

Multigenerational Differences in Work Attributes & Motivation: An Empirical Study

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This study empirically examines the differences in work attributes and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among four generations (baby boomers, silent generation, generation X & generation Y). Data was collected with the help of an online questionnaire from working executives. Total sample consists of 653 respondents working in different public and private organizations. Data was factor analyzed and ANOVA was carried out followed by Post hoc analysis wherever applicable. Results indicate that generation Y prefers to work individually and seeks instant feedback in comparison to the older generation. There is no difference in the preference of workplace flexibility among the four generations. Intrinsic motivation is higher in Silent generation and extrinsic motivation is higher in generation Y.

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Introduction

Generation as a construct has been studied by scholars from various academic fields. Social psychologists have been interested in understanding the various socio-psychological influences that shape generational attitudes and behaviors. Some scholars like Giancola (2006) suggest that “generational approach may be a more popular culture than social science”, yet generational studies have a long and distinguished place in the social sciences. Scholars have attempted to search for the unique and distinctive characteristics of generations for several decades now. In the last decade management scholars have tried to demystify generational attitudes, values, behaviors, (Gibson et al., 2011) motivators and their effect on team work, learning orientation (D’Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008), retention policies (Gabriel, 1999), leadership expectations, and organizational policies at large (Westerman & Yamamura., 2007).

Academic research and industry experiences unanimously advocate the need for deeper understanding of generational differences at the workplace. Since long,

generations have been attached with specific attributes. While some of these have been rooted in cultural stereotypes or anecdotal evidence (Macky, Gardner & Forsyth, 2008), substantial research has revealed age or generation related trends and characteristics. In addition, research also suggests that generational diversity has an impact on employees' work-related attributes and interpersonal interactions (Pitt-Catsouphe & Matz-Costa, 2008). Studies suggest that employers or managers should provide their employees appropriate opportunities and recognition according to their needs, and create a work environment that fosters productivity in every generation (Saunderson, 2009; Macon & Artley, 2009). In addition, it is also suggested that managers must provide adequate information and skills to their employees to enable them to understand the generational characteristics of their co-workers, to foster better understanding, communication and teamwork among employees (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Macon & Artley, 2009). Thus, it has been repeatedly emphasized in the existing literature that effectively handling generational difference in the workforce is one of the biggest challenges faced by managers today (Lester, Standifer, Schultz & Windsor, 2012).

Generational Theory

Generational theory proposed by Karl Mannheim (1928) postulates that people belonging to the same age group who witness common, crucial, socio-political and historical events during developmental stages of their life form generational group

Generational localization unifies individuals belonging to a particular generational group within the framework of the same socio-historical context.

Kupperschmidt (2000). This definition draws special attention to a shared or collective field of emotions, attitudes, and preferences which have an impact on work place attributes. Mannheim further emphasizes that generations is a localized concept and that socio-economic changes occurring in one country effect the generations of that particular country only. This generational localization unifies individuals belonging to a particular generational group within the framework of the same socio-historical context. Based on this understanding, Indian scholars have proposed four generational groups in India. Based on phases of economic development, Srinivasan (2012) suggests four different employee generations who started working during or before liberalization in India. The four generations are: Pre Liberalization (started working before 1991), Early Liberalization (1991-2001), Rapid Growth (2002-2006) and Plateaued Growth (2007-2012). Tamara Erickson, one of the top 50 global thinkers of 2011, and leading expert on multi-generation, proposed a four-group classification that was temporally similar to the American classification, but was based on the Indian socio-cultural history (Erickson, 2009). Later, Roongrengsuke (2010) proposed a similar classification. According to both these authors the four generations in India are: Traditionalists (born during 1928-45), Baby Boomers (born during

Box 1 Generations in India: Critical Influences

Birth Year	Alternative Names	Socio Political Influences	Economic Influences	Technological Influences
1945-65	Pre-Liberalization, Mid Night Children, Baby Boomers	Resurgence of India from colonial Raj, Growth of educational institutions, Saw wars and famine. Era of Nehru and Shastri, Joint Families	Closed economy, Public sector dominance, Growth rate of 3% Excessive spending on heavy industries	Development based on borrowed technology from international partners.
1966-1976	Early Liberalization, Social Revolution generation, No Vacancy Generation, Silent Generation	Indo-Pak war, Emergency in 1970, and formation of Janta party. Operation Harit Kranti, Milk Flood, etc	Hindu Rate of Growth, Closed economy, License Raj, heavy spending on social programs	Nascent stage of technological development. Advent of telephones
1977-1988	Rapid Growth, EMI Generation, Gen X	Assassination of Indira Gandhi, Sikh Genocide, First Non Congress party coming to power, Mandal Commission, Bofors Scam, Rajiv Gandhi becoming prime minister. Nuclear Families; Hum do Hamare Do	India at the brink of being bankrupt. Slow economic development.	Advent of Television, beginning of IT revolution in India
1987- 2001	Plateaued Growth, Millennial, Gen Y	Rajiv Gandhi assassination, Babri Masjid riots and Bomb blast, Godhra Incidences, India shaming campaign, Standard of living enhanced, India winning 20-20 world cup. Double Income Single Kid	Economic liberalization, privatizations of public sector organizations and opening up of Indian Markets for MNC's heightened growth rate at 8%	Technology as a differentiator between haves and have not's. Advent of Internet, Mobiles, Smart phones.

1946-64) generation X (born during 1965-80) and generation Y (born during 1981-95) Similarly, Hole, Zhong, & Schwartz (2010) suggested three generations: the traditional (1948–1968), the non-traditional (1969–1980), and generation Y (1981 onwards). This was in line with the work of Ghosh & Chaudhari (2009) who identified the three generations existing in India as the conservatives, integrators and Y2K. Based on analysis of earlier studies, the current study classifies employee workforce into four different generation (box 1); baby boomers (1945-1965), silent generation (1966-1976), generation X (1977-1984) and generation Y (1985-2001). Our study utilizes international generational labels for convenience sake. Box 1 elaborates on few key formative events of these generational groups.

Work-related Attributes

Substantial research evidence sug-

gests that generational diversity has an impact on every aspect of the workplace one of them being their approaches to work, or work-related attributes (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Gursoy, et al., 2013). Researchers suggest that these characteristics affect employees' expectations related to their work (Dencker, Joshi, & Martocchio, 2008) and shape employee interactions (Gursoy, et al., 2013). Macon & Artley (2009) suggest that these differences influence vital areas such as teamwork, communication, and training, due to which it is imperative for managers to have a clear understanding of the complex nature of generational influences. Furthermore, a major cause of concern for managers is that these differences could lead to intra-generational conflicts in the workplace (Gursoy, et al., 2013). This highlights the need to examine these differences closely, to enable managers and employers to consider them during planning and implementation of company policies. Different studies have highlighted different characteristics of generations. We examine here the current literature specifically focusing on three work-related attributes viz., teamwork preference, feedback preference and work place flexibility preference.

Teamwork Preference

Typically, teams consist of employees from different backgrounds and experiences, as well as age and work experience. These unique traits of individuals affect the way in which people work with one another (Macon & Artley, 2009). For instance, research has found that generation X and generation Y are

Generation X and generation Y are more individualistic and independent as compared to Baby Boomers.

more individualistic and independent as compared to Baby Boomers (Sirias, et al., 2007). Similarly, Patterson (2007) found that generation X members do not have the patience for working in groups due to their independent nature, while on the other hand baby boomers enjoy the position power and decision-making authority and baby boomers also promote participative and team oriented styles of management that gained dominance in the 1970s and early 1980s (Kyles, 2005). In addition, the related values of interdependence, consensus decision making and collaboration are considered important for team development (Sirias et al., 2007). A similar study conducted by Singh et al., (2012) on Indian millennial found that organizations encourage teamwork between generational participants. According to this study the millennial generation is not too keen in working with teams, rather they would prefer working in an organization which provides space for self actualization in individual growth. In sum, these finding enunciates that there are substantial differences between generational preferences of working in teams. In the light of above mentioned literature, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H₁: There will be significant differences in teamwork preference among the four generations.

Feedback Preference

Feedback plays an important role in the development process of employees. It has been observed that the generation Y can be rather impatient because they want immediate feedback that is provided not just once or twice a year, but as often as possible (Sujansky, 2004; Wood, 2006). However, feedback receptivity research has not examined whether demographic characteristics of recipients are related to feedback acceptance. Ilgen et al. (1979) suggested that older workers may have more solidified self views. If so, these individuals may be less receptive to negative feedback. Sterns and Doverspike (1989) noted that social conditioning may lead older workers to be more reluctant to engage in developmental activities. Other researchers have also suggested that older workers are less receptive to feedback (Ashford, 1986; McEvoy & Buller, 1987). However, studies on performance or task feedback have not supported a direct relation between age and acceptance of feedback (Kudisch & Ladd, 1997; Snyder, Williams & Cashman, 1984). Based on the foregoing, the second hypothesis of the study is as follows:

H₂. There will be significant differences in feedback preference among the four generations.

Workplace Flexibility Preference

The research interest related to workplace flexibility and its strategies has been growing since the advent of knowledge work in the organizational

context (Dex & Scheibl, 2001). Organizational flexibility strategies could be identified as internal flexibility, external flexibility, quantitative or numerical flexibility, and qualitative or functional flexibility (Johnson, 2004). Research on workplace flexibility has concentrated mostly on tele-working and flexi timing, since it is seen as the most preferred arrangement over any other workplace flexibility strategy (Galpin & Skinner, 2004; Lo, 2003; Solomon, 1994). In a study on multigenerational workforce drawn from twenty two different companies in the US, Pitt-Catsoupes and Costa (2008) found that workplace flexibility has a positive effect on employee engagement and especially so for senior employees (above 45 years of age). In addition, in this study, senior employees were found to view workplace flexibility as a tool to enhance employee wellness and organizational commitment, and employee engagement.

Research in the Indian context has focused on workplace flexibility and its effects on employee work life balance issues and employee wellness issues in the IT and ITES sectors. In the Indian context, in a study that compared participants from the pre-liberalization and post-liberalization period, Singh (2013) found that the use of technology was seen as a method to augment work-life balance by both groups due to the flexibility it offered. The following hypothesis will be tested in the present study:

H₃. There will be significant differences in workplace flexibility preference among the four generations.

Intrinsic & Extrinsic Motivation

Motivation could be intrinsic (where the individual is driven by inherent interest or liking towards the job) or extrinsic (where the individual is motivated by external outcomes such as rewards and recognition) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Both these factors affect individuals differently. For instance, Singh (2013) compared the concept of work of the pre and post liberalization generations, and found that both the generations reported intrinsic factors as greater motivators than extrinsic factors. Similarly an intrinsic motivator namely challenging role has also found to be a strong motivating factor as it enables employees to expand their abilities across generations (Srinivasan, 2012; Singh, 2013). Another dimension that affects the motivators that influence an individual's work is the generation to which he/she belongs. Research suggests that there are large-scale generational differences in the factors that motivate or drive employees (Wong, Gardiner, Lang & Coulon, 2008). For instance, in their study on 278 generation Y participants from various fields, Anantatmula and Shrivastav (2012) revealed that, in comparison to the other generations, those from Generation y were found to be strongly affected by position in the organization, community presence, and monetary gain. Srinivasan (2012) examined the work-related attributes of the generation Y employees and it was found

that equitable pay, responsibility and independence, and achievement were strong intrinsic motivators for generation Y. On the other hand, factors such as having a considerate and sympathetic supervisor, restricted hours of work, and clear company policies were identified as strong extrinsic motivators for this group (Srinivasan, 2012).

A large-scale cross-sectional study on more than 3500 Australian managers and professionals from moderate to large sized organizations revealed generational differences in preferences towards motivators such as affiliation, power, and progression. Specifically, while the generation X and generation Y participants reported to be motivated by progression and affiliation, Baby Boomers expressed an inclination towards power (Wong, Gardiner, Lang & Coulon, 2008). Clearly, these preferences would color employees' work preferences and styles, which make it necessary for managers to have a deep understanding of their team members' unique preferences.

Since long, employee benefits have been viewed as a major source of intergenerational conflict in organizations. In the context of rewards, it is also important to consider other forms of appreciation provided to employees. Again, studies have reported generational differences in this regard, which emphasize the importance of examining the generational dynamics involved. For instance, Gursoy et al., (2013) compared the work-related attributes of Baby Boomers, generation X, and generation Y participants and found that as compared to the other

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groups, the Millennials were found to view recognition as an important aspect of their work and sought the same. Thus, benefits and rewards are another aspect related to work-attributes that needs to be cautiously examined.

Benefits and rewards are another aspect related to work-attributes.

Thus, there seems to be a consensus that generational factors have a strong influence on work-related attributes. However, there are limited studies in the Indian context. As mentioned before, the multicultural nature of the Indian population and the differences in the demographic characteristics of employees, specifically those related to their generational identity work in tandem to influence the attitudes, preferences, and performance of Indian employees. The present study sought to test the following hypotheses:

H₄. There will be significant differences in intrinsic motivation among the four generations.

H₅. There will be significant differences in extrinsic motivation preference among the four generations.

Participants

An online survey was conducted and link of the questionnaire was forwarded to 1000 working executives in different public and private organizations. Every single respondent was sent an email with a link to the survey. Participation to complete the survey was requested in the mail

sent to working executives. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Total 653 (65.3% response rate) responses were received and verified in terms of missing values and other data verification parameters. Final sample consists of 653 respondents. Of these 49 belongs to baby boomers, 157 to silent generation, 267 to generation X and 180 to generation Y (Table 1). Total sample consist of 73 % male and 27% female respondents. 83% were postgraduates and 73% worked in private sector.

Measures

Review of the literature was used in designing the survey instrument and item writing. Final questionnaire consists of total ten items. Out of 10 items 5 were related to work related attributes and the rest were related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. All the items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). Additional information on demographic variables namely; gender, year of birth, educational qualification, sector of employment and work experience was also collected and tabulated.

Work Attributes

Work attributes were measured with the help of five items. All the items were subjected to factor analysis which resulted in three factor solution (72.26% of variance). The factors were labeled as; teamwork preference (2 items), feedback preference (2 items), workplace flexibility preference (1 item). Table 2 presents descriptive and reliability analysis of the items.

Table 1 Demographic Analysis (Total Sample = 653)

Generations	N	Gender	Average Work Exp	Educational Qualification	Employment
Baby Boomers (1945 – 1965)	49	Male = 44 Female = 5	27.53 yrs	UG = 10 PG = 31 Doctorate = 8	Public = 14 Private = 29 Self Employed = 3 Others = 3
Silent Generation (1966- 1976)	157	Male = 134 Female = 23	15.68 yrs	UG = 37 PG = 112 Doctorate = 8	Public = 54 Private = 94 Self Employed = 5 Others = 4
Generation X (1977 – 1987)	267	Male = 209 Female = 58	7.09 yrs	UG = 17 PG = 248 Doctorate = 2	Public = 29 Private = 219 Self Employed = 14 Others = 5
Generation Y (1988 – 2001)	180	Male = 100 Female = 80	2.68 yrs	UG = 27 PG = 151 Doctorate = 2	Public = 22 Private = 145 Self Employed = 6 Others = 7

Table 2 Reliability Analysis (Work Related Attributes)

Workplace attributes	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Teamwork preference			
I am collaborative and enjoy working in team	4.34	.68	.488
I prefer group projects to individual projects	3.63	.88	
Feedback preference			
I prefer performance reviews every three months rather than yearly	3.50	1.22	.418
I prefer instant feedback about my work from others	3.58	.95	
Workplace flexibility preference			
RI prefer flexibility to meet my work and personal commitments	4.06	.83	-

Motivation

Motivation was measured with the help of five items which were subjected to factor analysis that resulted in two factor solutions (62.83% of variance). The factors were labeled as intrinsic motivation (3 items) and extrinsic motivation (2 items). Descriptive analysis and reliability are presented in Table 3.

Results

A one-way ANOVA test was employed to determine if there were any significant differences among four generation of employees' work attributes. In the case of significant differences, the Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons were performed. Given a set of four means, one for each generation, the

Table 3 Reliability Analysis (Intrinsic & Extrinsic Motivation)

Motivation	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Intrinsic Motivation			
I want to participate in decision making process related to my work	4.40	.70	.61
I seek increasing levels of responsibility and authority	4.29	.67	
I enjoy challenging work assignments	4.36	.61	
Extrinsic Motivation			
I value high materials rewards	4.08	.83	.50
Big pay package is my top motivator	3.17	1.08	

Tukey HSD procedure tested all six two-way comparisons: (a) baby boomers and silent generation, (b) baby boomers and generation X, (c) baby boomers and generation Y, (d) Silent generation – generation X, (e) Silent generation – generation Y, and (f) generation X and generation Y. The result of one-way ANOVA indicated significant differences in all dimensions (Table 4). The Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons were utilized by performing a series of pair wise comparisons to indicate the source of significant differences among generations. Findings revealed that there were significant differences of generation on teamwork preferences ($F(3, 649) = 9.32, p < .01$). Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for baby boomers ($M = 8.28, SD = 1.20$) was significantly higher than generation Y ($M = 7.60, SD = 1.29$). Mean score for the silent generation ($M = 8.28, SD = 1.23$) was also significantly higher than of generation Y ($M = 7.60, SD = 1.29$). Also there is a significant difference between the mean score of generation X ($M = 8.01, SD = 1.22$) and of generation Y ($M = 7.60, SD = 1.29$) on teamwork preference dimen-

sion. Overall teamwork preference is higher in baby boomers and silent generation and it was reported to be the lowest in generation Y, therefore, hypothesis 1 was accepted.

Preference of feedback is the highest in generation Y.

Results of one-way ANOVA also indicated significant differences in preference of feedback among four generations ($F(3, 649) = 6.36, p < .01$) therefore hypothesis 2 was accepted. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test specified that there was significant difference in preference of feedback between baby boomers ($M = 6.55, SD = 1.81$) and generation Y ($M = 7.49, SD = 1.61$). Mean score of silent generation ($M = 6.80, SD = 1.78$) is significantly lower than generation Y ($M = 7.49, SD = 1.73$). Also there was a significant difference in the mean score of generation X ($M = 7.08, SD = 1.61$) and generation Y ($M = 7.49, SD = 1.61$). Taken together; these results suggest that preference of feedback is the highest in generation Y. The results of one-way ANOVA also indicated that there was

no significant difference in workplace flexibility preference among four generations therefore hypothesis 3 was rejected. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test also suggested no significant difference in mean score of all six mean score comparisons of generations.

Table 4 One-way ANOVA

Variables	Generation	N	Mean	SD	F
Teamwork Preference	Baby Boomers (1945-1965)	49	8.28	1.20	9.32**
	Silent Generation (1966-1976)	157	8.28	1.23	
	Generation X (1977-1987)	267	8.01	1.22	
	Generation Y (1988-2001)	180	7.60	1.36	
Feedback Preference	Baby Boomers (1945-1965)	49	6.55	1.81	6.36**
	Silent Generation (1966-1976)	157	6.80	1.78	
	Generation X (1977-1987)	267	7.08	1.73	
	Generation Y (1988-2001)	180	7.49	1.61	
Workplace Flexibility Preference	Baby Boomers (1945-1965)	49	4.00	.86	.145
	Silent Generation (1966-1976)	157	4.07	.77	
	Generation X (1977-1987)	267	4.05	.89	
	Generation Y (1988-2001)	180	4.08	.77	
Intrinsic Motivation	Baby Boomers (1945-1965)	49	12.93	1.78	8.11**
	Silent Generation (1966-1976)	157	13.40	1.41	
	Generation X (1977-1987)	267	13.17	1.32	
	Generation Y (1988-2001)	180	12.65	1.63	
Extrinsic Motivation	Baby Boomers (1945-1965)	49	6.59	1.93	3.17*
	Silent Generation (1966-1976)	157	7.27	1.43	
	Generation X (1977-1987)	267	7.31	1.55	
	Generation Y (1988-2001)	180	7.32	1.59	

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Table 5 Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test Results

	Baby boomers-Silent generation	Baby boomers-Generation X	Baby boomers – Generation Y	Silent generation X	Silent generation Y	Generation X – Generation Y
Teamwork Preference	-0.00	.27	.68*	.27	.68*	.40*
Feedback Preference	-.25	-.53	-.94*	-.28	-.69*	-.40*
Workplace Flexibility Preference	-.07	-.05	-.08	.01	-.01	-.03
Intrinsic Motivation	-.46	-.24	.28	.22	.75*	.52*
Extrinsic Motivation	-.68*	-.72*	-.73*	-.04	-.05	-.01

* Mean difference is significant at 0.05 level.

Findings of one-way ANOVA also suggested a significant effect of generations on intrinsic motivation ($F(3, 649) = 8.11, p < .01$) therefore hypothesis 4 was accepted. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that mean score of silent generation ($M = 13.40, SD = 1.41$) was significantly higher than generation Y ($M = 12.65, SD = 1.63$). Also mean score of intrinsic motivation was higher in generation X ($M = 13.17, SD = 1.32$) than in generation Y ($M = 12.65, SD = 1.63$). Finally, the study findings also suggested a significant effect of generations on extrinsic motivation ($F(3, 649) = 3.17, p < .05$) therefore hypothesis 5 was accepted. Post hoc comparisons suggested that the mean score for baby boomers ($M = 6.59, SD = 1.93$), was significantly lower than silent generation ($M = 7.27, SD = 1.43$), generation X ($M = 7.31, SD = 1.55$), and generation Y ($M = 7.32, SD = 1.59$). In sum, extrinsic motivation is highest in generation Y and lowest in baby boomers.

Extrinsic motivation is highest in generation Y and lowest in baby boomers.

Discussion

This study suggests that generational differences in work attributes and motivation exist between older and younger generations of employees. The first hypothesis addressing the difference in teamwork among four generations was strongly supported. Findings indicate that there was clear difference between preferences of generation Y and other gen-

erations on working individually and working in groups and teams. While generation Y prefers working individually, the other three generations prefer working in groups and teams. Research on challenges in managing multigenerational workforce in organizations (Macon & Artley, 2009) elaborated that different generations have differential goals while working in the same team. While baby boomers are more focused on getting job done, generation Y employees are more focused on self achievement, killer competition of career progression and self goals, which may lead different generations preferring different ways of working. One of the reasons for this variance could also be seen in the psycho-social upbringing in the formative years of these different generations. While the earlier generations grew in joint families and learned to cohabit with large number of family members, generation Y grew in nuclear families where they missed on learning values of sharing and mutual collaboration.

Findings of the study also supported the second hypothesis that there are significant differences in feedback preference among four generations. Resonating with the study of Singh, et al., (2012) the present study also found that generation Y prefers instant and constructive feedback from their managers. Empirical researches in domain multigenerational differences at work also suggest that generation Y crave for feedback for self development. Tulgan (2009) in his study on emerging new leadership in generation Y suggests that senior leaders should provide regular feedback to the

top performers in generation Y to groom them as future leaders. The present study also found that the older generation (generation X, silent generation and baby boomers) prefer performance feedback annually. Contrary to western literature (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002) Indian generation X do not prefer instant feedback, rather they prefer feedback which is bi-annual or annual. The rationale for the inclination of the senior generations towards annual feedback could be found in Lancaster and Stillmans (2002) study, where they enunciate that older generation is inclined more towards formal annual feedback mechanisms because they perceive instant feedback as hasty and inappropriate.

It is noteworthy that the third hypothesis that there will be significant differences in workplace flexibility preference among four generations was clearly rejected. In contrast to other findings, no differences were found between the generations in the degree to which they need work place flexibility. An earlier study conducted by Pitt-Catsoupes and Costa (2008) also found no differences in preference of workplace flexibility by different generations. The explanation for this could be found in a study conducted by Catalyst (2013) that all employees belonging to different generations prefer work place flexibility to manage work life balance.

Earlier studies have elaborated on generational differences with regard to intrinsic (participation in decision making, challenging work assignments) and extrinsic (high material reward, big pay

packages) motivational factors (Petroulas, Brown & Sundin, 2010). The present study too found that generations differ on motivational drives. Results clearly supported the fourth hypothesis that there is a significant difference in intrinsic motivation among four generations. One unexpected finding pertained to higher intrinsic motivation in silent generation and lowest in generation Y. Contrary to existing literature, generation Y is not keen on taking positions of responsibility, authority and challenging work assignments. Generation Y typically does not live to work but they work to live. For them job provides resources to do the other things they want to do. Hence, they are motivated by extrinsic in comparison to intrinsic motivational factors. Petroulas, Brown & Sundin, (2010) also found that generation X and generation Y are keen on taking up challenging work assignments only when it is followed by immediate extrinsic reward. Older generations on the other hand equate work to self fulfilment and a drive and passion for hard work and long working hours (Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000).

Contrary to existing literature, generation Y is not keen on taking positions of responsibility, authority and challenging work assignments.

Implications

Generational differences exist between the older (Baby Boomers and the Silent generation) and younger generations (Generations X and Generations Y).

These generational differences should be perceived more as opportunity than challenges at workplace. It is also true that generational differences might lead to conflict among employees and resultantly lead to stress and low engagement. On the other hand if these differences are managed successfully will create happy work culture and it will improve engagement, motivation and generational synergy in organizations (Gursoy et al., 2008). Also it is an effective way to decrease turnover rate, improve employee engagement and overall organizational performance.

If these differences are managed successfully will create happy work culture and it will improve engagement, motivation and generational synergy in organizations.

Organizations should accept the fact that employees from different generations have different work values and preferences. For example, findings of this study indicated that generation X and generation Y want to work individually in comparison to older generations. Also generation X and generation Y prefer regular and sometimes instant feedbacks in comparison to older generation. Organizations which have moved to project team based structures should be wary of preference of individualization and self goals among younger generation. Work should be designed to take care of the needs of older as well as younger generations at workplace. Organizations should try to redesign systems and process to recognize the individual contri-

butions of generation X and Y and team based contribution of older generations. Also managers should also be aware of generational preferences while giving feedback and conducting performance reviews. Immediate and frequent feedback, along with personal and public appreciation means a lot to generation Y. In order to develop workforce synergy today leaders should be trained to give differential feedback to different generations. Managers should come up with different HR models to deal with the preferences of respective generations. This also suggests that younger generations expect their managers to play the role of performance mentor and coach. It is also evident from the findings of the study that workforce flexibility has become a hygiene factor for all generations and managers need to strike a chord between regimental work rules and work life balance. Therefore, developing flexible policies and practices will help organizations to attract and retain employees from all generations.

Findings of this study suggested that in comparison to baby boomers all other three generations are motivated by extrinsic rewards. Also intrinsic motivation is the highest in silent generation and generation X and lowest in generation Y. This finding has critical implications on designing of rewards and retention strategies of present day organizations. Since baby boomers are motivated by intrinsic work value like empowerment, responsibility, authority and challenge, they should be given leadership positions in organizations. Silent generation and generation X are motivated by both intrinsic as well as

extrinsic factors. Enriched job role, variable pay package, promotion and job advancement could be used to motivate silent generation and generation X. On the other hand, generation Y is keen on taking challenging work only if it is followed by immediate rewards. Hence managers should link challenging work assignments with immediate rewards which will eventually improve the engagement and retention of generation Y employees. In sum, the findings of this study will also help elder generation's managers to manage younger generations effectively.

Conclusion

Present study is also not free from limitations. The first limitation of the study was that the sample of the study was dominated by male employees having a postgraduate degree and working mostly in private sector organizations. Therefore, the findings of the study should be cautiously interpreted. Secondly, in the present study generations were treated as homogeneous groups, but evidence of heterogeneity within generations due to gender and other socio-demographic variables is also reported in a few studies (Parry & Urwin, 2011).

In conclusion, there are differences in work attributes and motivation among generations in Indian and international researchers. Deep understanding of generations may lead to socio-cultural linkages of differences in work attributes of generational members. By understanding similarities and differences between generations, managers can develop relevant policies and improve retention, engage-

ment and performance of the employees. It is a useful step in meeting diverse need of different generations. This strategy can help the organizations to attract talented younger employees and on the other hand it will also lead to higher rate of retention among existing employees.

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