

MANAGING GENERATIONS AT WORK

A SELECT STUDY OF SALES EXECUTIVES OF FMCG SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Generational differences may not explain everything about employee behavior, but they do explain variation in their perception and approaches in day to day activities at work. What motivates one generation may not satisfy another generation .Failing to address for such differences can lead to sustainability issues. Managers and human resources professionals will need to develop adopt new work practices that take into account the generational differences between Gen X and Gen Y and motivate them. The present study tries to study the perception of Gen X and Gen Y towards work practices. The study was conducted among 120 sales executives of a reputed FMCG company. The study reveals that these both groups differ in their perception towards Individual Development plan,Perfromance Mangement,Technology Training, Work Commitment, Team Work and working Hours but do not differ in perceptions regarding Quarterly training programme, Merit based performance appraisal, Work life balance,Salary,Non monetary benefits, Supervisory control and Use of Technology.

Keywords: *GenX , Gen Y, Work practices*

I. INTRODUCTION

Generational diversity in the workplace refers to the extent to which the workforce population of an organization represents, or is influenced by, people of different age groups available in the general workforce. Each generation shares similar experiences growing up and views the world through their own generational experiences, influences and social values. Accordingly, each group has a different approach around work-life balance, employer loyalty, authority, and other important issues related to the organization, all of which have a significant impact in the workplace.

To be successful in maximizing the variety of needs, experiences, values, and approaches based on generation, and develop effective strategies as organizations continue to grow, the first step is to understand the differences among the generations.

Lot of studies has been done in the areas of job satisfaction, work commitment, employee engagement. However it necessitates to study perceptual differences among Gen X and Gen Y managing both generation workforces require different approaches.To successfully integrate these diverse generations into the workplace, companies

International Conference on Emerging Trends in Engineering, Science and Management

Sphoorthy Engineering College, Hyderabad, India

(ESM-17)

17th and 18th March 2017 , www.conferenceworld.in

ISBN: 978-93-86171-32-0

will need to embrace radical changes in recruitment, benefits, and creating a corporate culture that actively demonstrates respect, bring about changes in the way they engage its multigenerational work force.

Researchers have divided today's workforce into four generations:

Generation	Born between	Age
Matures	1920–40	62–82
Boomers	1940–60	42–62
Generation X	1960–80	22–42
Generation Y	1980–2000	Less than 22

Source: Compiled

Generation gaps in perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors are nothing new, but they can be difficult to reconcile in the workplace. Lack of attention to generational differences will make any company less attractive to young recruits, resulting in higher recruiting costs and greater difficulty in finding the right employees. The present study focuses on perception of Gen X and Y towards work practices and what importantly engages them at work.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on perception of Gen X and Y towards work practices and what importantly engages them at work. The significance of such study has been research with various dimension and sectors. However there is less research in studying the perception of Sales executives belonging to Gen X and Gen Y. This study has been undertaken for FMCG sector.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Many studies have been carried out to study diverse generation's preferences of workplace requirements. *Wey Smola, K. and Sutton, C. D. (2002)* presented the issue of generational differences and the causes of those differences among 350 individuals across the country and results were compared to a similar study conducted in 1974. Results suggest that generational work values do differ. *Lyons, S. and Kuron, L. (2014)* critically evaluated the research evidence concerning generational differences in a variety of work-related variables, including personality, work values, work attitudes, leadership, teamwork, work-life balance and career patterns, assess its strengths and limitations. They suggest for a more clear and theoretical research agenda that views generation as a social force in organizations rather than as merely a demographic variable. *Camille Kapoor, Nicole Solomon (2011)* suggest that employers must identify the separate characteristics of each generation present in their workplace. Steps that managers can take include mentor programs, generational diversity training, and enhanced communication methods designed to cater to each generation's preferences. *Nancy (2013)* summarizes Millennials, were recently shown to have different values than the other two prevalent generations. When aggregated, these generational differences have noticeable practical impact. Gen X are not happy with managers who do not encourage and appreciate ideas from

employees, and are bossy (O'Bannon, 2001). While Gen Y complains that there is a lack of respect towards them in the workplace Deal (2007) examined the attitudes of employees of different cohorts relative to authority finding that 13% of members of older generation included authority among their top 10 priorities at work, compared to 5% of boomers, 6% of Generation X and 6% of Generation Y.

IV. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

The Generation X (1960-1980) and Generation Y (1980-2000) are two of these generations working together at workplaces. These generations here have different perceptions towards workplace practices. The appropriate measures to satisfy, motivate and manage both the generations are required especially in the sales field where motivation plays a key role in work performance. So the present study aims to study the perceptual differences of generation X and Generation Y regarding work practices and factors that contribute in engaging them at work of these two generations.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To understand the perception of Generation X and Generation Y towards workplace practices
- To analyze the differences in perception of Gen X and Gen Y towards workplace practices.
- To suggest appropriate intervention practices that meets the expectations of Generation X and Generation Y at workplace.

5.1 Hypothesis of the Study:

H0: There is no difference in the perception of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards workplace practices.

H1: There is difference in perception of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards workplace practices

5.2 Research Methodology:

Data is collected from 120 employees working for FMCG sector belonging to Generation X and Generation Y of the district Hyderabad in the state of Telangana. The type of sampling to be used here is Random stratified sampling. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure the perception of Gen X and Gen Y towards work practices which was measured using a Likert scale. Key work practices that were measured were training and development, performance appraisal, work life balance, compensation, supervision, technology training, teamwork, working hours using Means, Standard deviations and Independent t test was used to analyze the data using SPSS. The questions were measured on Likert scale from 1 to 5 i.e. the received responses which were coded in following: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5.

5.3 Limitations:

Role of mediating variables such as gender, work experience in the company etc are not taken into account. Larger number of respondents would have made results more significant. The study is limited to Sales executives of the select FMCG sector.

5.4 Data Analysis:

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ISBN: 978-93-86171-32-0

Descriptive analysis Data has been collected based on a structured questionnaire, addressed to 120 employees of marketing and sales department of FMCG sectors for various levels. The no of responses are 120 on the basis of which data was analyzed and interviewed.

AGE GROUP	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
25-35 years	64	53.33
35 years and above	56	46.67
Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	102	85.00
Female	18	15
Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Up to 8 years	64	53.33
Above 8 years	56	46.67
Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Full Time	120	100.00
Part Time	0	0.00
Job Position	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Intermediate	88	73.33
Manager	32	26.67
Working field	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Marketing	68	56.67
Sales	52	43.33

Table No. 1: Summary of Survey Respondents (Source: Primary Data)

The summary of survey is presented in Table 1. From the 120 samples received 53.3% of the participants are age 25 – 35 years (Generation Y) and the remaining 46% are of age 35 years and above (Generation X). In terms of Gender 85% are male and 15% are female. Going with Experience of participants 53% have experience up to 8 years and 46% have above 8 years. All of our participants are Full Time either in Marketing Sector or Sales Sector holding either Manager or Intermediate job positions.

Table no :2 the reveals SPSS output of Independent t test which has been used for comparing means and variation between the two groups Generation X and Generation Y regarding work place practices in the select FMCG sector.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Quarterly Training programme	Equal variances assumed	.007	.934	.907	118	.366	.11111

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	Equal variances not assumed			.912	102.653	.364	.11111
Individual Development Plan	Equal variances assumed	.581	.447	-1.168	118	.245	-.16667
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.167	100.630	.246	-.16667
Merit based Performance Appraisal	Equal variances assumed	1.599	.208	1.425	118	.157	.19444
	Equal variances not assumed			1.411	97.511	.161	.19444
Performance management	Equal variances assumed	.261	.610	-.587	118	.558	-.09722
	Equal variances not assumed			-.585	99.632	.560	-.09722
Work Life Balance	Equal variances assumed	.377	.541	1.225	118	.223	.18056
	Equal variances not assumed			1.265	111.090	.209	.18056
Salary	Equal variances assumed	.422	.517	.671	118	.503	.11111
	Equal variances not assumed			.679	104.618	.499	.11111
Non Monetary Benefits	Equal variances assumed	2.853	.094	.461	118	.645	.06944
	Equal variances not assumed			.446	88.697	.657	.06944
Supervisory control	Equal variances assumed	.011	.918	.803	118	.424	.11111
	Equal variances not assumed			.799	99.239	.426	.11111
Use of Technology	Equal variances assumed	.013	.910	.101	118	.920	.01389
	Equal variances not assumed			.101	101.746	.920	.01389

Technology Training	Equal variances assumed	.107	.744	-1.624	118	.107	-.20833
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.654	106.873	.101	-.20833
Work Commitment	Equal variances assumed	4.556	.035	-.174	118	.862	-.02778
	Equal variances not assumed			-.180	111.687	.858	-.02778
Team Work	Equal variances assumed	.004	.952	-.825	118	.411	-.11111
	Equal variances not assumed			-.830	102.929	.408	-.11111
Working hrs	Equal variances assumed	.009	.923	-.073	118	.942	-.01389
	Equal variances not assumed			-.072	98.086	.943	-.01389

Table no.3: Independent t test Compiled using SPSS

VI. FINDINGS

The *p value* (.934) >.001 of Levene's test for Quarterly training programme, *p value* (.447) >.001 of Levene's test for Individual developmental plan, *p value* (.447) >.001 for Individual developmental plan, *p value* (0.208) >.001 for Merit based performance appraisal, *p value* (0.610) >.001 for Performance management, *p value* (0.541) >.001 for Work life balance, *p value* (0.517) >.001 for Salary, *p value* (0.094) >.001 for Non Monetary Benefits, *p value* (0.918) >.001 for Supervisory Control, *p value* (0.910) >.001 for Use Of Technology, *p value* (0.744) >.001 for Technology Training, *p value* (0.035) >.001 for Work Commitment, *p value* (0.952) >.001 for Team Work, *p value* (0.952) >.001 for Working Hours, so we accept the null of Levene's test and conclude that is no variance in perception of Gen Y and gen X regarding all the work practices under study . This tells us that we should look at the "Equal variances assumed" row for the t-test (and corresponding confidence interval) results.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Quarterly training programme is .907 greater than assumed significance level .05 so we accept the null hypothesis "There is no differences in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Quarterly training programme." and both the groups perceive it in a similar way.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Individual Development plan is -0.168 which is less than assumed significance level .05 so we reject the null hypothesis and state that There is a differences in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Individual developmental plan." and the perceptions of both the groups differ.

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The corresponding p value for t-test for Merit based performance appraisal is 1.425 which is more than assumed significance level .05 so we accept the null hypothesis and state that "There is no differences in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Merit based performance appraisal." and the perceptions of both the groups do not differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test is for Performance Management is -0.587 which is less than assumed significance level .05 so we reject the null hypothesis and state that "There is a difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Performance management." and the perceptions of both the groups differ.

The corresponding p value for Work life balance t-test is 1.225 which is more than assumed significance level .05 so we accept the null hypothesis and state that "There is no difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Work life balance." and the perceptions of both the groups do not differ.

The corresponding p value for Salary for t-test is .671 which is more than assumed significance level .05 so we accept the null hypothesis and state that "There is no difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Salary." and the perceptions of both the groups do not differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Non Monetary Benefits is 0.461 which is more than assumed significance level .05 so we accept the null hypothesis and state that "There is no difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Non Monetary Benefits." and the perceptions of both the groups do not differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Supervisory Control is 0.803 which is more than assumed significance level .05 so we accept the null hypothesis and state that "There is no difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Supervisory Control." and the perceptions of both the groups do not differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Use of Technology is 0.101 which is less than assumed significance level .05 so we reject the null hypothesis and state that "There is a difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Use of Technology." and the perceptions of both the groups differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Technology Training is -1.624 which less than assumed significance level .05 is so we reject the null hypothesis and state that "There is a difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Technology Training." and the perceptions of both the groups differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Work Commitment is -0.174 which is less than assumed significance level .05 so we reject the null hypothesis and state that "There is a difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Work Commitment." and the perceptions of both the groups differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Team Work is -0.825 which is less than assumed significance level .05 so we reject the null hypothesis and state that "There is a difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards Team work." and the perceptions of both the groups differ.

The corresponding p value for t-test for Working Hours is -0.073 which is less than assumed significance level .05 so we reject the null hypothesis and state that "There is a difference in the means of Generation X and Generation Y opinion towards working hours." and the perceptions of both the groups differ.

VII. CONCLUSION

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The present study which tries to study perceptual differences of Generation X and Generation Y towards work practices at work place. The findings revealed that these both groups differ in their perception towards Individual Development plan, Performance Management ,Technology Training ,Work Commitment ,Team Work and working Hours but do not differ in perceptions regarding Quarterly training programme, Merit based performance appraisal, Work life balance, Salary, on monetary benefits, Supervisory control and Use of Technology. In order to use the work force productively the HR managers must focus on Individual Development plan, Performance Management(managing their potential), Technology Training(to upgrade their work related skills regularly), Work Commitment(need better work provisions to commit) , Team Work(better facilitation of team management) and Working Hours(Flexibility) which both the Generations under study primarily differed. There needs to be sector specific research to be carried out in order to effectively manage these both generations as this study is limited to a select FMCG sector only.

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