



**A STUDY OF MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT REGARDING  
WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SATISFACTION**

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## ABSTRACT

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The working world of today is distinguished by the presence of personnel from diverse generations. As a result of historical and social events, various generations have distinct attitudes, beliefs, and expectations that influence both their employment and the work environment. According to previous studies, managing intergenerational workforce is more challenging. Therefore, companies need to identify the challenges which are caused by these multigenerational workforces.

Even though research on generational differences is rising, the subject of whether there are generational variations in work values and, if so, what those differences are, is heavily disputed in both academic and popular publications. Due to the low number of cases investigated in prior research on managing a multigenerational workforce, these topics have been the subject of very few studies to date. Nonetheless, further research is required to explore the results and repercussions comprehensively.

This paper addresses the subject of how businesses solve the associated difficulties. It also examines the significance of a positive work-life balance and whether elements such as leadership styles might have a positive effect on the overall job satisfaction of employees. As past research shows, understanding generational differences in today's workforce, from Traditionalists to Generation Z, can help management to also ensure lower attrition and more retention. Leaders often are unaware of the fact that a supervisor's understanding of generational expectations affects the job satisfaction of their subordinates. Consequently, it is necessary to not only find out differences among the generations in terms of motivational drivers and job satisfaction but also to analyze and understand the variance of each generation's characteristics.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the study

Nowadays, companies are more likely to face difficulties, such as an age-diverse work environment, because of the “current climate of political, social, economic, and health-related upheaval” (Mulvie, 2021). Therefore, age diversity and generational differences in the contemporary workforce is a novel phenomenon that businesses encounter for the first time (Singh & Verma & Chaurasia, 2021).

A generation or generational cohort is a sociological concept defined as a group of members who shares comparable lifestyles and ideals formed by the same historical events or circumstances within 15-20 years (Smeak, 2020). The groups are classified as the Silent Generation (1928–1945), also known as the Traditionalists, Baby Boom generation (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980), Millennial Generation (1981–1996) and Generation Z (1997–2012) (Chun & Evans, 2021). According to Human Resources Development, four major periods of historical development divide those groups from each other. In particular, the era of World War II, the period following the war until the early 1970s, the decade from the early 1970s to the early 2000s, and the present period, from 2000 onwards. Based on these age differences, workforce participation has an impact on the racial/ethnic and sexual variety resulting in a transformation of social conventions, legal safeguards, and economic situations (Shultz & Adams, 2019).

By 2023, the workforce will comprise an estimated 163.5 million individuals, with traditionalists accounting for 8%, baby boomers for 22%, Generation X for 20%, and Generation Y for 50% (Jones LM, 2017).

Furthermore, alone in the USA, 20% of employees over the age of 65 are remaining to stay in labor even after reaching their age of retirement due to economic difficulties. Still, demographic changes are occurring around the world as well (Mulvie, 2021). Also, employees have started focusing on what matters since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the necessity of balancing family and work has been reevaluated by employees everywhere. However, individuals who were once content with having a job, are now questioning their personal objectives. Alone in the United States, employees are resigning in numbers not seen in the last two decades (Warren, 2022). According to new research it resulted in extreme fluctuations in the economy. In April 2020, the unemployment rate more than doubled, hitting 14.7% (Gittleman, 2022).

## 1.2 Problems of the study

As the characterization of each group differs from generation to generation, managers experience a lot of difficulties when leading an intergenerational team due to different individual behavior and work expectations of their team members (Neville & Brochu, 2019).

Due to the differences of an age-diverse workforce, companies are more likely to face challenges not only in terms of legal requirements but also in terms of learning and development. However, providing a strategy that meets all the interests of a multigenerational work environment needs planning, execution, and resourcing. Promoting a life-long learning has become a requirement rather than a voluntary activity for many organizations (Mulvie, 2021). Even though organizations face such generational challenges, their executives manage all employees identically, regardless of cohort categorization, as opposed to concentrating on the distinctive qualities and attributes of generational personnel and responding to their specific demands (Jonck, van der Walt & Sobyayeni, 2017).

Companies without an organizational strategy for facing the differences of an age-diverse workforce are also more likely to deal with issues, not only in terms of recruiting but also retention of their employees. This again leads to the importance of establishing a successful strategy that meets the needs of the individual generational group members in consideration of the fact that, due to a dynamic environment, it is exceedingly unlikely that a single management style can yield satisfactory results (Ashford & Brown, 2017).

Another huge challenge for organizations is “The Great Resignation” or “The Big Quit”. These terms first gained traction in January 2021. Millions of employees, mainly in the accommodation and food service industry, seized the upheaval produced by the coronavirus pandemic as an opportunity to reevaluate their careers and lives. The movement of people quitting their jobs in protest of stagnant salaries and insufficient workplace protections caused by the epidemic has evolved into something resembling a movement (Herman, A., 2022). According to a recent global study of 5,500 employees and small-business owners found that Generation Z and Millennials, who have worked the least amount of time of any generation, are primarily responsible for the mass exodus. Adobe's analysis reveals that more than half of Gen Z respondents intend to seek new employment within the next 12 months. The generation also reported the lowest satisfaction levels with their occupations (59%) and work-life balance (56%). 62% reported feeling the most pressure to work during office hours, even though they conduct their best work outside of conventional office hours. More than 9 million unfilled vacancies in the United States, making it extremely difficult for businesses to hire employees (Smart, T., 2021).

Considering all the external factors like the business environment, the technology available etc. typical companies need to focus more on their human capital and their well-being. A highly motivated workforce performs better than their less motivated counterparts, which is precisely the reason why managers today are expected to know their employee's needs and motives. If managers are not aware of them, they will not be able to gauge and evaluate the individual's drivers and anchors and hence will not be able to motivate them (Bhatt, Chitranshi & Mehta, 2022).

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

This paper provides an overview of the current situation regarding generational differences in workforces. The change of the employed generations is influenced by the retirement of the older population and younger ones entering working life. This study set out to gain a further understanding of the demanding requirements companies are facing to manage a multigenerational workforce.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the variance of each generation's characteristics, to determine the conflicts and also synergies of a workforce that is defined by age diversity.

### **1.4 Scope of the study**

This study uses recent data which was published within the last five years to investigate the aim further. Data for this study were collected by using secondary data from existing research papers and published books, defined and discussed the generations, their differences but also the necessity for companies to provide an organizational strategy to cope with the requirements. However, the present research was limited by the fact that the issue of today's work environment is rarely investigated so far.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The age-diverse work environment leads to differences in terms of values, expectations, and motivation of its single group members. Even though the research on generational differences is increasing, it is not only academical but also in popular literature, a much-debated question if there are generational disparities in work values and, if so, what those differences are. So far, very little studies have examined these questions due to the fact that previous research on managing a multigenerational workforce has been limited to a small number of cases. Also, current studies often haven't been able to provide robust evidence for their existence (Campbell & Twenge & Campbell, 2017). However, a person's beliefs are a crucial motivator for their attitude and conduct, even though they share a workplace, their job objectives are distinct (King & Murillo & Lee, 2017)



This paper aims to find out differences among generations in terms of motivational drivers, job satisfaction, and how companies can manage those differences in today's workforces to enhance the satisfaction of their employees.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Generations

There are two crucial components to the word creation. First, a conventional position in the historical eras, and secondly, a particular perception of the historical status shaped by what transpired and was experienced during that period. These two factors link to the individual in a way that makes people's characteristics, emotions, and values identical to their age (Sinha & Vispute, 2022).

As already mentioned, literature describes several generations in the workforce. For several reasons, the Silent Generation (Traditionalists) built their sense of self-worth on their work ethic. The fact that they were born between 1925 and 1945 placed them in a period of conflict. They lived through the Great Depression, the devastation of the First World War, the uncertainty of the Second World War and its repercussions, and early adulthood spent dreading communism's advance throughout the Cold War. In their childhood, strict regulations such as a "children should be seen and not heard" mindset fostered a generation that values tradition. The forced struggle of significant world events in their time united this generation, prompting them to collectively keep their heads down and strive furiously to live, garnering them the moniker of the Silent Generation. This generation's labor was not in vain since they entered the workforce during an economic expansion.

Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, desire a balance between work and family. Due to corporate initiatives, this generation is more able to manage work-family conflicts than previous generations. In addition to juggling careers, grandkids, and elderly parents, they must maintain a healthy work-life balance. Mental health and job stress are the leading causes of work-family conflict in the current age. Baby Boomers are often results-oriented and money-driven, and they tend to remain with businesses for the long term. Boomers generally put work above family in the beginning of their careers to establish their position within the firm. Boomers are also known for their extreme materialism and have lower values for leisure than earlier generations, but greater values for extrinsic and social benefits.

Generation X looks to be relatively introverted and disinclined to collaborate across generations. According to researchers, Generation X is the Resilient Generation because its members have acquired the ability to rely on themselves. Generation X's aversion to working alongside Baby Boomers and Millennials might be caused by the fact that it has less members than previous generations: 65 million compared to 77 million Baby Boomers and 85 million Millennials. Generation X believes that they would receive less favorable

treatment and promotions than Millennials and Baby Boomers since their generation has fewer members than those generations. According to new research, Baby Boomers had more work satisfaction and organizational loyalty than Generation X. There is also a link between job happiness and the capacity to employ new technologies in the workplace, according to research. This might be problematic for Generation X, which supposedly has less drive to master new technologies (Westover et al., 2020).

Millennials (also called Generation Y), born between 1984 and 2001, have progressively surpassed the older generation to become the largest group on the job market, and they are increasingly seeking fascinating and meaningful employment. The generation born after 2001, is acclimated to the internet and computer technologies, distinct from the Millennials (Zhao et al., 2021). The millennial generation is proficient in open-mindedness, inventiveness, independence, fearlessness, and technological advancement. With these portrayals of people, the millennial generation might become a formidable workforce. They do have adverse effects, such as decreased devotion and less enthusiasm in the firm, despite their positive outlook. (Brinda Devi & Jayakani, 2021).

Group Z is the youngest generation of personnel is increasingly joining the workforce each year. Their usage of technology and desire for flexible work hours are nearly comparable to those of Generation Y in the workplace. Employees of Generation Z recognize the importance of financial security and the satisfaction of achieving well at work. It is believed that both Generation Y and Generation Z seem to be more racially diverse than any prior generation (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Generation Z bears characteristics of the "net generation" because they were born into a highly developed digital era. They were also referred to as the "Facebook generation," "digital natives," and even the "iGeneration." The norms of generation Z differ from those of the generation before it. They are nearly constantly online on any technological gadget. It may also be observed in their acts, which are connected to their technological surroundings, and can serve as a tool or a milieu in their lives. Other sorts of social interaction are challenging for them. Unlike generation Y, generation Z is unfamiliar with the notion of struggle. They are pragmatic, bright, and they enjoy taking the initiative because they are courageous. They are less patient and more agile than their ancestors, and they continually seek out new challenges and stimuli. They are not terrified of continual change, and they have access to a great deal of knowledge owing to the internet, but only to a certain level. They use the internet to discover solutions to their difficulties (Bencsik et al., 2016).

## **2.2 Work-Life Balance Satisfaction**

In the past decade, there has been a rise in the popularity and the scholarly discourse on the quest for harmony between work and personal responsibilities and how individuals manage their lives (Townsend & Bugg, 2020). Work-life balance is a contributor to work satisfaction. The job-life balance emphasizes the

interaction and effect of work and family responsibilities, with dignity in any or both domains as the "primary consequence." However, outcomes may be positive or destructive, depending on the presence of equilibrium or imbalance. The effects include work-, non-work-, and stress-related variables, such as job satisfaction, turnover, absenteeism, and performance; marital, family, and life satisfaction; and stress, burnout, and substance abuse. Work-life imbalance is related to high work expectations, job-leaving tendencies, psychological stress, and a mismatch between family and job satisfaction (Westover et al., 2020).

Most of the Millennials and members of Generation Z have experienced spending their formative early career years working remotely, allowing them to cultivate professional connections and rapport with their colleagues outside of the typical office structures (Smart, T., 2021). Unlike baby boomers at a similar age, Millennials and Generation X place a greater emphasis on aspirations connected to extrinsic values, such as financial potential, appearance, and celebrity. Moreover, compared to Baby Boomers, Millennials and Generation X have shown slightly less care for others (e.g., empathy) and less interest in civic engagement. Other found generational differences include greater self-esteem and favorable self-perceptions (Pinelli et al., 2018).

Younger individuals are more prone to prioritize broad and future-oriented objectives, whereas older individuals prefer to prioritize immediate or shorter-term goals. According to a multigenerational survey by Sessa and colleagues, while all generations valued honesty, familiarity with fundamental organizational functions, listening, and helping others, Millennials placed higher value on focus and optimism than previous generations did. While placing less importance on delegation and big-picture thinking. Silent Generation and Traditionalists are driven by recognition and symbols, whereas Baby Boomers are motivated by recognition and prestige. Xers are driven by personal feedback and diversity, but Millennials want intellectual challenges and the opportunity to grow personally and professionally (Boyle et al., 2018). Very few individuals resign based only on pay. Frequently, workplace circumstances are the primary factor. Employee well-being is also negatively affected by monotony, with many respondents expressing annoyance at having to perform monotonous or administrative activities (Trueman, 2022).

It has been shown that supervisors devoted to work-life balance can function as leaders who urge employees to internalize their views and values. The attitudes and actions of managers have a significant impact on employees and it has been demonstrated that supervisors support increases employee's motivation (Talukder & Galang, 2021). In conclusion, work satisfaction relates to an individual's appraisal of his job to determine how effectively his expectations are met by the company. Organizations must acknowledge the significance of work-life balance in enhancing productivity and retention, eliminating work-life imbalance, lowering employee stress, and enhancing job satisfaction (Abdullah, Kabia & Pandey, 2022).

### 2.3 Workforce Satisfaction

Motivation is the process of allocating energy to maximize the satisfaction of wants. An employee's motivation develops a drive to commit their skills to achievement. Therefore, an engaged employee will attempt to achieve a work-related objective. Employers must recognize the significance of employee motivation since the success of every organization depends on the performance of its personnel (Mahmoud et al., 2021).

Due to its usefulness in predicting job attitudes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work behavior, and motivation to leave Person-organization (PO) fit has attracted substantial study interest (Seong & Choi, 2019).

Many studies define person-organization fit as the unity of an individual's and an organization's ideals. Incompatibility emerges when the values of the person and the organization are in conflict. PO fit happens when the organization responds favorably to the individual's expectations and goals, or when the individual adapts to the company's structure and principles. The idea of person-organization fit refers to the congruence between individual and organizational goals, individual priorities, requirements, and organizational structures, and the personality of the individual and the climate of the company (Akkaya & Serin, 2020).

As the age demographics of wealthy nations experience a gerontological transition due to the retirement of baby boomers, there is a more significant likelihood of rapid departures. The usual pyramidal structure of a population demographic is spreading at its apex as a greater proportion of elderly individuals depart, with the most immense impact of this retirement wave occurring in 2020 (Taylor & Youngs, 2017). Due to the changes, individuals' needs vary, and surroundings differ in the amount to which they provide the potential for need satisfaction (Peltokorpi, Bader & Froese, 2019).

A highly driven workforce outperforms its less motivated competitors, which is precisely why modern managers must understand the notions of needs and motivations. If the leaders are unaware of these principles, they will be unable to gauge and evaluate the generation's drives and anchors and, consequently, of motivating them. Job happiness is among the most important parts of an employee's life. It is one factor that helps employers distinguish themselves from other companies. Therefore, to retain and recruit the finest personnel, firms must design positions to maximize employee pleasure. The employment result is one of the essential evident outcomes of contented employees. Employees who are satisfied are likely to exceed the expectations than those who are not, which results in a gain of productivity (Bhatt, Chitranshi & Mehta, 2022).

Another important factor is a person's leadership style which is a collection of observable characteristics formed from their fundamental ideas, values, and decision-making throughout time. It has been demonstrated that authentic leaders recruit, motivate, and retain followers more efficiently (Pinelli et al., 2018).

To fulfill the organization's mission and objectives effectively, it is well known that a successful leadership style must be able to stimulate and motivate followers pursuing of these goals. Transformational leadership has a more significant impact on organizational outcomes like work satisfaction than contingent incentives leadership (Safrizal., Eliyana, Usman & Gunarsa, 2020). Good training, a sense of job embedding, employee loyalty that emerges when their needs are addressed, and employee happiness with their work are all factors that contribute to job satisfaction (Duty, 2022).

#### **2.4 Past research**

Work-life balance is highly valued by younger generations due to the significance placed on integrating work and personal life while keeping a healthy balance. Multiple studies demonstrate that Millennials and Generation Z recognize the necessity of the WLB and accord it greater weight than prior generations. Prior research indicates that even most successful organizations continue to report low levels of work-life balance data. Due to the expectations of new generations in the workplace and the quickly developing sector of e-recruitment, the most important result of the study is the necessity for human resource departments to maintain a good balance between work and personal life. To attract talent from Millennials and Generation Z, it is also suggested that businesses strengthen their online disclosure of work-life policies (Sánchez-Hernández, González-López, Buenadicha-Mateos & Tato-Jiménez, 2019).

Surprisingly little empirical study has been undertaken on the impact of supervisor support on the work and life attitudes of workers, despite the recognition that supervisor support is essential for achieving a balance between work and life. (Talukder & Galang, 2021). Even though, according to academic research, autonomous support from managers may lead to various outstanding employment outcomes, including general inventiveness and job performance. (Msuya & Kumar, 2022). However, leaders are often unaware that a supervisor's awareness of generational expectations influences their subordinates' work engagement (Duty, 2022).

However, generational research reveals that work satisfaction does not differ as much between generations as one might assume. According to a five-generation research, Millennials reported somewhat higher levels of overall happiness with their firms and occupations as job protection, acknowledgment, and career opportunities but comparable levels of satisfaction with salary and employee turnover intentions as Boomers and Gen Xers. Nevertheless, impact sizes were modest (Westover et al., 2020). In terms of generational differences other research has shown that collaboration across various age groups may produce not only disputes but also beneficial outcomes for the organization, in whose additive execution the Human Resources Department plays a significant role. For the new generation, with their changing requirements and

unique characteristics, as engaged and productive employees of the organization, it is very required to modify the current human resources operations. These changes primary affect corporate culture's communication, motivation, and growth (Bencsik et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, when managers link specific abilities or behaviors to generational stereotypes, such as a lack of technology knowledge, generational preconceptions can even be damaging. As a result, only little studies provides insight into distinct generations given historical events and social influences (Chun & Evans, 2021).

### **3. Research Methodology**

This documentary research methodology explored the challenges and benefits associated with managing a multigenerational workforce. It also examined the influence of various leadership styles on employee job satisfaction and work-life balance. The research involved a comprehensive review of existing scholarly literature and relevant documents to gather in-depth information on these topics.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In this documentary research, the researcher conducted a systematic review of existing scholarly literature and relevant documents. This analysis involved interpreting these materials to uncover trends, patterns, and valuable insights on managing a multigenerational workforce. The research also examined the role of leadership styles in promoting employee job satisfaction and work-life balance.

#### **3.2 Sources of Data**

This documentary research utilized a variety of primary data sources. These included academic articles, specifically peer-reviewed publications that explored generational differences in the workforce, leadership styles, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Additionally, industry reports from reputable organizations provided insights into workplace dynamics, leadership trends, and generational challenges. Furthermore, government publications offered valuable data and perspectives from governmental agencies on workforce demographics and trends. Finally, scholarly books and book chapters addressing generational issues, leadership theories, and employee satisfaction were included in the analysis.

#### **3.3 Data Collection Method**

This documentary research employed a multi-pronged approach to data collection. First, relevant information was extracted from academic databases by conducting keyword searches focused on generational differences, leadership styles, job satisfaction, and work-life balance in peer-reviewed articles and publications. Next, industry reports on workplace dynamics, leadership trends, and generational challenges were obtained

from reputable organizations' websites and data repositories. Finally, government publications offering data and insights on workforce demographics and trends were retrieved. All collected data and documents were then meticulously compiled for a systematic analysis.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Method**

This documentary research employed a two-fold analytical approach. First, content analysis was utilized to systematically dissect the collected documents. This involved coding key passages within the text, followed by the identification of recurring themes or patterns. Through this process, the information was categorized to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges associated with managing a multigenerational workforce and the impact of varying leadership styles. Secondly, a comparative analysis was conducted to juxtapose findings from different sources. This allowed for the observation of both similarities and discrepancies within the existing literature, ultimately providing a more nuanced perspective on generational differences, the influence of leadership, and its connection to employee job satisfaction and work-life balance.

### **3.5 Limitations**

This documentary research acknowledges some inherent limitations. The selection of documents itself may introduce bias, as the researcher's focus could influence which sources are chosen. Additionally, access to certain materials might be restricted, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the analysis. Finally, verifying the absolute accuracy and reliability of information gleaned from various documents can be challenging, highlighting the importance of critical evaluation throughout the research process.

## **4. Conclusion**

This study highlights the significant impact of generational differences on individuals' values, expectations, and behaviors in the workplace. While there is a need for more comprehensive research on the consequences of these differences, this paper emphasizes the importance of considering not only the varying expectations among generations but also other influencing factors such as work-life balance (Msuya & Kumar, 2022).

Managers must adopt a holistic approach to their leadership behavior, taking into account the diverse characteristics of their employees. Supervisors play a crucial role in bridging the gap between an organization and its employees, and their actions can substantially influence employees' perceptions of their employer's work-family balance policy. Consequently, supervisors' behavior affects employees' attitudes towards their jobs, ultimately impacting their performance (Msuya & Kumar, 2022).

Furthermore, recent research suggests that transformational leadership has a more significant positive effect on employee job satisfaction compared to other leadership styles (Safrizal, Eliyana, Usman & Gunarsa,

2020). This finding underscores the importance of adopting a leadership approach that inspires, motivates, and supports employees in order to foster a positive work environment and enhance overall job satisfaction.

## **5. Recommendation**

To manage a multigenerational workforce, it is essential to understand the differences of generation's work behavior as well as the effects of their attitudes. Generally, the outcome of employees will not be the same due to their differences regarding work values and goals. It is necessary to understand that employees are driven to pursue results that have value to them, and their motivation will not rise if they do not appreciate the reward. Without insight into specific factors and needs of generational cohorts, it is challenging to develop and establish initiatives to motivate employees (King, Murillo & Lee, 2017). Therefore, it is recommended to implement workforce practices that are adaptable and reflective of the requirements of all employees (Chun, Evans, 2020). Furthermore, companies should fulfill the requirements of its personnel, capitalize on their strengths and abilities, and limit characteristics that may conflict with its purpose and objectives. As work satisfaction is correlated with training opportunities, adapting employee development to a multigenerational workforce is essential. Possibilities for professional growth should be viewed as an additional method for increasing job satisfaction. The capacity to build a professional development program that considers the diverse requirements of the participants should become the norm in companies (Duty, 2022).

Future research should examine how the expertise of each generation in the workforce may impact specific Human Resource Development practices, such as how the diversified motivating factors and demotivators of every generation can influence the methods used to supervise different generations, teach effectively, and motivate each generation to improve their job performance (Park & Park, 2018).

Organizations must review their leadership styles and degree of knowledge of generational variations among their employees. Establishing a workplace environment that is diversity-friendly can also enforce a collaboration of generational employees and subsequently has positive effects not only on productivity and retention but also in terms of facing the conflict of generations (Jones LM, 2017).



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