

Business Honors Thesis

The Five Generations in the Workplace & Job Satisfaction

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Abstract:

With a focus on the five generations in the workplace and their ties to job satisfaction, this study explores the relationship between each generation and four job satisfaction factors. I assessed whether full-time working participants from different generations had differences in overall job satisfaction and factors such as colleague and supervisor relationships, work meaningfulness, and pay and benefits. The hypothesized relationship between older generations and higher job satisfaction was supported as well as the relationship between younger generations and higher value on colleague relationships. The relationship between Millennials and satisfied work meaningfulness was not supported and there was no relationship between Generation X and less importance on supervisor relationships and Millennials and satisfied benefit packages. My findings emphasize the importance of knowing generational differences in the organization to allow for a more productive and useful workplace.

Introduction:

Today, there are currently five generations of employees in the workplace that each express different characteristics, values, attitudes, and needs shaped by the significant events of their time. These differences often present work-related challenges to managers nationwide. While there is ongoing research regarding this topic, the most efficient way to manage this array of ages is controversial.

The five generations that make up the labor force include: Traditionalists (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Generation Z (1997-current). According to Fry (2018), “more than one-in-three American labor force participants (35%) are Millennials, making them the largest generation in the U.S. labor force, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data” (pg. 1). In this study completed in 2017, Traditionalists made up the smallest portion of the workforce at 3%, Generation Z at 9%, Baby Boomers at 41%, Generation X at 53%, and Millennials at 56%. With this wide age range throughout organizations, top managers and leaders are having to come up with solutions to keep their employees productive and satisfied.

The composition of these generations in the labor force has brought a lot of attention to business professionals especially in Organizational Behavior and Organizational Development roles. Through these roles, subject matter experts are having to analyze the organization and find the best way to keep all employees satisfied and comfortable. According to *How to Manage*, “managers are increasingly grappling with generational differences in their work forces. Problems can arise from differing mindsets and communication styles of workers born in different eras. The frictions may be aggravated by new technology and work patterns that mix

workers of different ages in ever-changing teams” (p. 1). With all of the presented generational differences, the workplace can seem misaligned resulting in the employees not working to their full potential.

A few of the more common challenges that managers are facing with the generational gap is figuring out how to best communicate and manage their employees, how to motivate their employees, how to best train and develop their employees, and how to keep their employees satisfied so they stay with the organization. The issue of job satisfaction regarding each generation in the workplace is among one of the most crucial challenges. This key problem is creating barriers in the labor force, so it is important to understand how to integrate each generation in an effort to provide a comfortable and productive organization.

In order for the multi-generational place of work to be effective, there has to be a balance point. This would require all generations to find common ground or be able to adapt to what is best for the company. There are a few main drawbacks where generations really differ and values do not line up. One of the main differences between generations in the workplace is their view on work-life balance. Research shows that the Traditionalists and Baby Boomer generations tend to view work on a more important scale than Generation Xers. According to a study completed by Huff (2005), 52% of Generation X said they put family first whereas Baby Boomers said 41%. When asked ‘Do you put work first’, Generation X answered 13% and Baby Boomers 22%. This study shows how just within one generation there are significant differences in important values that can create mishap for managers.

This study will look at each generation and their researched characteristics and behaviors, and tie it to job satisfaction. Topics regarding the factors of job satisfaction and how they correlate to different generations will be researched in an effort to help managers understand the

needs of their employees. Some of the factors that may affect overall job satisfaction include colleague and supervisor relationships, benefit packages, and work meaningfulness. All of these factors could differ between generations due to their values and institutional needs.

This is an important topic because job satisfaction effects the organization in several ways. Dissatisfied employees tend to be less productive and/or leave the organization more often which results in high turnover rates. This is costly for organizations and tends to disrupt the culture and productivity throughout the workplace.

Generational characteristics:

Traditionalists

Currently, the oldest generation in the workplace belongs to the Traditionalists, also known as the Silent Generation. This generation is characterized by individuals who were born between 1925 and 1945 (74-94 years of age today). Being the oldest generation in the workplace also means it is the smallest generation in the workplace. Data from the *Bureau of Labor Statistics* reveals that in 2018 there were 1,764 employed individuals 75 years and older. This made up 8.4 of the Traditionalist population. Research shows that by 2020 there will only be 1% of Traditionalists left in the workforce.

Many people find it surprising that this generation is still in the workforce today. Palmer (2017) explains how older Americans are staying at their jobs longer and “[retiring] at an older age, in part for income but in part for enjoyment” also, “many people are still trying to make up for financial losses suffered in the 2008-09 recession” (p. 3). Whatever the reason may be, these older individuals are continuing to work and mark their place within their designated organization.

The Traditionalists that are still in the workforce today have specific qualities and institutional needs. There has been a lot of research done on this generation over the years that constructs their differences and shows results of their workplace behaviors. The way this age group was raised and the situations they have endured has shaped their work dynamic and their interactions in organizations. According to Kapoor and Solomon (2011), “most of this generation endured poverty and traumatic world events, living through the Great Depression and World War II” (pg. 309). The intensity of these events created a paranoia for this generation which rubs off on the way they behave in the workforce.

Traditionalists are known to emphasize the importance of the group in a work setting. They are willing to help their colleagues with tasks even when it is not in their specific job description to insure that everything gets completed. Traditionalists are also known to be extremely hard working and accept authoritative demands in the workplace. Research from Sutton Bell and Narz (2007) suggests that this generation works best under pressure from an authoritative figure rather than figuring it out on their own. They often conform to the social norms at work and do not take risks. This generation also tends to be extremely structured throughout their day and into their tasks. The individuals who make up this generation are known for “[working] in the office from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., along with frequent evening and weekend work and extended work hours during tax season” (pg. 57). It is very rare that an individual from this generation has moved around jobs more than one or two times. It is suggested that this generation values the hard work they put in with stability from their place of employment the most.

The current challenges that managers are facing with Traditionalists in the workplace is that many of them have not adapted to new technologies. According to research

conducted by Norwich University on varying levels of technology usage, Traditionalists only accounted for 6% whereas Millennials accounted for 75%. This is problematic as times are changing and the workplace is becoming extremely technologically advanced. The Traditionalists also tend to be at the top of these companies so they may be holding the company back from technological advancement. As a result, this could cause tension from younger employees who are trying to move the company forward. Since these individuals are the oldest generation in the workplace, they are having to learn new materials and shift their behaviors and preferences to fit the current needs of the organization.

Baby Boomers:

Traditionalist parents raised the next oldest generation in the workplace today, The Baby Boomers. This generation is classified as anyone born between the years of 1946 and 1964 (55-73 years of age today). According to Toossi (2009), Baby Boomers participating in the workforce is continuing to grow and “the number of 55-to-64-year-olds is expected to increase from 23.3 million in 2010 to 29.3 million in 2020. Concomitantly, their share of the total labor force will grow from 15.1 percent to 17.8 percent over the same time span.” (pg. 30). The projected increase of Baby Boomers in the workforce is due to the growth of the United States economy and more jobs being presented. Due to the size of the baby boomer cohort and the increase for workforce participation for older workers, an increase in Baby Boomers is on the rise. Most of the individuals in this age group are approaching the common retirement age, yet many are choosing to stay in the workforce just like the Traditionalists.

The characteristics and workplace behaviors that this generation is classified by speaks a lot about their upbringing with Traditionalist parents and the significant events taking place around the world. The Baby Boomers were raised around the time of the Vietnam War,

Communism growth throughout the world and social changes throughout the United States including race and gender equality movements. This is the first generation where women could really acquire an education and work alongside men, bringing many changes to American work values.

Growing up around these events created new values to be expressed and Sutton Bell and Narz classifies the most important as “personal growth, hard work, individuality, and equality of the sexes” (pg. 57). Unlike Traditionalists, Baby Boomers are known to question authority and prefer less hierarchy structures in the workplace. According to Kapoor and Solomon, “they tend to be idealistic and are willing to sacrifice personally and professionally in order to achieve success” (pg. 39). They also suggest that Baby Boomers have a tendency to micromanage and punish lazy employees. They are known to be highly motivated by high levels of responsibility and are results-driven. Like their parents, they tend to stay in one place of work for the majority of their career so long as they are receiving praise. This generation is also known to be extremely competitive and work long hours to bring success and commitment to their position.

Some of the main challenges that managers face with this generation is their desire to stay in the workforce for a very long time and their heavy need for control. As the Baby Boomers stay in the workplace, they hold onto jobs and there are not as many vacancies in the workplace for younger workers to take. This can create a stagnant organization and cause the company to not be able to change their ways. As a manager, sometimes it is crucial to implement change and move people around so it is something they need to combat. Another challenge managers are facing is to find ways to handle the Baby Boomers desire for control. This generation is extremely competitive and individualistic and tend to want to be the best. They are motivated and driven by control so conflict can arise when superiors take the reins.

Generation X:

Generation X, also known as the Baby Busters is the small generation that follows the Baby Boomers. This generation is defined as individuals born between the years of 1965-1980 (39-54 years of age today). This generation is known to be smaller in population due to the low fertility rates of Baby Boomer parents. To put this into perspective, according to data collected by *Knoema* there were approximately 75.52 million Baby Boomers born within their perspective time frame and only 65.72 million generation Xers born between theirs. That is a 10 million people deficit from the Baby Boomer generation to Generation X. Though this is a smaller generation, it is one that made significant differences in the workplace. Data from the *Pew Research Center* shows that in 2017, Generation Xers made up the second largest workforce population with 53%, trailing the Millennials by only 3%. This suggests that the Generation X individuals in the workforce make up a significant population of organizations and shapes them accordingly.

Though similar to their Baby Boomer parents, there are several key differences that Generation Xers possess. Generation X individuals grew up during the final years of the Vietnam War, but it did not have as great of an impact on them as it did their parents. This generation was more impacted by the numerous energy crises and the Gulf War. Generation Xers also grew up during the beginning of major corporate downsizing. Growing up, Generation Xer's parents were typically hard at work, so they tended to raise themselves and had to learn how to be self-sufficient early on. Both generations value working hard, but Generation X individuals tend to value their family time more and seek to find a balance between their work and personal lives.

The traits and values that generation Xers are characterized by are very different from the past generations. Generation X is the first generation that really grasped the full extent of

technology. They are known to be adaptable and quick learners, which developed their accessibility and technological savviness. According to Bennett they are “a product of change and unrest in their families and the broader society. This often contributes to their independence and self-direction, while at the same time [results] in skepticism toward authority” (p. 9). Like their parents, Generation Xers like to be in control and micromanage. This generation is known to rely on security in the workplace. If they do not feel at ease or like they are making a contribution to the organization they are known to look for a better fit. Due to their independent nature, Gen Xers tend to only ask for feedback when they need it which results in developmental problems. Also due to their self-sufficiency, this generation is known to prefer working alone than in groups. Generation Xers are motivated and focused directly on results.

There are a few challenges that managers are facing regarding Generation Xers in the workplace today. First, Generation X has a strong desire to balance their work life and their family life. They do not want their life to revolve around a work schedule, but instead they want to create a schedule that is effective for their selves. Another challenge is that they prefer working alone when many jobs require team work. This generation tends to shut down when tasks involve group thinking and communications. Also, this generation seeks and desires new experiences. They often times desire more work, money, and benefits than what their company is giving them, so the hardest problem can be to simply satisfy and *keep* the individuals in the organization.

Millennials:

Currently, the largest generation in the workforce belongs to Generation Y, or more commonly known as, the Millennials. Though there is no *exact* time-span, Millennials, are mostly defined as individuals born between 1981 and 1996 (22-37 years old today). This

generation is the largest population in the workforce up to date, and growing as each day goes on. Data from *Pew Research* suggests that there are 56+ million millennials in the workforce today, and that number will continue to increase by 2020 and beyond.

Research shows that Millennials are changing the game and according to Settembre (2018), a study completed found that “millennials are working harder than other generations, putting in more than 45 hours per week, with 21% taking on another job to make ends meet. And 66% of people in that age group are expected to work past age 65, with 12% saying they likely would never retire” (p. 3). This shows that the Millennials are impacting many organizations by putting in more hours than previous generations and likely working harder. Like the previous generations not wanting to retire, there is chance that Millennials will be in the workforce for a very long time.

The life events and structures that have impacted this generation and their characteristics are current and still in place in society today. For example, many individuals in this generation grew up with divorced Generation X parents who solely focused on them to make up for their absentee Baby Boomer parents. These Generation X parents taught their millennial children to stay busy, often times going from one activity to the next in the same day. Through these activities, this generation grew up receiving tons of praise for their participation and work and the era of “everybody gets a medal” unleashed. This generation grew up during events such as the Oklahoma City Bombing and the 911 terrorist attacks. Due to the fearful nature of these events, Millennials value openness and social connections with their colleagues.

As Traditionalists and Baby Boomers are slowly retiring, Millennials are taking over their vacant positions and changing them to make them more technological savvy and advanced. The Millennial generation is the first to grow up using technology from a young age.

They were raised around forms of technology designed to keep them busy and serve as learning platforms. Most Millennials grew up in schools where technology was implemented into the lesson plans and the importance and value of the technology was taught. This generation is known to be very confident and expressive, often times ridiculed for being “too confident.” They were raised to show their feelings and be outspoken in life which has carried over into the workplace. Millennials expect a lot of feedback and want it frequently. They need to hear how they are doing and how they can improve.

Many Millennials seek a job and/or organization that is impactful and meaningful. They want to make a difference in the world with their work. Often times, Millennials are not loyal to one place. They are known to move around frequently until they find a good fit or to simply move up the ladder. Research shows that they prefer higher salaries over better benefit plans. According to Kapoor and Solomon, “Millennials favor teamwork and prefer to follow directions as long as there is flexibility for them to get the work done in their own way” (pg. 310). Development is extremely important to Millennials and Jenkins (2017) states “seventy-one percent of Millennials who are likely to leave an organization in two years are dissatisfied with how their leadership skills are being developed. Sixty-nine percent of Millennials aspire to be leaders in the next five years and 60 percent of Millennials want training to develop their leadership skills” (p. 4). These high percentages show how important it is for an organization to tune in with Millennials and effectively develop their skill set in order to keep them in the workplace.

There are several challenges that managers are facing with regards to the Millennial generation. First, many Millennials want a job with a purpose so they are seeking organizations that give back or provide some sort of purpose such as non-profits or philanthropic events. This

is challenging as organizations have to make sure that their altruism is in line with their Millennial workforce. Also, Millennials are seeking development and bettering themselves so it is important for managers to monitor and give feedback to these individuals as frequently as possible. Another challenge that managers are facing regarding Millennials is their desire to work in effective teams. This is the first generation since 1943 to see themselves as part of group and not just as an individual. This can be challenging as other generations prefer to work alone. Managers have to figure out the best way to make the entire organization productive and useful.

Generation Z:

The newest generation in the workforce belongs to Generation Z or, more commonly referred to as the Nexters. This generation is composed of individuals born after 1996 (0-21 years of age today). This is the most current generation in society and in the workforce so, there is still a lot of research to be done regarding the background, traits, and characteristics created in part from the Nexter Generation. There are estimates that suggest that this generation is already composed of over 80 million people in the United States. This number is larger than Generation X and two thirds the size of the Baby Boomer generation. Within the next decade, this generation will easily make up the largest portion of the labor force.

The older spectrum of this generation is just now starting to enter the workforce and leave their mark. According to Fry, in 2017 Generation Z made up only 5% of the workforce, but that number has continued to grow as more and more of this generation is graduating from education institutions and joining the workforce. It is predicted that Generation Z will soon outnumber the Baby Boomers and Generation X in the workforce.

Generation Z is the first generation to be raised where technology is completely normalized and essential. This generation has no recollection of what life was like before

computers or smart-phones. They are extremely tech-savvy and have been described by Grubb as being like “Millennials on steroids...the minute they were born, they already had a domain name and a Facebook profile and Twitter feed” (pg. 20). They are raised around everything being told on social media as soon as it happens. Due to this, Generation Zers are known to have short attention spans and limited interpersonal skills. This generation also grew up watching their parents struggle financially through the 2008 recession. With this, they are known to be cautious and frugal of their money and possessions.

The traits and characteristics that this generation is known for is still under many studies, but there is research that shows that this generation is extremely creative, especially digitally. This is in part to their strong technological advancement. They also tend to be open-minded and in favor of new opportunities. Research shows that they are always trying to better themselves and fit roles that they may not have always sought. Like millennials, this generation desires feedback frequently and expect to be rewarded for hard work. This generation is known to be motivated more by a flexible lifestyle than by more money. Like millennials, this generation also prefers to work in an organization that is making a difference in the world. They want to know that their work is meaningful and/or impactful. In the workplace, this generation tends to prefer face-to face communications. This is in part to their desire to be social and make connections with everyone they meet.

Some of the challenges that managers are facing today with this generation is their desire to want to be flexible in the workplace. This generation prefers working when they feel it to be the most effective. The 8-5 job scene seems unnecessary for this busy-minded generation. Another common challenge with this generation is the desire innovative technology in the workplace. If the company is not as advanced, or ran more old-school, this generation can be

turned off. Generation Z is also focused on bettering themselves and seeking new opportunities so, it is crucial for managers to really engage these employees and develop them in ways that is beneficial to all.

Job Satisfaction:

With all five of these generations in the workplace expressing their differing needs, managers are tasked to find a way to keep all employees satisfied. According to Kaliannan, Perumal, and Dorasamy (2016), “given the employees from different generational cohorts have different work personality; it is also likely that they will have differences with regards to job satisfaction” (pg. 345). Due to the dissimilar values and institutional needs of each generation, the importance of the job satisfaction factors can differ resulting in some generations being dissatisfied with their job and/or organization.

Job satisfaction is one of the main factors to an effective organization. This term refers to a feeling of fulfillment or enjoyment that a person derives from their job. This is a management issue because the results from job satisfaction can have an impact on the organization’s productivity, culture, staffing, and overall success. Gavin and Vinten (2011) explain how “organizations whose employees possess a high degree of job satisfaction will have relatively low turnover, stress and absenteeism. Studies also indicate that a strong correlation exists between organizational commitment (dedication to the organization’s goals and values) and job satisfaction” (pg. 55). Job satisfaction is an important management concept. Most organizations strive for employee satisfaction in an attempt to make the workplace more efficient, although not all can attain this goal. Due to this, it is important that managers are aware of the factors impacting satisfaction and how they fit into the company’s overall bottom-line.

There are several sub-factors of satisfaction that effect overall job satisfaction in the workplace. Once all of the factors are measured and averaged, overall job satisfaction can be calculated. There are extrinsic, intrinsic, and personal factors that relate to job satisfaction. The extrinsic factors are physical and include pay and benefits, job security, and working conditions. The intrinsic factors are internal and include work meaningfulness and fit, work relationships, and recognition. Personal factors include personality, leadership abilities, and motivation. Prior research has been conducted to see which of these factors plays a bigger part in overall satisfaction and according to Gavin and Vinten, “it would appear that professionals are satisfied with the intrinsic and universal aspects of their job. These aspects span the nature, orientation, and process of work performed by them” (pg. 62). The study also concluded that when it came to extrinsic factors such as pay and opportunity for promotions, professionals were overall dissatisfied. No matter what the job satisfaction factor may be, business professionals are figuring out ways to make the workplace more enjoyable for their employees in an effort to create a more productive and useful company.

Hypotheses:

When it comes to the five generations in the workplace there is a need to determine whether satisfaction differs among these cohorts. There is an obvious range of institutional characteristics and needs presented with each generation. The question of whether or not these characteristics play a role in the factors of job satisfaction and/or overall satisfaction needs to be answered.

Considering the past exploratory research on each generation and their characteristics and values, hypotheses can be made. First, research suggested that the older generations:

Traditionalists and Baby Boomers are more confirmative to rules and their work in general. It was stated that they both like structure and getting the job done. As the generations get younger, they have a tendency to seek updated norms. With this, it can be predicted that the older you are, the more satisfied you are overall in the workplace. **H1: If a generation is older, then they'll score higher in overall satisfaction.**

One of the main challenges that managers are facing with the Millennial generation is their desire to be in a position that is meaningful. Prior research suggests that Millennials seek a job that is purposeful and creates a deeper meaning than just "work." From this research, it can be predicted that Millennials will score higher on being in a job that is meaningful than older generations who work just for the job, specifically Baby Boomers. **H2: Millennials will score higher on work meaningfulness than Baby Boomers.**

Past research also suggests that Generation Z and Millennials are very social generations. They are more expressive with their feelings and value personal relationships. These generations tend to be more connected technologically and seek exposure from others. With this, it can be predicted that Generation Z and Millennials will value their work relationships more than the other generations. **H3: Generation Z and Millennials value colleague relationships more than the other generations.**

Generation X is known to be independently natured. Research suggested that due to the upbringing of this generation they prefer to work on their own and be in charge of their own feedback. Research also suggests that this generation does not value work relationships as much because of their self-sufficiency. They tend to only ask for feedback or help if it is really needed. With this in mind, it can be predicted that Generation Xers do not need to be on their supervisor's "good"

side. **H4: If an individual belongs to Generation X, then being on their supervisor's "good" side is not important.**

The exploratory research conducted suggests that Millennials are more motivated by internal factors and intrinsic rewards. They are known to exceed with praise and the social benefits that come from their workplace. When choosing a job, research shows that Millennials want a job that is meaningful and impactful more than a job with a high salary and exemplary benefit plan. Due to this, it can be suggested that Millennials are in jobs where their benefit packages are satisfactory. **H5: Millennials will be more satisfied with their benefit packages than the other generations.**

Methodology:

Sample and Procedure

In an effort to address the hypotheses, descriptive research was completed using an online survey. By using descriptive research, the data collected describes the specific proportion of the study's population and the results are attainable regarding job satisfaction and the five generations in the workplace.

To collect the data, an online survey was distributed via Qualtrics. The population of this study was anyone working a full-time job (30+ hours a week). This was the chosen population because the study is measuring job satisfaction from each generation. By working a full-time job, an individual is more immersed in the organization which will lead to better results.

The survey was distributed in two ways: through email from an online database and an anonymous link. An email was sent to a simple random sample of 1,259 undergraduate and graduate students drawn from the Oklahoma State University registrar's database. The

anonymous link was posted and shared on social media sights such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Reddit. By emailing a link and sharing it via social media, the participants were able to take the survey at their convenience via computer, tablet, or cell-phone as long as they had WiFi or cellular data connections. After 10 days of the link being open there were 119 collected responses. Once the data was filtered for eligibility, there were 114 usable responses.

The sample in terms of generational makeup is shown below:

Generation:	Trad.	Baby Boomers	Gen. X	Millennials	Gen. Z	No answer
Number of Responses:	6	21	21	41	14	11

These results are significant in the sense that the number of responses are linked in the order of workplace population. For example, Millennials have the most responses and they are the largest generation in the workplace while Traditionalist have the least amount of responses and are the smallest generation in the labor force. Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Generation Z fall next with their number of responses and the placement of their workforce population size.

Measures

The survey consisted of 15 questions with seven of them being on a 5-point scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” This was the most effective way to get the results needed and show correlations.

The survey starts out with a close-ended, Yes/No filter question to make sure that eligibility is met: “Are you currently working a full-time job (30+ hours a week)?” If the

participant answered “No” their response was not used in the final data. Following the filter question was three open-ended preliminary questions to get the participant opened up to the content: “How long have you been in the workforce? (Please answer in years)”, “How many organizations have you worked for?” and “What industry are you currently working in?”

In an effort to test H1 and determine which generation is the most satisfied, the survey has two questions about the generality of the participant’s job satisfaction. The first question is composed of five statements: “I am satisfied with my job right now,” “I would recommend my job to others,” “My job brings me great satisfaction,” “I am fulfilled with my job,” and “I get excited thinking about my job.” The participant is asked to answer the statements to the best of their ability on a scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The survey has another question testing general job satisfaction that states “Today...during most of the day I have felt enthusiastic about my work,” “Today...I felt fairly satisfied with my job,” and “Today...I found real enjoyment in my work.” This question was also asked to answer to the best of their ability on the same five-point scale.

To test H2 and determine scores on work meaningfulness, participants were asked to answer the following statements to the best of their ability on a scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The statements read: “I am engaged in meaningful work,” “I feel productive and useful at work,” “My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment,” and “my job makes good use of my skills and abilities.” Correlations from this question will determine the results of Millennials and work meaningfulness.

There are two sets of questions used to test H3 about colleague relationships. Once again, the participants were asked to answer the questions to the best of their ability on a scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The statements for this research problem consisted of:

“Having a good relationship with my colleagues is important,” “I am more productive in a team with my colleagues than I am when I am working alone,” “My colleagues show mutual trust of each other,” “Being friends with the people I work with matters,” “I enjoy working with people of all ages,” “I prefer working with individuals from different generations,” and “It is fun to work with older/younger coworkers.” These questions will be looked at to show correlations and patterns.

To determine H4 about the importance of generation X and their supervisor relationships, participants were asked to answer to the best of their ability on a scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The statements for this section read: “Having a good relationship with my supervisor is important,” “I can go to my supervisor with any work-related problem and get help,” “My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my work,” “Being on my supervisor's "good" side is important.” These questions will be used to look at the importance of good relations between Generation X and their supervisors.

Looking at the final hypothesis about benefit packages, H5, another question was asked and set up in the same way as the others. The statements asked about salary and benefits: “I feel appreciated by the organization I work for when I think of my salary,” “I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases in the future,” “The benefit package I have is satisfactory,” “I am satisfied with my chances for promotion,” and “The benefit package I have is enough to keep me satisfied.” The results from these statements will be analyzed to determine if Millennials are more satisfied than other generations.

The survey ends with four demographic questions: Age, Gender, Generation classification, and ethnicity. These will be used to further guide the research and include any other findings if applicable.

Results:

Hypothesis 1:

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between generations and their overall job satisfaction. There is a correlation between the two variables $r = .211$, $p < .05$. Overall, there is a strong, positive correlation between the older generations and higher job satisfaction results.

Hypothesis 2:

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between work meaningfulness and the Millennial and Baby Boomer generations. There is a negative correlation (positive relationship) between work meaningfulness and Millennials $r = -.215$, $P < .05$. There is no relationship between work meaningfulness and Baby Boomers.

Hypothesis 3:

There is a negative relationship between Generation Z and Millennials and the devaluing of colleague relationships. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between these variables $r = -.245$, $P < .05$. This shows that the younger an individual is the more they value these relationships.

Hypothesis 4:

After running a Pearson correlation coefficient, there is no relationship between Generation X and high supervisor relationships $r = .075$, ns.

Hypothesis 5:

A Pearson correlation coefficient was run to assess the relationship between Millennials and their satisfaction with their benefit packages. The results show there is no relationship $r = -.085$, ns.

Discussion

Summary

My first hypothesis states that the older a generation is, the more satisfied they will be in regards to job satisfaction. This hypothesis is supported. According to the correlation table, there is a positive relationship between the two variables and it is significant. This is important because it shows managers that in most cases, their older employees are more satisfied with their overall job satisfaction than their younger generation employees. When focusing on how to improve job satisfaction, they will need to start by evaluating their younger employees and figuring out why they are typically less satisfied.

My second hypothesis states that millennials will score higher on work meaningfulness than Baby Boomers. This hypothesis cannot be supported. The results show that Millennials scored low on work meaningfulness and there was no relationship with Baby Boomers. This can be because they have not found an organization that fulfills their need for this yet. Since they are known to want an organization and job that makes them feel useful, they may be more dissatisfied than other generations who do not care as much. This is important for managers as they will need to find a way to make their positions more meaningful throughout society.

My third hypothesis states that Generation Z and Millennials value colleague relationships more than the other generations and it is supported. The data shows that there is a correlation between the variables. The younger the generation is, the more they value their

colleague relationships. This is important for managers as they can implement more relationship oriented programming into the job for the younger generations to feel satisfied and stay with the company.

My fourth hypothesis reads that if an individual belongs to Generation X, then being on their supervisors “good” side is important. After analyzing the results, there is no significance between these variables and therefore it cannot be supported.

The final hypothesis states that Millennials will be more satisfied with their benefit packages than the other generations. The results showed no correlations between these variables and therefore the hypothesis cannot be supported.

Limitations

A few of the limitations of this research was that the sample size was relatively small and the number of responses from each generation could have been more. There were only 114 usable responses for this research. This number is small in regards to it being sent on many social media platforms and to a database of over 1,000 individuals. Also, the number of responses from each generation differed tremendously. Traditionalists only accounted for 5% of the survey where Millennials accounted for 35%. If there were a greater number of responses and the pool of generational cohorts were equal, the research could be more valid.

Future Directions

Based on the results, it would be beneficial for managers to do job satisfaction research in their specific organization based on generations. This will allow for them to see what their employees need from a generational standpoint. Other, potentially effective areas for further research include: why older employees are more satisfied in their jobs, what work

meaningfulness means to the Millennial generation and how it affects overall job satisfaction, and investigating how colleague relationships help or hurt productivity in the workplace.

All of these topics could help managers and other leaders within the organization understand more about their employees and create a healthier workplace where more individuals are satisfied.

Conclusion

Some of the greatest takeaways from this research is that considering five different generations in the workplace, there are several factors that result in different satisfaction levels among the cohorts. It was interesting to have significant data that shows that the older a generation is, the more satisfied they are overall. This leaves the question of whether or not age and maturity is the factor of this, or if it is generational characteristics. Managers will need to decide whether or not to implement new factors to make younger employees more satisfied or develop their younger employees to feel more comfortable and productive at work.

Another interesting takeaway was that there was no relationship between Generation X employees and not needing to be on their supervisor's "good" side. Previous research shows that Generation Xers are very independent and self-motivated. With this, it would seem as that Generation X individuals do not value supervisor relationships, although the results were insignificant.

It is known that job satisfaction is very important within an organization. It affects many other factors in an organization such as productivity levels, turnover rates, healthy work culture, and the overall bottom line. This research can help managers look at their different generational

cohorts within their organization and decide how to best align them to create a more effective and satisfied workplace.

Appendix:

Correlations

		JSat 1	JSat 2	SupR el	CollR el	AllGenE nj	JMeani ng	Benefi ts	Gen 1	Gen 2	Gen 3	Gen 4	Gen 5	Q14
JSat1	Pearson Correlati on	1	.889 **	.480**	.178	.192*	.863**	.666**	.139	.061	.132	- .134	- .051	.193
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.000	.000	.063	.044	.000	.000	.140	.522	.162	.155	.586	.050
	N	114	113	112	110	110	107	104	114	114	114	114	114	103
JSat2	Pearson Correlati on	.889 **	1	.446**	.110	.198*	.799**	.694**	.153	.074	.148	- .201 *	- .017 *	.211 *
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000		.000	.255	.039	.000	.000	.106	.438	.118	.033	.855	.032
	N	113	113	111	109	109	106	104	113	113	113	113	113	103
SupRel	Pearson Correlati on	.480 **	.446 **	1	.436**	.213*	.436**	.373**	- .083	- .074	.075	- .112	.127	- .101
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.026	.000	.000	.382	.441	.434	.241	.183	.310
	N	112	111	112	110	110	107	104	112	112	112	112	112	103
CollRel	Pearson Correlati on	.178	.110	.436**	1	.373**	.184	.139	- .061	- .089	- .194 *	.112	.210 *	- .245 *
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.063	.255	.000		.000	.057	.159	.527	.357	.042	.245	.027	.013
	N	110	109	110	110	110	107	104	110	110	110	110	110	103
AllGenE nj	Pearson Correlati on	.192 *	.198 *	.213*	.373**	1	.138	.108	.076	.060	.023	- .092	- .048	.127
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.044	.039	.026	.000		.157	.275	.432	.532	.811	.340	.621	.203
	N	110	109	110	110	110	107	104	110	110	110	110	110	103
JMeanin g	Pearson Correlati on	.863 **	.799 **	.436**	.184	.138	1	.590**	.075	.112	.204 *	- .215 *	- .159 *	.260 **
	Sig. (2- tailed)													
	N	110	109	110	110	110	107	104	110	110	110	110	110	103

Q14	Pearson Correlation	.193	.211*	-.101	-.245*	.127	.260**	.133	.521**	.609**	.158	-.472**	-.584**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.032	.310	.013	.203	.008	.181	.000	.000	.111	.000	.000	
	N	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103	103

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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