

Clash of Generations: Assessing the Impact of Generational Diversity in a Workforce

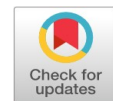
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Abstract: This study aims at investigating the generational diversity at workplace and how perceived generational differences formulate to actual differences between age cohorts which leads to a higher likelihood of dangerous workplace conflict, ostracism, and decreased willpower caused by a difference in mentality, values, and work approaches relative to age distinctions. This study adopted a survey design and gathered data from organizations with workforce diversity; data was gathered from respondents belonging to Gen X Y and Z. Both individual and group-level data were obtained and analyzed for this study. This study highlights that generational diversity within the workplace has i) an insignificant relationship with workplace conflict, ii) a positive relationship with ostracism, and iii) a negative relationship with willpower. Moreover, the findings suggest that power in the workplace plays no role in the relationship between generational diversity and outcomes. This study has expanded the divided body of existing knowledge concerning workplace conflict.

Keywords: Workplace conflict, Generational diversity, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the fine delineation between yielding the phenomenon of diversity as a weapon to gain the metaphorical spotlight and disregarding its use to enter the twilight zone is by how much an organization comprehends its existence and implication. While a wide array of businesses have acknowledged the double edged presence of sensationalized differential issues relating to gender and race, seldom is heard about corporate giants paying heed to the prevailing difficulty of managing a multi-generational workforce, which currently details four generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y, and Z.

The importance of generational diversity lies in its pedestrian recognition and undermined negative implications. While previous literature has identified differences in cohorts within particular situations (Becker, Richards, & Stollings, 2020; Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012) and management technique to tackle probable tensions, there has been little extrapolation on the hazardous consequences of age diversity itself. In lieu of the existence and perils of age stereotypes (Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010), past literature sheds light on how various age cohorts allow preconceived beliefs and negative perceptions influence certain values, behaviors, and psychological phenomenon such as organizational commitment (Becton, Walker, & JonesFarmer, 2014; Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015) but is yet to delve into the notion of negative age perceptions leading to threatening outcomes. Hence, to explore the true role of generational cohorts within a workforce with respect to possible daunting consequences, two ways of analyzing the gap will be addressed.

Firstly, since a growing body of literature of management research has started spreading light on Workplace Ostracism as a frequent and unwanted visitor in organizations, it is necessary to understand where age diversity stands in its prevalence. This, of course, is not a shot in the dark for a plethora of growing reasons. Workplace Ostracism, defined by Ferris, Brown, Berry, and Lian (2008), weighs on the perception of individuals based on their feelings of isolation and exclusion from others. As theorized

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by [Robinson, O'Reilly, and Wang \(2013\)](#), employees possess the tendency to perceive social groups on the basis of similarity and, hence, develop the unintentional or intentional propensity to drift away and eventually shut out individuals with different or dissimilar interests. The extent of this hypothesis has not been studied in the concept of diversity, whereby, the latter is a known contextual phenomenon leading to the involuntary or purposeful grouping of likeminded individuals to form a social context of shared beliefs. Therefore, a defined problem burrowed in this study is: Does generational diversity lead to workplace ostracism due to shared similarities in values, beliefs, experiences, and cognition within age cohorts?

Secondly, with various bouts of diversity dabbling into the context and prevalence of adverse workplace outcomes with the likes of discrimination, incivility, delayed promotion, suppressed employee voice, and high turnover, to name a few, workplace conflict may be spotted as a popular and mercurial area of interest when exploring the former. However, it must also be noted that this is a field where literature falls short as past researchers shed preference on prominent topics of diversity such as race, gender, and religion, but have yet to take age into account. While past research has dipped into the characteristics of employees relative to their generations which may bear conflict inciting behavior or mindsets which possess iotas of aggression, a gap ensues where these qualities have not been used to establish a direct link with workplace conflict itself. Therefore, the importance of this study lies in exploring whether these tendencies have the capability of leading to negative conflict or not. Its necessity is strengthened by the possibility of how most perceived generational differences formulate to actual differences between age cohorts which leads to a higher likelihood of dangerous workplace conflict caused by a difference in mentality, values, and work approaches relative to age distinctions. Consequentially, the second research problem that requires gratification is: Does generation diversity lead to workplace conflict in the light of defined generational differences, social categorization, and varying approaches among cohorts?

Additionally, in crux of the problems identified within this study, an approach to reaching an appropriate conclusion will be done through the following objectives:

- To assess the causes and consequences of employee reaction when exposed to generational cohorts within three generations in the workplace: Generations X, Y, and Z.
- To examine the role of the power of an employee in GC and assess the extent to which it justifies employee reactions.
- To relate the consequences of employee reaction under the constraints of power and other structures (industry, organization, etc) to the causes of workplace conflict, workplace ostracism and willpower.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generational diversity in the workplace

The division of generations stems from the Generational Cohort Theory in which individuals belong to age constructs delineated by experience, values, and beliefs respective of the period they are born in ([Lester et al., 2012](#); [Inglehart, 2015](#)). The true essence of this sect of diversity, however, is proclaimed in its impact on work in terms of values supported by members of the same generation ([Becton et al., 2014](#); [Kupperschmidt, 2000](#)).

The concept of a generational cohort can be described as one's belongingness to their generational identity which is an amalgam of life-course stage, position in the family and place within history to generate a sense of similarity and distance that is loosely based on age ([Biggs & Lowenstein, 2013](#); [Leon-Perez, Medina, Arenas, & Munduate, 2015](#)). Moreover, a profusion of literature discusses the relevance of generational diversity, but lacks in properly defining the prospect. Therefore, with respect to the current workplace trends, a multi-generational workforce will include the following cohorts for this study:

Gen X: Generation X individuals were born between the years 1965 to 1980 ([Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013](#)). Gen Xers tend to be independent but are somewhat doubtful of authority. Employees of this cohort prefer to work alone and can lack in interpersonal skills. Generation X is commonly seen as a cohort of skeptical people who lean more towards a causal work environment and have a weaker work ethic than those of the previous generations ([Twenge et al., 2010](#)). Key characteristics of this generation

also include high intrinsic motivation, technology preference and strong delineation between their work and personal life (Lester et al., 2012).

Gen Y: This generation's millennials were born between 1981 and 2000 (Becton et al., 2014; Gursoy et al., 2013). Generation Y employees are typically seen as a technology-driven and an innovative group of multitasking people who are focused on creating idealistic and fun work environment for their fellow cohorts (Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, & Brown, 2007). Generation Y is more progressive, technologically savvy, well taught and more diverse culturally than any other previous generation.

Gen Z: This controversial cohort continues to hold a little ambiguity over which years it spans over. The current consensus on the matter is that their birth ranges from mid-90s to early 2000s. A defining characteristic of Generation Z is its reliance on the Internet which trumps that of the previous generations combined (Goh & Lee, 2018). Furthermore, individuals of this generation portray self-confidence, embrace team spirit, require assurance for their future, seek happiness at the work-place and desire independence over authority. As opposed to its predecessors, generation Z also reckons with real time communication and flexibility in their work values (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

While previous research has been noted to specify generational diversity to organizations and support its prevalence in effecting the pragmatism of work (Lester et al., 2012), the broad generalization of how this feat can specifically target certain aspects of the workplace can be modeled through Haeberle, Herzberg, and Hobbs (2009) where age differences were found to have strong repercussions on communication, technology, leadership, and the logical systems of organizations. As stated by Lester et al. (2012), differences between generational groups exist in reality where most of the perceived differences between employees stand in actualization. This is prioritized by what every generation regards in work values which make it distinctive from other cohorts and can be exemplified by how Boomers would prefer fewer job mobility than Gen X and Y or Gen X will pay less homage to authority than Gen Y (Becton et al., 2014). These differences also stem from the existence of age stereotypes tailored through age within individuals which acts as an influencer of worker perception and attitude leading to negative work outcomes, such as poor performance ratings for members of older cohorts (Doherty, Fink, Inglis, & Pastore, 2010; Posthuma & Campion, 2009), due to members of a cohort sharing life experiences and subjective norms (Becton et al., 2014).

In addition to this, research over the debate of generational differences caused by a multi-generational workforce in more recent years displays frequency in understanding the managerial implications, leadership inclusiveness, training solutions of such a workforce with respect to their significant differences to avoid any adverse outcomes (Cekada, 2012). Furthermore, a plethora of literature has directed itself to comprehending gaps in understanding of values, behavior, and cognition as possible sources of conflicts within work environments between generational cohorts (Becton et al., 2014; Twenge et al., 2010).

Hence, in conviction of what has already been proven, a multi-generational workforce has been viewed as a pit of various generational cohorts sub-categorized into their own shared experiences and characteristics as well as possible instigator of negative outcomes in a work environment with more emphasis placed on its role in challenges faced by the controlling authority. However, a gap in research exists where this undermined concept of diversity has not yet been emphasized on how its differences relate to specific negative outcomes specifically conflict and ostracism considering that age diversity is prone to spewing age stereotypes where employees enter an organization with preconceived beliefs of others (Posthuma & Campion, 2009) and harmful cohort differences which are a result of perception rather than reality (Robinson et al., 2013).

Workplace conflict

Conflict, in its simplest form, may be defined as 'when group members perceive discrepancies, incompatible wishes or desires among them' (Chuang, Church, & Zikic, 2004). While the debate of the outcome of conflict has been divided over the tenure of its academic relevance over whether conflicts specifically in the workplace have a positive or negative outcome (Chuang et al., 2004), the relevance of conflict in this research refers to the destructive nature of this predicament. This nature has been extrapolated by De Cieri, Sheehan, Donohue, Shea, and Cooper (2019) as conflict which may arise due

to variation in views over resources or the work itself but aggravated due to the resulting realization of differing perceptions and incompatibilities which leads to individuals then highlighting their relationships as the incendiary (Leon-Perez et al., 2015; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

Furthermore, with a deluge of literature focused on the types and dimensions of conflicts arising in the workplace environment, this study considers task, emotional, and relationship conflict as probable consequences of diversity. Centering on model by Pelled, Eisenhardt, and Xin (1999) model of exploring a link between diversity and task as well as emotional conflict, it can be concluded that due to atypical preferences and discrepancies for tasks (Pelled et al., 1999), a strong relationship exists between demographic diversity and task conflict with similar results reflected in the link between the aforementioned diversity and emotional conflict due to the manipulation of individual subconscious to group themselves into a social strata (Pelled et al., 1999; Tajfel, 1982). As a result, task and emotional conflict will hold little to no importance in the overall role of conflict in this study, leaving relationship conflict as the greenlit highlight of the variable.

Relationship conflict may be referred to as conflicts related to interpersonal issues, political norms and values, and personal taste which are independent of the tasks assigned to individuals (Pelled et al., 1999). In recent literature, this branch of conflict has been noted to be studied in the role of an antecedent and supporting variable under situations similar to as a source for abusive supervision and workplace bullying (Leon-Perez et al., 2015), in mediation of other forms of conflict with resultant behaviors (Leon-Perez et al., 2015), and in moderation of disturbing psychological stressors within workplaces.

Hence, with little research directed towards relationship conflict as an outcome of workplace behaviors and environments, it will be explored as a consequence of a multi-generational workforce due to the variety of clashing perceptions, stereotypes, and values found in age diversity (Inglehart, 2015) and the role of these preconceived beliefs and work values as instigators of relationship conflict (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

Generational diversity and workplace conflict

The relationship between generational diversity and workplace conflict dates back to the Generational Cohort Theory defining individuals into age cohorts (Inglehart, 2015). The importance of age cohorts can be emphasized through the consideration of the Social Identity Theory and the Social Categorization Theory (Chuang et al., 2004; Tajfel, 1982). The theories emphasize on individuals in this scenario employees boxing themselves in social constructs as differentials from others through visible characteristics, which is age in this study. To build a positive self in comparison to their surroundings, employees will identify themselves as well as people with similar attributes as participants of the in-group while classifying others as members of the out-group for the purpose of accentuating themselves (Abdurrahman & Osman, 2017; Garai-Fodor, 2019). To remain in congruence with their perceived in-group, individuals will be prone to stereotypical perceptions, such as age stereotypes which may have negative repercussions (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

On the other hand, relationship conflict in the workplace arises due to conflicting values and perceptions which may not be related to the work itself (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Hence, it is proposed that on the basis of the Social Identity Theory/Social Categorization Theory, employees will identify themselves in generational cohorts and be prone to age stereotypes against the perceived members of other cohorts which, in turn, will cause conflicting incompatibilities to be highlighted among them and give rise to relationship conflict.

H1: Generational diversity has a direct and positive relationship with workplace conflict.

Workplace ostracism

As a fairly novel concept in the research of alarming workplace behaviors, workplace ostracism is passive aggression which may refer to giving the silent treatment to particular individuals. While the repercussions of ostracism have been studied by a tenfold to underline its alarming psychological distress and workplace deviance (Robinson et al., 2013; Oliveira & Cardoso, 2018), the facets against which this concept has been tested against are quite limited.

As such, this study will refer to [Robinson et al. \(2013\)](#) classification of ostracism with respect to its reasoning. The first type of ostracism defined is purposeful, where individuals are fully conscious of the aftermath of their neglect, which can be termed the silent treatment. This may be for a greater or personal good specifically in terms of groups ([Wesselmann, Wirth, Pryor, Reeder, & Williams, 2013](#)) or to avoid counterproductive and psychologically discomforting behavior ([Kurzban & Leary, 2001](#)). Furthermore, the second type of ostracism is non-purposeful where individuals may be unaware of their neglect of another person which may range from distraction by one's own work in neglecting another to social norms disallowing an individual from acknowledging another ([Robinson et al., 2013](#)). Similarly, the scenario of non-purposeful ostracism can be extended to employees belonging to different age brackets failing to connect socially.

Several antecedents of non-purposeful ostracism have been explored those ranging from personality to emotional burnout and resource limitation ([L. Wu, Wei, & Hui, 2011](#); [L. Z. Wu, Yim, Kwan, & Zhang, 2012](#)) with the common factor of dissimilarity coloring all non-purposeful ostracized relationships. This dissimilarity, however, has not yet been observed in the guise of diversity other than in the form of a moderator.

Generational diversity and workplace ostracism

Generational diversity, as a constituent of various cohorts, has also been an abode for unspoken subjective norms indulged on its cohorts, as evidenced by the Social Identity Theory's social self ([Oliveira & Cardoso, 2018](#)). This is extrapolated by the congruence of the part of an individual an employee in this scenario which is a reflection of his or her membership in a social group age cohorts in this situation which they work to salvage ([Tajfel, 1982](#)). Therefore, it can be hypothesized that age cohorts have specific social norms that members of the cohort perceive themselves to understand only which can be a leading cause of unintentionally ostracizing an older or younger employee.

H2: Generational diversity has a positive relationship with workplace ostracism.

Willpower

Willpower may be defined as the drive towards goal-attainment or exercising a consistent, personal energy in working towards the achievement of goals ([Peterson & Luthans, 2003](#)). While willpower may be defined as a strong determinant of positive outcomes in one's life ([Baumeister, 2013](#)), it is an area that has received minimal coverage by previous management or workplace literature. Those which have delved into willpower have found leadership effectiveness to be the focal point ([Karp, 2015](#)), have harnessed the variable as a gun in a sword fight for employees who strive to achieve higher bouts of leadership ([Baumeister, 2013](#)), or explored its role in the study of self-control and demands among workers ([Kupperschmidt, 2000](#)). With the concept of willpower deep-rooted as a product of nurture as much as nature, its past research furthers in assessing whether the absence of such a quality would lead to personal inhibitions, antisocial behavior, violent attitudes, or, in some cases, criminal outcomes within the workplace ([Baumeister, 2013](#)). Such a characteristic as a product of nurture finds itself to be an undermined and understudied which directs employees, particularly leaders, towards highly attainable outcomes should planning in goal-orientation be pursued. This particular characteristic has yet to be defined regarding the types of employees that may exist in a workplace.

Generational diversity and willpower

The study of generational diversity with respect to willpower is proposed on the bases of the Generational Identity Theory itself. Considering the three generational cohorts under study Generation X, Y, and Z the GIT states that particular experiences, beliefs, and most importantly, approaches to work, set individuals apart in distinguishable generational groups. A further analysis within this claim affirms its conclusion by identifying Generation X with characteristics that prioritize self-career development and have bouts of intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation while Generation Y prefers the same development with little satisfaction on being intrinsically and extrinsically motivated ([Karp, 2015](#)). The exploration of these generations in this regard has been painted all over literature where generations have been found

to significantly differ in terms of willingness to work overtime, job mobility, work family values, etc. (Becton et al., 2014). These differences give rise the Social Categorization Theory which, as mentioned before, leads to highly negative stereotypes across cohorts. Therefore, on the basis of GIT identifying generations to have a stark difference in work values and with respect to SCT, it is hypothesized that negative stereotypes and perceptions will negatively impact the determination or positive outlook of an employee in the form of Willpower which exists in different variation across generational cohorts. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Generational diversity has a direct and negative impact on employee willpower.

Workplace power as moderator

Power has been defined as the control over resources, people, and things (Elliott & Smith, 2004), whereby, an individual has control over valuable resources, is able to impose his/her will on others and is able to impose, and is able to influence the outcome of others (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Hershcovis, Ogunfowora, Reich, & Christie, 2017).

The modernization of this variable cannot transcend the foundation laid by French and Raven in their eponymous model for the five bases of power reward, expert, coercive, legitimate, and referent which are facets found on every level of the organization regardless of their type and the appellation of the job (Parmer & Dillard Jr, 2019). Furthermore, another distinct characteristic of the variable of power is the need for employees to comprehend the perceived power in an organization for the sake of goal-orientation and direction (Parmer & Dillard Jr, 2019).

While power has seen scarce extrapolation through previous literature, its research branches to contexts revolving around supervisor-employee relationships (Holmes & Stubbe, 2015), negative outcomes, and management techniques (Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Holmes & Stubbe, 2015) in frequency, its association with implications in workplace bullying, incivility, and diversity have been found to be subject to the most interest. Power's role in bullying stems from the definition of workplace bullying itself, whereby, it is identified to be a case of imbalanced power while incivility is studied under the pretext of perceived mistreatment by a higher authority (Hershcovis et al., 2017). Either variables have proven that unfavorable and undesired outcomes may be either mitigated or heightened in the presence and absence of perceived power. However, this is where the extent of unfavorable outcomes diminishes as an area of concern due to the absence of damaging effects with the likes of workplace conflict, ostracism, deviance, and violence.

In addition, power's past research has dabbled into the concept of diversity and its role in influencing an individual's position, promotion and psychological well-being within a disparate workforce (Doherty et al., 2010; Fiske & Hancock, 2016). Particularly, power has been found to shadow the imbalance of workplace performance and career development in terms of gender (Elliott & Smith, 2004) and race diversity (Fiske & Hancock, 2016) to the membership of employees in their perceived social groups (Elliott & Smith, 2004). This concept, however, has yet to be observed within age diversity where similar social stratification takes place.

As a result of previous literature skimming over the effect of power on outcomes similar to incivility and bullying in diverse work settings, the following hypothesis are proposed:

H4: Workplace power strengthens/weakens the effect of generational diversity on workplace ostracism.

The influence of power over the relationship between generational diversity and ostracism can be studied in two ways: among those without and those with power. Firstly, when addressing employees without the tool of power, it is important to note that the severity of ostracism is measured by its psychological intensity - how much an individual victimized by it is aware of and feels its effects (Robinson et al., 2013). The root cause of such an impact is due to the nature of those in the position of a lack of power who are sensitive towards the behavior of those with considerably higher power due to their influential consequences (Fiske & Hancock, 2016). Secondly, with individuals honing the skill and authority of considerably higher power, it is necessary to note that such individuals actively seek social connections. Hence, high power has a strong association with socially connectivity and interactions which is a setting where ostracism cannot thrive (Narayanan, Tai, & Kinias, 2013).

Furthermore, the moderation of such a variable can be strengthened through reliance on the Group-Value Model specified by [Hershcovis et al. \(2017\)](#). As done with incivility, power moderates the perception of mistreatment and sifting of self-serving information as low powered individuals pay more heed to those with high power ([Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003](#)) because it heightens the effect of any behavior displayed by the latter. This, in line with [Elliott and Smith \(2004\)](#) conclusion of power mitigating or worsening a diverse environment and [Robinson et al. \(2013\)](#) research that ostracism has a greater impact due to perception in victims under the guise of power, leads to the proposition of the hypothesis that power moderates the effect of generational diversity on workplace ostracism.

H5: Workplace power strengthens/weakens the effect of generational diversity on workplace conflict

The theorization of the moderation of workplace power between generational diversity and workplace conflict can be done through ([Berger, Ridgeway, Fisek, & Norman, 1998](#)) Status Expectation Theory where employees develop expected competencies which lead to a power hierarchy and form the bases for perceived differences and social inequality. Considering that generational diversity gives rise to stereotypes ([Posthuma & Campion, 2009](#)) and has members of age cohorts develop certain perceptions about those with varying age groups, it is theorized that these impressions lead to the appointment of hierarchical, formal power, defined as legitimate by French and Raven which in turn heightens social inequality. Consequentially, a precedence of this resulting social inequality has been proven to be that employees are prone to be more stereotypical towards those with higher power than those that land on the opposite end of the spectrum ([Fiske & Hancock, 2016](#)). Moreover, this tendency to encourage power through perceived differences and then partake in stereotyping on the bases of high powered and low powered individuals has been found to espouse intergroup workplace conflict ([Keltner et al., 2003](#)). Therefore, it is hypothesized that workplace power can strengthen the effect of generational diversity on workplace conflict in the light of stereotypical perceptions surrounding power and weaken it should this issue be properly addressed.

H6: Workplace power strengthens/weakens the effect of generational diversity on employee willpower.

The moderation of workplace power on generational diversity and willpower will be explained with reference to [Karp \(2015\)](#) theory of leadership's use of the latter variable. Leadership is centralized on power and roles but is also defined by the ability to express positivity and goal-orientation in crucial times. Willpower revolves around the ability to lead by finding this particular quality in powerful leaders with the likes of historical figures. Since leadership involves two categories with the first relating to assumed power in the manner of formal power, it can be hypothesized that workplace power influences leadership by assigning leaders who are then expected, and as a result display higher levels of willpower as compared to employees with lesser assigned power.

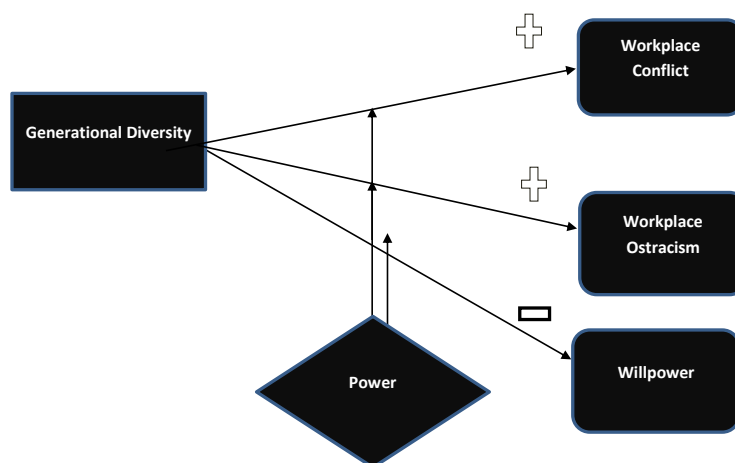


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The implication of generational diversity on various negative outcomes such as workplace conflict and workplace ostracism with workplace power as the moderator (Figure 1) will be studied through surveys conducted in organizations from employees, in groups as well as individual, in industries comprising of Generation X, Y and, specifically, Z as it is a fairly novel entry in the multi-generational workforce. The implication of the studies are being observed organization wide, which can be identified as the research's unit of analysis as the frame within which it is being conducted due to generational density in the overall workplace as the main focus.

Sample

The data collected centered around a quantitative approach consisted of 150 participants from private businesses including the likes of telecommunication, banking, and Information Technology where age diverse workforces were found in the manner of Generation Z dwelling as trainees or new recruits and Generation Y and Z found in abundance within middle management with a few in top level management. The sample consisted of 37.6% of Generation Z, 51.5% of Generation Y, and 11% of Generation X.

Measure

In order to encompass the effects the various generational cohorts, age has been measured in the form of a ratio scale, where participants were asked their age and their age cohort to gather effects from all generational groups within a workforce and differentiate their answers relative to their characteristics on the basis of literature. In addition, the dependent variables and moderator used within this study made use of preconceived scales.

Workplace conflict: Workplace conflict, under the specification of relationship conflict, was measured with the use of 5 items to be assessed using a 6-point Likert Scale where (6) was Strongly Agree, (5) Slightly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Disagree, (2) Slightly Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree. The items were taken from Friedman's (2000) measure of workplace conflict specifically relationship and relate to the measures of hostile environments, coworker plotting, and negative interpersonal feelings through the following 5 items: 1) The atmosphere here is often charged with hostility, 2) Backbiting is a frequent occurrence, 3) One party frequently undermines another, 4) There are often feelings of hostility among parties, and 5) Much "plotting" takes place "behind the scenes."

Workplace ostracism: Workplace ostracism is studied through Ferris et al. (2008) classic 10-item measurement scale with particular relevance given to its items independent of workplace implications to ensure that unintentional or non-purposeful ostracism is being measured, whereby, individuals do not realize that they are giving another the silent treatment due to previously conceived subjective norms backed by generations. The measurement of these items will be carried through a 7 point Likert scale of (7) as Strongly Agree, (6) More or Less Agree, (5) Agree, (4) Undecided, (3) Disagree, (2) More or Less Disagree, (1) Disagree.

Workplace power: Power's effects were measured using Elliott and Smith (2004) scale a reliable measure used in the context of gender and race diversity - consisting of 3 items: 1) Do you supervise another employee who is directly responsible to you? 2) Do you influence or set the rate of pay received by others? and 3) Do you have authority to hire or fire others? The responses were assessed as open ended questions.

Willpower: Willpower's effects were measured using scale consisting of 6 items: 1) I can think of many ways to reach my current goals, 2) If I find myself troubled at work, I can think of many ways to overcome it, 3) There are lots of ways around any problem? 4) At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals, 5) At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself, and 6) Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work. The measurement of these items will be carried through a 6-point Likert Scale where (6) was Strongly Agree, (5) Slightly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Disagree, (2) Slightly Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree.

Sample Characteristics

The total number of respondents taken for this study were 139, specifying in private businesses where participants from the ages 21 above worked in professional positions pertaining to trainees, middle management and a little extraction from top management. As the independent variable of this study is Generational Diversity, the respondents were assigned 3 categories: Generation X, Y, and Z. Out of the total number of respondents, 25.4% were Generation X, 55.1% were Generation Y, and 19.6% were Generation Z which signified that Millennials frequented workplaces more than the other two generations as Generation Z is a fairly new entry into the job market while Generation X has been pushed to top management positions or retirement.

Additionally, the variable willpower (Table 1) has the highest mean which indicates that majority of people agreed on the questions. Variable Power has the lowest mean which indicates that majority of people disagreed to the question items. We can say that majority of the respondents don't have power to hire or fire an employee. Furthermore, with a standard deviation of 0.3232, the variable PW has the highest consistency. Whereas OS has the lowest consistency with a mean of 1.4289 (Table 1).

ANALYSIS

Table 1: Correlation statistics

	Cronbach	Mean	SD	GEN	OS	WP	CN	PW
GEN	-	1.9496	0.66293	1				
OS	0.939	2.3504	1.42891	0.216*	1			
WP	0.865	4.4808	0.94197	-0.092	-0.184*	1		
CN	0.946	3.1612	1.29433	0.008	0.369**	0.150	1	
PW	0.856	1.7120	0.3232	0.209*	0.274*	0.041	0.238**	1

Note: ** Correlation significant at 0.01, * Correlation significant at 0.05, N=139

GN = Generational Diversity; OS = Ostracism; WP = Willpower; CN = Conflict; PW = Power

H1 theorized that Generational Diversity (Gen) in a workforce will have a direct and positive relationship with Workplace Conflict (CN) under a lack of power (PW). The correlation (Table 1) between Gen and CN indicates a positive relationship as at 0.008, an increase in Gen leads to an increase in CN though the increase in CN may be minimal while the reliability of the model is seen to be 0.946 (Table 1). In addition, with respect to Table 1, it can be concluded that a rise in Gen leads to a 0.015 rise in CN indicating a moderate change. However, the significance of this relationship is questioned through the *p*-value of the CN model which produces a value of 0.1665 (Table 3). It must also be noted that the analysis of Gen as an IV was observed in the delineation of 3 groups: Generation X (GenX), Generation Y (GenY), and Generation Z (Gen Z). The results affirm that Gen Y, in comparison Gen Z, holds a *p*-value of 0.9488 while Gen Z, under the same comparison, has a significance of 0.6242. Furthermore, the *R*² value of Gen on CN was found to be 0.5, arguing that Gen has a mere 5.65% impact on CN. Therefore, H2 is rejected as while Gen positively effects CN within a workforce, the relationship is insignificant on the basis of a *p*-value of over 0.05 supplemented by equally insignificant categories of Gen.

In addition, H2 posited that Generational Diversity in a workforce will have a direct and positive relationship with Workplace Ostracism (OS) under a lack of power. Observing the correlation of Gen and OS within this construct reveals a positive and significant relationship at 0.216 which indicates that an increase in Gen will lead to an increase in OS as well while the reliability of the model is seen to be 0.939 (Table 1) indicating highly reliable measurement. Indeed, every increase in Gen generates a 0.466 increase in Ostracism indicating a relatively high change. The significance of this theorization is emphasized by the *p*-value of the relationship model which is found to be 0.0082 (Table 4). Since Gen as an IV is further categorized, the significance of the 3 categories of the variable indicate that Gen Y, with respect to Gen X, has a 0.0071 *p*-value while Gen Z, in the same base comparison, holds a value of 0.0593. These may be interpreted to portray that Gen Y has the highest tendency to ostracize employees of different generation cohorts among all 3 categories. The impact of Gen on OS is augmented by an *R*² value of 10.92 which

proves that in a social setting amongst the influence of other variables, Gen has a 10.92% impact. Hence, it can be concluded that H2 is accepted as Gen has a positive and significant effect on OS with all 3 of its cohorts displaying significant prospects of ostracizing each other's members.

The results of the research now expand to H3 of the study which postulated that Generational Diversity will have a direct and negative relationship with Willpower (WP) with power as a moderator. The relationship is proven to be direct and negative at -0.092 which proposes that an increase in Gen leads to a decrease in employee WP whose model is proven to be highly reliable model with a value of 0.865 (Table 1). Additionally, every increase in Gen generates a 0.13 reduction in WP among employees operating in this form of diversity (Table 2). However, the detailed interpretation of this relationship produces interesting and varying results (Table 5). While the *p*-value of Gen and WP is found to be marginally significant at 0.073, a detailed analysis of the 3 categories indicated that Gen Y and Z, as compared to Gen X, have a 0.007 and 0.059 significance respectively when partaking in the decrease of WP in employees working under the canopy of Generational Diversity which are of acceptable significant standings. The results portray that Gen Y is the most likely generation to face the dilemma of reduced willpower as compared to the other 2 cohorts. They also point to Gen Z facing minimized willpower in the same workforce albeit a moderate significance which may indicate that Gen Z relates to most items detailed for WP. Therefore, while H3 is rejected where Gen has an overall direct and negative relationship with WP, Gen X, Y, and Z have been proven to partake significantly in reduced willpower with an increase in this form of diversity.

Lastly, the role of PW as a moderator has been observed throughout the study. While PW itself holds significant relationships with Gen and OS and a highly significant relationship with CN (Table 2), it proves to have no effect on the relationship between Gen and any of its proposed DVs. This is proven by the varying LLCI and ULCI values of the three DVs (Table 3, 4, 5) where the signs of LLCI and ULCI are different i.e the sign of LLCI is negative and the sign of ULCI is positive so we can conclude that power has no moderating effect on the relation of independent variable (Generation) and Dependent Variables (OS, CN and WP).

Table 2: Regression analysis

	β	R^2
Ostracism	0.466	0.047
Conflict	0.015	0.00
Will Power	-0.131	0.009

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, $N = 139$

Table 3: Regression analysis with workplace conflict as outcome

	Coeff	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.2370	0.2150	15.0592	0.0000	2.8120	3.6619
X1	-0.0133	0.2568	-0.0517	0.9589	-0.5209	-0.4943
X2	-0.1598	0.3304	-0.4836	0.6294	-0.8130	0.4934
PW_M	0.5896	0.6030	0.9778	0.3298	-0.6024	1.7817
Int_1	0.4059	0.7372	0.5506	0.5828	-1.0515	1.8633
Int_2	1.2553	1.1938	1.0515	0.2948	-1.1048	3.6153

Note: ** Correlation significant at 0.01, * Correlation significant at 0.05, $N=139$

Table 4: Regression analysis with ostracism as outcome

'	Coeff	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.7586	0.2434	7.2263	0.0000	1.2773	2.2400
X1	0.7895	0.2889	2.7329	0.0071	0.2181	1.3610
X2	0.7058	0.3710	1.9024	0.0593	-0.0280	1.4396
PW_M	0.6983	0.6604	1.0574	0.2922	-0.6079	2.4396
Int_1	0.2018	0.8132	0.2481	0.8044	-1.4067	2.0046
Int_2	0.6683	1.3607	0.4912	0.6241	-2.0231	3.3597

Note: ** Correlation significant at 0.01, * Correlation significant at 0.05, *N*=139

Table 5: Regression analysis with will power as outcome

'	Coeff	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.1819	0.02269	14.0248	0.0000	2.7332	3.6307
X1	-0.0173	0.2693	-0.0643	0.9488	-0.5500	0.5154
X2	-0.1698	0.3459	-.4910	0.6242	-0.8539	0.5143
PW_M	0.5683	0.6157	0.9230	0.3577	-0.6495	1.7861
Int_1	0.3484	0.7581	0.4596	0.6466	-1.1511	1.8479
Int_2	1.2817	1.2685	1.0104	0.3141	-1.2273	3.7908

Note: ** Correlation significant at 0.01, * Correlation significant at 0.05, *N*=139

DISCUSSION

The research findings implore that Generational Diversity within the workplace is has no relationship with Workplace Conflict while holding a direct and positive one with Workplace Ostracism and a relationship open for interpretation for Willpower. While previous literature has been found to be divided in the context of explaining workforce and team outcomes, the outcome of the analysis carried out may be explained under an umbrella of interpretations.

Firstly, age differences and stereotypes were not as distinguished as posited by previous research in workplace settings. While previous literature banks on the expanse of Social Identity and Social Categorization as a means to identify why generational cohorts may exist and round a workforce into various age-defined characteristics, the possibility of this form of categorization not taking place should also be considered. This relates to employees prioritizing and relating to other distinguished albeit unconscious characteristics which are more prevalent in their work life. The concept of identifying cohort categorization have been successful in past research but also reveal that it has a slight or minimal effect on outcome variation among social groups on the basis of generation, which forms the fundamentals of how this form of diversity may not be distinguishable due to its lack of result-orientation. Support on the near absence of this variable in assessing categorization comes from the case where negligent differences between generational cohorts exist in practical setting with a higher likelihood of such differences existing within a cohort, particularly that of personality, motivation, work values, etc., and with more elements of teamwork where age diversity and similar concepts fail to explain group behavior (Schneid, 2016). Consequentially, this postulates that individual differences hold more significance and social groups are formed on the basis of stronger and far more influential characteristics.

The crux of the study on the impact of Generational Diversity on Workplace Conflict is built on categorization playing an important part in defining negative stereotypes that may lead to Relationship Conflict. Therefore, with the current research taking place in workplace structures prevalent with teams, groups, and a collectivistic approach to work, variables embedded in the environment- such as biasness and team outcomes - influenced a lack of generational categorization and, thus, conflict.

Secondly, the research posited a positive and significant role of Generational Diversity in Workplace Ostracism which supported (Robinson et al., 2013) postulation of similarity in diversity leading to exclusion of dissimilar people. It further exemplifies SIT and SCT, whereby, employees create social groups on the basis of shared experiences, values, and beliefs which they wish to enhance as an in-group against other generational cohorts which they perceive as outgroups. Results indicate that Generation Y

holds the highest propensity to ostracize other cohorts with Generation Z following close. This draws support from the distinction in work values and subjective norms across cohorts. With Generation Y occupying the largest portion of workforces nowadays, it is no wonder that they are drawn and accustomed to similarity more than exclusion. Their nature of flexibility, liveliness, and increasingly high expectations stand in stark comparison with Generation X's skepticism, maturity, and need for control and Generation Z's reliance on remaining online, focus on acceptance, and self-reliance. This also heightens the already prevailing dominant image of Generation Y as the dauntingly influential workforce in most workforces in the current scenario. Since Generation Y is the canopy of influence under which Generation Z is entering the workforce, the latter's marginal significance of Ostracism may be attributed to Generation Y as a role model.

Thirdly, the findings of the study scatter marginally significant results for Willpower in generationally diverse employees. While the model has proven to be insignificant, its categories prove that when Generational Diversity increases, Willpower will decrease in Generation Y the most followed by Generation Z. This posits that Generation Y will be the first cohort to lose a positive outlook in crucial situations and while previous literature posits that this generational cohort has a knack for demanding autonomy, the findings of this study support the notion that Generation Y's have an increased tendency to job hop and quit for personal career development as a lack of Willpower due to increased stereotyping from outgroups may propose an antecedent for turnover intentions. Furthermore, the findings of this research also indicate that Generation Z trails close behind in its tendency to lose Willpower should generational diversity increase negative perceptions across cohorts. This supports and goes side by side with the cohort's preference for openness and acceptance, whereby, negative age stereotypes contribute to an adverse scenario. Moreover, a loss in Willpower due to increased negativity among different cohorts in Generation Y emphasizes on the cohort's tendency to flourish in lively and exciting environments rather than in detrimental ones.

Lastly, the role of power as a moderator was proven to be negligible within the current study. This pertains to the situation in which the variable was used as a moderator could be explained better in terms of novel employees as compared to those already present. Power is influential to Workplace Ostracism when employees are uncertain about their standing and draw perceptions about self from immediate authorities with a greater hold on power specifically new employees. This opens the door for further inquisitions as to what is regarded within the spectrum of power. If power centers around novel employees and their lack of understanding of the organizational dynamics within which they have entered, then the variable failed to moderate due to the distribution of data collection among middle and top management employees. However, if power posits to uncertainty within an individual regarding their organizational position and power dynamics, then the moderator focused more on assessing the legitimate power of an employee and drawing comparison between formal authority than taking accounts of employee worth attached to own power.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study contribute to painting new characteristics of Generations X, Y, and Z with particular importance given to the latter two. Since Ostracism is a relatively new field of research within the study of management, this research is one of the firsts to explore the tendency to exclude on the bases of social grouping within a workplace. It plays particular importance in predicting not only the probability of Ostracism within employees, but also in providing one of the first insights of the new job market entrant: Generation Z. Furthermore, it expands the divided body of existing knowledge with respect to Workplace Conflict as while a common conception exists of high conflict prevailing in highly diverse settings, the current study indicates that this only occurs in select situations. Lastly, the current study expanded the research in Willpower particularly with respect to nurture in the limited literature that exists on the subject matter.

As three very distinct generations coexist in a workforce, it is necessary to assess these possibilities for managerial implications. However, there were a few limitations faced when designing this research. With Pakistani organizations boasting of a collectivistic culture structured into teams, the effect of gener-

ational diversity was in the midst of other influencing variables that could not be determined. Therefore, future researches are advised to assess possible interfering factors when considering exploring this form of diversity within team and group oriented organizations. It was also found that the results were influenced by the type of organizations that were visited. Since this study is focused solely on private organizations where instances of conflict are instantly dealt with or which have flat structures, future researches are suggested to explore the true essence of generational diversity in more bureaucratic structures, especially that of public organizations where less heed is paid to employees harboring negative feelings. Moreover, with the given results of Willpower across generations, researchers can assess their applicability in different social contexts or with respect to organizational positions. Lastly, since Generational Diversity has proven to be directly related to negative outcomes such as Ostracism, future researchers are advised to explore the management techniques that may be of particular use to solving this dilemma.

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