



**MULTIGENERATIONAL CONFLICTS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
AND JOB ENRICHMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

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Abstract

Multigenerational is described as having a diverse range of ages that have different ideas, perspectives, experiences, competence, and expectations. At the present, the more the multigenerational workforce increases, the more conflicts occur in the workplace as each generation comes with contrast. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of multigenerational conflict on employee engagement and job enrichment. The findings indicated that there were workplace values and behavior inequalities among employees by year of birth. Employee engagement was said to be negatively impacted by a multigenerational conflict. The amount of job enrichment among employees at their place of employment increase with less generational conflicts at work. Job enrichment was significantly directly and positively impacted by employee engagement.

Keywords: multigenerational conflicts, employees engagement, job enrichment

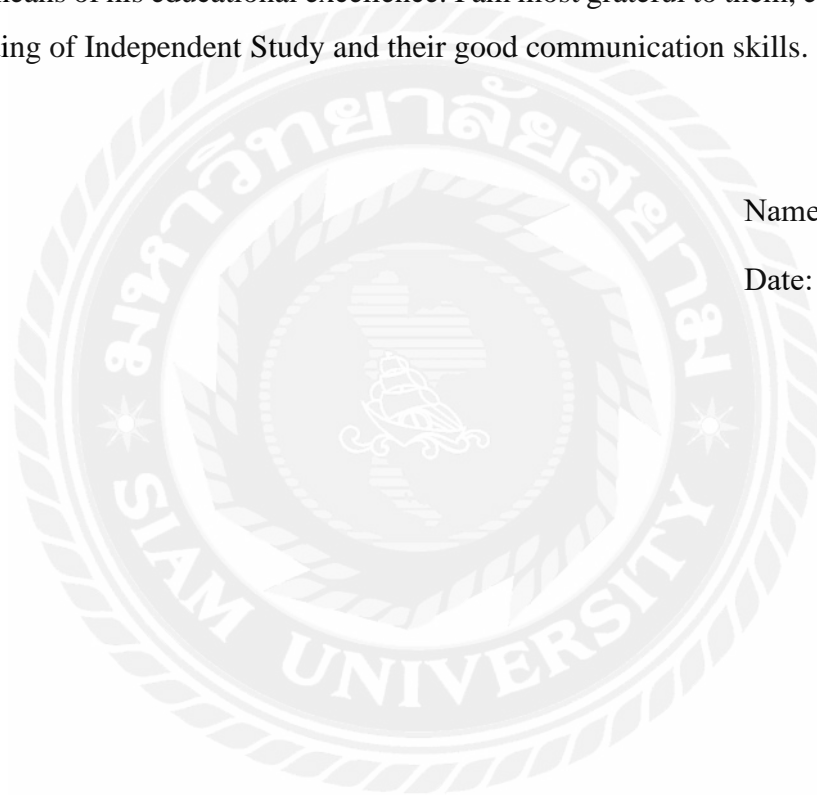


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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Employees in this day and age are showing a great deal of variety and are very different from others in values and behaviors (Mahmoud et al., 2020). In the present scenarios, employees those born after 1997 (Generation Z) in the workplace and how they perceive, certain things are quite different from traditionalists (before 1946), baby boomers (1946-1964), generation X (1965-1979) and generation Y (1980-1997). The employees of today's generation Z possess attitudes, values, and traits that are not uniform to other generations. As time progresses, a number of workers over 55 years are thinking of staying in the workplace in any form (Pophal, 2018).

This has developed a circumstance of five different generations working at the same time in the workplace (Schroth, 2019). An apparent change is in view in the study of Fry (2018), a generational workforce of individuals born post-1997 accounted for 11 percent of the workforce for the first time in 2020. A still vast majority of growing different generations working at the same time in 2020 such as generation Y (35%), generation X (33%), Boomers (18%), and Traditionalists (3%) compared to Boomers were 42 percent followed by Generation X 28 percent, Traditionalist accounted for 24 percent and lastly Generation Y only 6 percent in 2000 (Okros 2020).

The understanding multigenerational workforce in the workplace is decisive to recognize their engagement, issues, and expectation from the work they do. Each generation comes up with contrasting interests leading to a heterogeneous workplace (Lopez, 2020). A multigenerational workforce offers advantages but potential difficulties also in terms of managing differences (Nielsen, 2019). A workplace needs to be reminded in dealing with generational gaps in employees as 58 percent of 500 or more employees' size companies in the US reported conflicts of differences in ethics, opinions, and merits between multigenerational staff (Julie, 2019).

Conflicts happen in every workplace and not able to be ignored but strategically can be managed. Multigenerational conflicts are directly associated with individual behavior, work-life balance, and ability to influence others in the workplace. The presence of different generations

available at one place creates unsuitable relationships between their superiors. The productivity among multigenerational employees is often disrupted (Agusioma, 2018). The employees from generation Z often change their jobs. Their service time in the workplace is one-third of the other generations. Multigenerational conflicts arise in employees due to personal habits and career developments. Generational conflicts could raise incompatibility among employees. Multigenerational gaps affect work rate, soft skills, and workplace harmonization. The issues from generational differences also inferred that different work attitudes as a consequence of unconnected work values influence the outcomes in the workplace (Yinghui et al., 2020)

1.2 Research problems

Notable impacts created by multigenerational conflicts are employees' commitment towards their work is short-lived. Employees have the lowest working time of about 18 months in the Asia Pacific Region caused of conflicts among different generations (Giglio, 2019). Conflicts in the workplace bring lower job satisfaction. The issues among employees initiate higher chances of the workforce leaving. Lower the job satisfaction in the workplace, the higher the employee turnover. Conflicts as a result of different mindsets and perceiving things differently damage the organization's execution and implementation. Higher work conflicts occurred can disturb the company's identity. Moreover, higher employee differences hurt productivity and more likely the hiring and training costs (Yuniasanti et al., 2019).

In 2019, a survey conducted in Indonesia mentioned that 65.8 percent of the workforce decided to quit their job after 12 months of working considering the huge growth in the multigenerational population. A pharmaceutical company in Sri Lanka conducted a survey and suggested that annual turnover was reduced by 20 percent in 2020 and this is accompanied by the dearth of good behavior and low energy in the workplace. A survey reported that multigenerational conflicts arise as a result of different viewpoints among staff causing a drop in employees association; experienced a huge loss in banking industry and 44 percent of the respondents mentioned that differences occur in viewpoints and ideas are the key reasons for the organizational conflicts (Ahsani et al., 2020).

Multigenerational conflicts are higher and have a negative impact on employees' retention. Work-life balance among employees creates a negative significant relationship with different age groups individuals working together. There is a negative relationship between the generational gap workforce and work-family conflicts. Job satisfaction impacts negatively the influence of generational conflicts (Alam & Asim, 2019). Although there are numerous amounts of studies that investigate the impacts of multigenerational conflict on work-life balances, job satisfaction, employees retentions, and employees turnover, there have been a finite amount of studies carried out on multigenerational conflicts impacts on employees engagement in the workplace and job enrichment among generational gap workforce. These two variables have not been assessed collectively with regard to multigenerational conflicts.

1.3 The objectives of the study

This study aims to assess the impacts of multigenerational conflict on employee engagement and job enrichment. In consequence, the objectives of this study are to assess the impact of:

- a) Multigenerational conflicts on employee engagement,
- b) Multigenerational conflicts on job enrichment, and
- c) Employees engagement in Job enrichment
- d) Employees' engagement as moderators between multigenerational conflicts and job enrichment.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

As the generational workforce increases, workplace conflicts are most likely to increase as well. The growth of multigenerational issues is a result of the difference in the attitudes, behaviors, and working styles of individuals. With an increase in conflicts in the workplace, the behaviors of employees as seen in the change in job instantly, short-lived job experience as disrupts the organizations' growth, efficiency, and job satisfaction. The generation gap conflicts increase the employees' turnover costs. This study centers on generational conflicts and how they can be resolved through the assessment of employees' engagement and job enrichment in the workplace. This study reviewed 45 published and cited 30 papers in the reference to design framework and provide recommendations in this regard. The documentary research method is adopted in this study.

1.5 Research Significance

This study highlights the presence of a multigenerational workforce in the workplace and how it impacts employees' engagement. It is further going to be assessed the impact of generational conflicts on job enrichment. The relationship between employees' engagement and job enrichment will also be addressed and analyzed in this study. The moderating effect of employees' engagement on multigenerational conflicts and job enrichments will be assessed. The result of this will present how the workplace should manage multigenerational conflicts in the workplace. Moreover, the significance of this study is to provide recommendations on how to improve engagement among employees and how to keep them motivated for their jobs to increase job enrichment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Multigenerational conflicts

A generation mostly shares the same values, ideas, and viewpoints and can be changed along the way when the new generation joins. This explains that every generation have different perspectives to the world despite which generation you come and would create conflicts (Marcie, 2019). This was supported in the study of Okros (2020). It is concluded that Generation X and Generation Y perform the majority of tasks in the workplace. Numerous studies have stated that multicultural workforce produces unique challenges in the workplace and HR managers need to think more prudently in regard to the way the employees interpret or look management methods. The conflicts are highly driven in the workplace include: a belief system, sense of authority, rules, and regulation. Traditionalists are more likely to be seen as disciplined, own sense of right or wrong, citing historical experiences to plan for the future, and a nature of disliking to every incident (Trujillo, 2020).

Baby Boomers give importance supremely to personal development in the workplace, to learn new skills, and to face challenges for their own personal benefits. It is also stated that they prefer fame and rewards. It is believed by Baby Boomers that a sense of hierarchy system is the finest for any workplace, which makes it difficult for them to adapt in flexible conditioned environment (Klopotan et al., 2020). Generation X responds very well to the feedbacks, are called

to be highly committed for their workplace, believe in workplace that offers skills development opportunities, known to maintain work-life balance, perceived as flexible and to work independently (Akogan et al., 2020). Generation Y is divergent, seemed motivated to grow in life, other than directionless. This group of generation is technologically sound and depends largely on social networks. Contrasting to other generations, Generation Z are not an ideal listeners, largely depend on internet for information, lack of interpersonal skills. It is argued that Generation Z is educationally equipped (Kirchmayer & Fratricova, 2020).

2.2 Employees engagement

Employees' engagement is a subject matter in regard to task performance, interrelationship, and positive feelings in the workplace (Skleton et al., 2019). According to Liu et al., (2018) proposed that expectation to perform the demand of work in an organization, attitude towards other co-working staff, participations in training are cited as employees engagement criteria in the workplace. Employees' engagement hugely depends upon financial benefits and general working setup. In enlarging employees' engagement, support from fellow workers and superiors play a key role. In addition, the longer the conflicts in the workplace, the lesser the employees' occupancy (Zeffane & Melhem, 2017). The role of employees' engagement has been impacted in the workplace as conflicts uniquely affect the employees' commitments and intention to sustain in the workplace. The multigenerational conflicts can direct employees to stay or leave the job. It is firmly established there is a negative relationship between employees' engagement and turnover intention (Hisel, 2020). The employees' engagement has a positive correlation with job satisfaction in the workplace (Scanlan & Still, 2019). A similar result showed that employees from private and public sectors have a negative correlation in response to workplace conflicts (Strittmatter, et, al., 2020).

2.3 Job enrichment

Job enrichment points out the improvement of employees in the workplace across different positions. Some researchers advocated conflicts in an organization hurt monetary growth, career development, and personal development. In other words, generational differences create a negative impact on job enrichment (Alam & Asim, 2019; Wang & Wanberg, 2017). A multigenerational conflict affects the commitment level of employees to achieve advancement in their careers

(Estifanos, 2019). Moreover, employee engagement has a positive relationship with job enrichment proposed by Zito et al., (2018). A study was found about managers needing to be conscious of their employees' engagement to increase job enrichment which in turn will have a negative influence on employee retention. Employees' engagement moderates a negative relationship between multigenerational conflicts and job enrichment (Dori & David, 2020).

3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

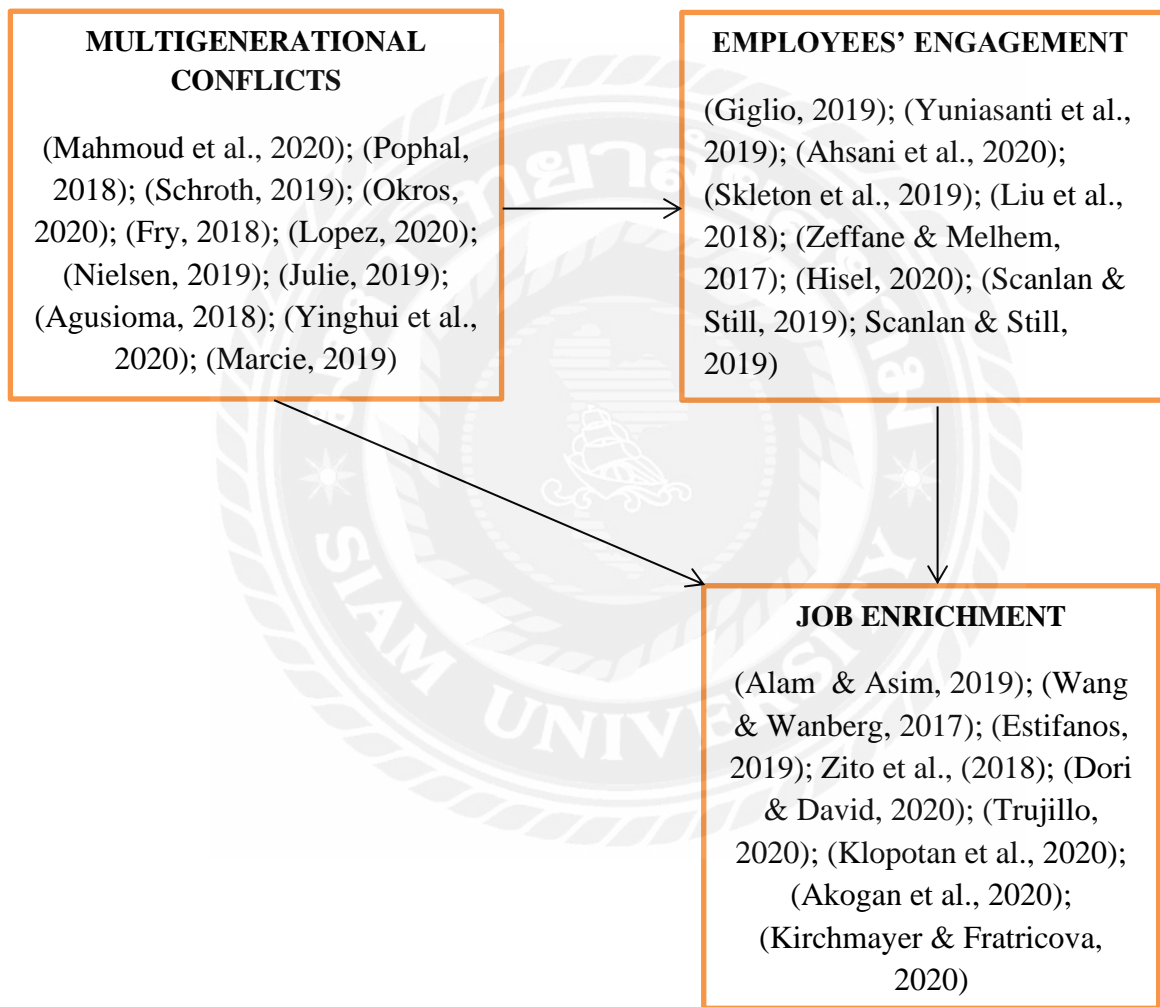


Figure 1: An adopted framework for this research

3.1 A rationale for the outcomes

The following were the study's findings: Multigenerational conflicts and the worker values of various generations demonstrate a weakly unfavorable significant association. b) There are

workplace values and behavior inequalities among employees by year of birth. c) Employee engagement is said to be negatively impacted by a multigenerational conflict. d) Multigenerational conflicts do not significantly affect job enrichment. The amount of job enrichment among employees at their place of employment increases with less generational conflicts at work. e) Job enrichment is significantly directly and positively impacted by employees' engagement. f) There is no connection between multigenerational conflicts and job enrichment when employees engage as a moderator.

4. RECOMMENDATION

To control the conflicts among different generations, job positions and pay scale structures should be re-designed based on the work values admiration in employees. The restructuring should be done intrinsically and extrinsically. The work value admiration will guide the workplace in a positive and conducive working environment. In view of, managing differences in multigenerational workplaces, managers in the workplace should construct indisputable policies in the workplace, with clear objectives, expectations, and benefits attached to them. With this clear occupational setting, managers would be in a position to neutralize the rigidity and stress in the work values assigned to different generations in the workplace. For example, Generation Z prefers to work in their own space, and organizations should take this as an opportunity to map out flexible employee-related policies to hold onto the current employees from different generations. Moreover, by executing this strategy, managers can take maximum participation from different employees altogether in a policy designed to achieve the overall aim.

It cannot be denied that a gap in generational differences in the workplace possibly creates negative organizational results such, as insignificant communication flow, contradictory attitudes, and behavior with other staff, low morale in the workplace, and reduced productivity. Managers, in this regard, should be able to know each employee's suitability at the work and how they interact with others, and quality would be of great interest to the workplace. A responsible manager can avoid conflicts in the workplace by knowing each individual's strengths and weaknesses and what is best for the organizational place. Managers should ensure that new generations of staff and old generations mutually work together. Thus, in return, each party should gain expertise and skills

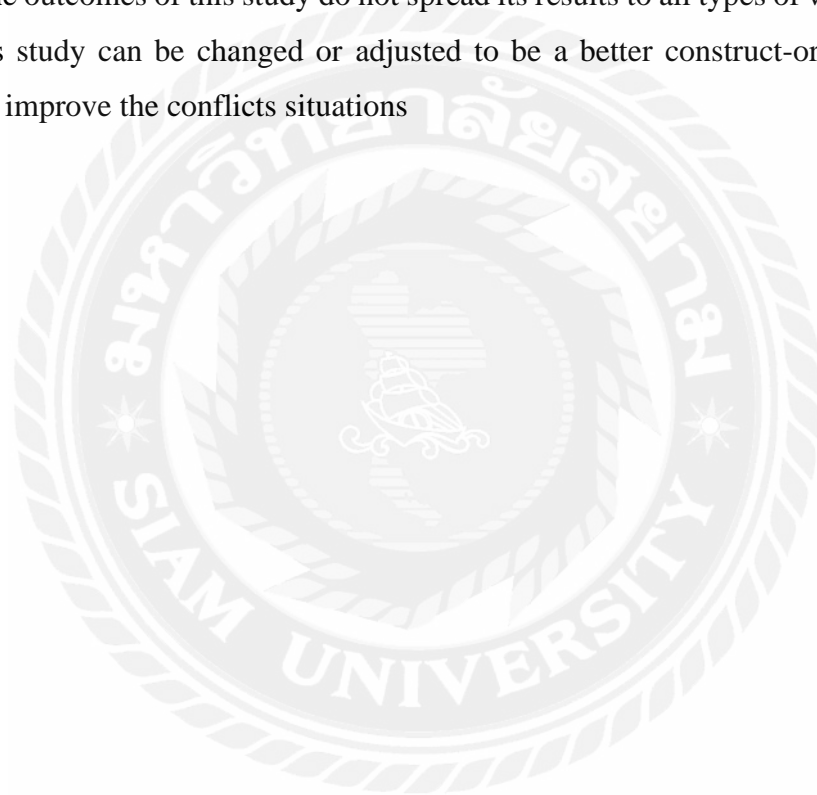
from the other. In the current working style in the workplace, keeping an open mindset would be really important for everyone in a work setting. Managers should enforce a working pattern or culture that should be adaptive. Traditionalists and Baby Boomers cannot be used for a task that requires tackling a diversified market.

In the workplace, to mitigate the multigenerational conflicts that impact employees' engagement. The recommendation that should be applicable or relevant to increase employees' engagement is to design a straightforward career development program and career trajectory for every individual working together in the workplace. Apart from generational conflicts, the remuneration factor is very important for employees to work longer in an organization. To make higher employee engagement in the workplace, there should be a focus on the professional advancement of staff, employment objectives, and pay rise. To diminish the conflicts at work, employees should be given training and education to main a work-life balance. A continuous assessment needs to be done in organizations to measure creativity, peer interaction between different generations, and loyalty to the organization. Employees' engagement should be measured in multigenerational conflicts through loyalty and commitment.

In an organization, with the presence of multigenerational conflicts, job enrichment gets affected as employees are less motivated to perform the extra task. It is evident that conflicts from different age groups decrease skills variety among employees and add no meaning to jobs. In a situation, an employee who enjoys autonomy in the workplace still shows reluctance in the work. An organization should have to analyze what better job design needs to be applied in there are multigenerational conflicts that impact job enrichment. There is a need to have a better superior-subordinate relationship in the workplace to enjoy completely the after-working hours. Additionally, the higher job enrichment persists, the higher the work ethic to be followed. Traditionalists and Boomers need to be clearly stated to not cross the authority and to have more interaction with authority respectively. Generation X to achieve higher job enrichment needs to be promoted timely to avoid conflicts. Generation Y should be given respect for their logic in interaction. Generation Z needs to be respected by their supervisors and managers for their smart work.

5. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study used a documentary approach to find the multigenerational conflicts those impact employees' engagement and job enrichment in the workplace. This includes two constructs to be viewed for the cause of multigenerational conflicts. Thus, it explains that this research constraint is to discuss abstractions and to be generic in nature. For further study, there are other constructs that need to be investigated to justify multigenerational conflict impacts in an organization. The outcomes of this study do not spread its results to all types of workplaces. It can be said that this study can be changed or adjusted to be a better construct-oriented model for organizations to improve the conflicts situations



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