of Accomplishment (a lasting contribution)	704	8
14	Social Recognition (respect and admiration)	658	12
15	True Friendship (close companionship)	684	10
16	Wisdom (a mature understanding life)	702	9
17	A World of Peace (free of war and conflict)	430	17
18	A World of Beauty (of nature and arts)	414	18

On the basis of 82 responses by Gen X, the top 3 Terminal Values were:

1. Health (physical and mental well-being)
2. Family Security (taking care of loved ones)
3. A Comfortable life (a prosperous life)

While the bottom 3 Terminal Values were:

1. A World of Beauty (of nature and arts)
2. A World of Peace (free of war and conflict)
3. Salvation (saved/eternal life)

An average Gen X holds Health (with a total rank score of 1286) in the highest regard while A World of Beauty (with a total rank score of 414) at the lowest rank among all the 18 Terminal Values related to his/her life goals.

1. Gen X's understand the need of having a healthy, long life with complete physical and mental well-being. Despite having professional ambitions and dreams to fulfill, they do not undermine their

health and take various measures from exercising to nutritious diet plans to ensure they remain healthy and hearty.

2. Health, prosperity and security of their loved ones is the chief concern and motive of the hard-working Gen X employees. They toil day and night at work to be capable enough of taking care and protecting their family members and providing for all their needs and requirements.
3. While money can be a major incentive to work hard in life for Gen X, employers must also know that it is just a catalyst for their aspiration of a comfortable and prosperous life, one which has all the necessities and does not require them to face any hardships.

Table 4: Rank Table of Generation Y for Terminal Values

Rank of Terminal Values			
S. No	Terminal Values	Total	Rank
1	A Comfortable Life (a prosperous life)	1005	4
2	Equality (equal opportunity for all)	828	7
3	An Exciting Life (a stimulating, active life)	785	8
4	Family Security (taking care of loved ones)	1117	2
5	Freedom (independence and free choices)	930	5
6	Health (physical and mental well-being)	1237	1
7	Inner Harmony (freedom from inner conflict)	918	6
8	Mature Love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	711	10
9	National Security (protection from attack)	698	11
10	Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	578	15
11	Salvation (saved, eternal life)	485	17
12	Self-Respect (self-esteem)	1090	3
13	A Sense of Accomplishment (a lasting contribution)	674	13
14	Social Recognition (respect and admiration)	601	14
15	True Friendship (close companionship)	692	12
16	Wisdom (a mature understanding life)	736	9
17	A World of Peace (free of war and conflict)	566	16
18	A World of Beauty (of nature and arts)	371	18

Terminal Values:

On the basis of 82 responses by working Millennials, the top 3 Terminal Values were:

1. Health (physical and mental well-being).
2. Family Security (taking care of loved ones).
3. Self-Respect (self-esteem)

While the bottom 3 Terminal Values were:

1. A World of Beauty (of nature and arts)
2. Salvation (saved/eternal life).
3. A World of Peace (free of war and conflict)

An average Millennial holds Health (with a total rank score of 1237) in the highest regard while A World of Beauty (with a total rank score of 371) at the lowest rank among all the 18 Terminal Values related to his/her life goals.

1. When it comes to a millennial's personal life, he/she understands the need of having a healthy, long life with a complete physical and mental well-being.
2. Millennials fiercely look after their own kin. Health, prosperity and security of their loved ones is the chief concern and motive of the hard-working millennials.
3. While money can be a major incentive to work hard in life for a millennial, employers must also know that it is not the only stimulus as millennials hold their self-esteem, self-respect in high regards. A millennial will not participate in or encourage any work or gesture toward him/her or someone else that could possibly tarnish one's self-respect. So employers must make sure that paying the millennial employee well is not enough, respect and honor should also be provided to that employee.

Table 5: Rank Table of Generation X for Instrumental Values

Rank of Instrumental Values			
S. No	Instrumental Values	Total	Rank
1	Ambitious (hard-working and aspiring)	840	6
2	Broad- Minded (open-minded)	862	4
3	Capable (competent and effective)	874	3
4	Clean (neat and tidy)	799	8
5	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)	827	7
6	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)	784	10
7	Helpful (working for welfare of others)	975	2
8	Honest (sincere and truthful)	1088	1
9	Imaginative (daring and creative)	507	18
10	Independent (self-reliant; self-sufficient)	847	5
11	Intellectual (intelligent and reflective)	766	11
12	Logical (consistent; rational)	700	14
13	Loving (affectionate; tender)	763	12
14	Loyal (faithful to friends or to the group)	717	13
15	Obedient (dutiful; respectful)	547	17
16	Polite (courteous and well-mannered)	661	15
17	Responsible (dependable and reliable)	793	9
18	Self- Controlled (restrained; self-disciplined)	632	16

Instrumental Values:

On the basis of 82 responses by Gen X, the top 3 Instrumental Values were:

1. Honest (sincere and truthful)
2. Helpful (working for welfare of others)
3. Capable (competent and effective)

While the bottom 3 Instrumental Values were:

1. Imaginative (daring and creative)
2. Obedient (dutiful and respectful)
3. Self- Controlled (restrained and self-disciplined)

An average Gen X holds Honesty (with a total rank score of 1088) in the highest regard while Imaginative (with a rank score of 507) at the lowest rank among all the 18 Instrumental Values related to his/her work behavior.

1. For Gen X, Honesty is one virtue that they expect in return from the work they do and the people they work with. Honesty can prove to be a make-or-break factor so employers should be brutally honest with their employees (belonging to Gen X) if they expect them to work with sincerity.
2. Gen X has a caring touch to its working style. Inspired by their older generations they come across as selfless and have an attribute to help others and do some work that comes in use for people. They want to leave a mark and do something substantial. The joint family system in the Indian set up has also contributed to this value system. Since, this generation has lived with a joint family which helps each other it is ingrained in their value system to help others.
3. Gen X is most certainly capable and aims to be the most competent workforce in its field of work.

Table 6: Rank Table of Generation Y for Instrumental Values

Rank of Instrumental Values			
S. No	Instrumental Values	Total	Rank
1	Ambitious (hard-working and aspiring)	1142	1
2	Broad- Minded (open-minded)	974	3
3	Capable (competent and effective)	961	4
4	Clean (neat and tidy)	702	14
5	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)	925	5
6	Forgiving (willing to pardon others)	801	8
7	Helpful (working for welfare of others)	908	6
8	Honest (sincere and truthful)	1029	2

9	Imaginative (daring and creative)	684	15
10	Independent (self-reliant; self-sufficient)	889	7
11	Intellectual (intelligent and reflective)	722	11
12	Logical (consistent; rational)	705	13
13	Loving (affectionate; tender)	714	12
14	Loyal (faithful to friends or to the group)	732	10
15	Obedient (dutiful; respectful)	373	18
16	Polite (courteous and well-mannered)	532	16
17	Responsible (dependable and reliable)	741	9
18	Self- Controlled (restrained; self-disciplined)	488	17

Instrumental Values:

On the basis of 82 responses by Working Millennials, the top 3 Instrumental Values were:

1. Ambitious (hard-working and aspiring)
2. Honest (sincere and truthful)
3. Broad-Minded (open-minded)

While the bottom 3 Instrumental Values were:

1. Obedient (dutiful and respectful)
2. Self- Controlled (restrained and self-disciplined)
3. Polite (courteous and well-mannered)

An average Millennial holds Ambition (with a total rank score of 1142) in the highest regard while Obedience (with a rank score of 373) at the lowest rank among all the 18 Instrumental Values related to his/her work behavior.

1. Ambition with respect to career advancement and development to fulfill one's dreams was ranked by the majority of millennials. A zeal to reach a certain milestone or prove oneself is the most important factor and a certain force of hard-work and aspiration can be seen in today's millennial which the Employers can address by giving suitably challenging and satisfactory to a particular individual.
2. For millennials, Honesty is one virtue that they expect in return for having it in themselves towards the work they do and the people they work with.
3. Irrespective of having or not having conservative parents at home, today's millennials respect and regard a prejudice-free society. They realize the importance of being open-minded and accepting new ideas, new changes in the world. Contrary to older generations, they want to develop with the progressive nature of work culture and not just stick to obsolete mechanisms or functioning.

As can be observed, while there is a strong resemblance in the ranking of Terminal values for both Gen X and Y, there is only a slight difference in their rankings when it comes to the Instrumental values. Although it is expected that the top value for both the generations should be different, our study shows that for both the Generations, Health and family security are the two top-most values. The recent Coronavirus pandemic can be considered as the major reason for this, people have seen their near and dear ones leave for heavenly abodes, they have seen the pain and heard about it in the news and this environmental change or phenomenon has deeply impacted both the generations. It also means that organizations must build their compensation packages around health and family security. Humans have paid so much importance to money and comfort that they have forgotten one basic need of oxygen. Industrialization led to air pollution, cutting of trees, production of air conditioners etc. which deteriorated the natural environment and as observed "A World of Beauty" is at the bottom of the value list of both the generations.

FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

While for Generation X the top terminal values are health, family security and comfortable life and that for Generation Y are Health, Family Security and Self Respect. This means that the top 2 terminal values are same for both the generations but the top third terminal value is different for both the generations. Generation X gives more preference to comfortable life than self-respect, this implies that organizations should motivate Generation X by providing benefits that make their lives comfortable like low rate of interest on car loans, home loans or paid vacations, meal coupons like sodexo, transport facility. Generation Y can be motivated by paying attention to their self-respect i.e. appreciating them in public, not scolding them in public, talking to them with respect.

For Generation X, the bottom 3 terminal values are a world of peace, a world of beauty and salvation. For Generation Y, the bottom terminal values are a world of beauty, salvation and a world of peace. Though all the 3 values are same but their order is a little different.

The top 3 instrumental values of Generation X are honest, helpful and capable while for Generation Y the top 3 instrumental values are ambitious, honest and broad minded. This means that Generation X is more helpful than Generation Y and Generation Y is more ambitious so the need for achievement is stronger for Generation Y and need for affiliation is more in Generation X. As Generation X value honesty employers should be honest with them and also help them in performing the tasks this has also

made the concept of reverse mentoring very important. Reverse mentoring means that younger generation helps elder generation learn more about technology for instance when in banking sector computers were introduced it was seen that younger generation was more comfortable while elder generation was very reluctant to change. But we can clearly see the issue is that for Generation X, being helpful is important but for Generation Y being helpful is not important. So team building amongst both the generations should be conducted.

The bottom 3 instrumental values for Generation X are imaginative, obedient and self-controlled while that for Generation Y are Obedient, self-controlled and polite. This means that Generation Y can be rude at times and hence to tackle them organizations should motivate them by offering challenging and interesting tasks that can help them achieve their ambitions. Since for the elder generation imagination is not so important so this generation should not be given job profiles which need imagination. Also, Generation Y does not value obedience so they shall be given creative freedom to perform their job.

CONCLUSION

Amongst the Generation X, top 3 Terminal Values were Health, Family Security and Comfortable Life while the same amongst Generation Y were Health, Family Security, and Self Respect. So insurance policies, medi-claims for self and family can motivate both the generations.

The top 3 instrumental values amongst the Generation X were Honest, Helpful, Capable and that amongst the Generation Y were Ambitious, Honest and Broad minded. Reverse mentoring can be very attractive for the Generation X and team building exercises and conflict resolution programs can also be very motivating for both the generations

These values will come handy for motivating both the generations and all the suggestions given in the above section can help human resource managers to attract, motivate and retain both the generations at work.

Since the data is limited, future course of research can be to expand this study with a bigger sample size. Also hypothesis testing can be applied in order to understand whether the difference in values and attitudes of the two generations are statistically significant.

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