



Generation Differences in Work Motivation: From Developing Country Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary way of living and the economic effects has had its consequence on the way business activities today handle the motivation of employees. Hence, organizations need to determine the best way to motivate their employees. This paper explores and determines motivational factors for Generation X and Generation Y employees in electric and electronic industry in Malaysia. Quantitative approach with self-administered questionnaire method has been employed for data collection of this study. A total number of 124 respondents based on Cluster sampling were participated in this research. This study revealed that both generations X and Y showing some differences in their Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation factors. It is recommended that organizations should modulate their operations and procedures to properly satisfy two distinct groups of generations.

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1. Introduction

Organizations today need to focus more on transforming their working environments to motivate their employees to engage in behavior that is consistent with their goal especially to compete in global rivalry market (Amar, 2004). Organizations not only need to understand the importance of employees' motivations, they also should comprehend the variances in preferences of motivation factors between various groups of employees' generations. Failure in satisfying these aspects could result in decline of organizations' total effectiveness. Subsequently resulting unwanted working environments which hinders employees' contributions towards casting into knowledge-based economy. Hence, motivating employees in the present day business activities are different from years ago because each generation have their own preference in working environment and expectations from their contributions (Agarwal et al., 2001). Unfortunately, employees' motivation issue found to be as a hidden value in most organization. For instance, Giancola (2006) found many organizations still continue with their old methods and procedures in guiding and monitoring their generational diversified employees, including employment activities, operation process, organizational procedures, evaluation criteria, appraisal methods, and remuneration packages.

In Malaysia the shifting of economic from agricultural products to industrial products such as Electric and electronic industry is very much relies on sufficient backups of educated labour force, market-oriented economy and good infrastructures. In order to sustain the global competitiveness, Malaysian industries should recognize that factors in deciding today's organization success is not only rely on their technology assets or capital power as years ago productivity (Third Outline Prospective Plan, 2011). Instead employees' contribution as well as willingness to abide is becoming more important. Which is why, employees' motivation issues and level of participations will be the linchpin in decide the speed of organization and country advancement. This study serves a purpose as to enhance organizations' awareness on their current business practice in understanding generations' differences and henceforth motivating employees to improve their citizenship performance.

This paper is structured as follows. First, this paper provides literature review of the study which provides the issues of the study. The paper continues with research methodology, report and discussion of the results. Finally, in its conclusion it highlighted some implications for practitioners.

2. Generation X and Y, and their motivation: evidence from literature

Who are Generation X and Y?

Generation is defined as people that are grouped within a certain range of ages, location they live, and significant life events they experienced at critical developmental stages (Kupperschmidt, 2000). The groups are often referred to as cohorts, whose members are linked to each other through shared life experiences during their formative years. In fact each cohort ages has been influenced by what sociologists

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call generational markers. Particularly, members of the cohort are influenced by events that have impacts on all members of the generational grouping (Zemke et al. 2000). As a result each generation has its own unique combination of experiences, expertise, prospective and expectations. It is believed that their similarities in terms of work values, attitudes, preferences, expectations, perceptions and behaviours are fettle from same or haemophilic historical, economic, and social experiences (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Zemke et al., 2000). With proper understanding, accepting and cooperation of these generations, organisation will enjoy stronger competitive advantages by utilizing and sharing their unique experiences and expertises

Generation X

Generation X refers to as Lost Generation who are born between 1966 - 1976 and reaching their age of 36 to 46 years old as of year 2012 (William, 2008, Tay, 2011). Generation X learned from their elders that following company rules and regulations is least likely secure their jobs (Dougan et al., 2008). This generation cohorts are placing a high importance on maintaining their work-life balance and constantly seeking for a balance between family, life and work (Gursoy et al., 2008; Kaylene et al., 2010). Hence, they rank their families and personal time very important to a level where they will least likely to sacrifice their leisure hours to go for work. Much of them are not willing to work at the weekends as these are the days they will get along with their families. They are often showing their demands when they face issues that may have effects on their lives (Cole et al, 2002).

A number of studies have discovered generation X possesses some important characteristic. For example Santos and Cox (2000) discovered generation X prefers organization that grant them flexible working schedule, high autonomy, interesting yet challenging work, and continuous opportunity for professional growth. Hence, they treat work delegated to them as tasks and prefer to do it on their own (Murphy, 2010). They are much dependent on their own skills and trust in their own judgments to perform their task independently (Richard, 2007). Gursoy et al. (2008) perceived Gen X employees as employees that prefer to work smartly they will always be looking for their own ways to carry out their task than just follow what their seniors usually do. With the aid of their characteristic nature in technological literacy, they displayed high favor in working environment that fill up by high technology that allowing them to carry out their task independently (Dougan et al., 2008).

In addition, they are much focused on self-career development (Santos & Cox, 2000) and motivated by desire to enhance their professional skills to increase their marketability for future career prospects (Richard, 2007; Dougan et al., 2008). Their decisions to whether remain or leave organization basely depends on opportunities for professional development and prefer direct and immediate recognition and reward (Hammil, 2005). They have low tolerance in queuing their turns for promotions and are looking forward to immediate recognitions and rewards them every time they did a good job (Dougan et al., 2008). Altimier (2006) found that much of the Generation X employees do not resist job hopping and are less interested to remain long in an organization, but believe that with their sufficient and competitive capabilities, job hopping will provide higher promotion opportunities and higher salary.

Moreover, a large number of Generation X employees have also experienced Asian Financial Crisis in year 1997 and suffered limited job opportunities in their young ages (Lager, 2006). In turn they have developed a low trust on their organization and quite skeptical for their organizations and have very low tolerance for bureaucracy and organizational regulations, especially regarding procedures that will obligate their performance (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). The summary of characteristics of Generation X is shows in Table 1 below;

Table 1. Summary of Generation X Characteristics

Characteristics	Sources
Focused on Self-Career	Santos and Cox, (2000), Richard, (2007), Dougan, Thomas, & Christina, (2008), Altimier (2006)
Work-Life Balance	Cole <i>et al.</i> , (2002), Kaylene <i>et al.</i> , (2010), Dougan <i>et al.</i> , (2008)
Self-Reliance	Gursoy <i>et al.</i> (2008), Richard, (2007), Murphy, (2010)
Individualistic	Richard, (2007)
Skeptic	Crumpacker & Crumpacker, (2007).
Value Prompt Recognition & Reward	Hammil, (2005), Dougan <i>et al.</i> , (2008)
Adaptable to New Technology	Dougan <i>et al.</i> , (2008)
Prefer Instant Feedback	Hammill, (2005), Dougan <i>et al.</i> , (2008)

Generation Y

On the other hand Generation Y is well known as Millennials who are born from 1980 to 2000 (William, 2008, Tay, 2011). According to Zemke et al., (2000) Generation Y employees are more cooperative and optimistic than their elders as most of them have high educational background or professional training. Hence, most of them are well graduated at least with Diploma or Degree in colleges or universities (William, 2008). Besides, they usually prefer to be casual in workplaces and expecting their managers to care for their well-being (Gursoy *et al.*, 2008). Nevertheless, they have a high tolerance in diversity in age, ethnicity, and gender orientation because they want this world to be a better place for everyone to live (Gursoy et al., 2008; Zemke et al., 2000).

In fact, generation Y are great collaborators and showing a high favour in teamwork (Dougan et al., 2008) and prefer to follow directions as long as there is flexibility for them to get the work done (Gursoy et al., 2008; Iyer & Reisenwitz, 2009). Their motivations rely very much on good teamwork with their team members (Murphy, 2010). Since they experienced an equal status and opportunities to voice in schools' extra-curriculums, they are also showing their capabilities in group activities, practicing instant communication and expecting feedback in their workplaces (Gursoy et al., 2008). Hence, they Generation Y are found to be grown up with advanced technology (Spiro, 2006). With

aids of high technologies, they are proficient in assimilating information quickly, grabbing for wider knowledge, and high capability in multitasking (Dogan et al., 2008). Thus, Tay (2010) pointed out that Generation Y employees would remain longer in organizations that invest and supplies sophisticated technologies and make their jobs interesting, challenging and entertaining. The summary of characteristics of generation Y is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Generation Y Characteristics

Characteristics	Source
Focused on Self-Career	Dogan et al., (2008)
Optimistic	Dogan et al., (2008), Gursoy et al., (2008) Zemke et al., (2000)
Pro-Diversity	Gursoy et al., (2008), Zemke et al., (2000)
Team Player	Gursoy et al., (2008), Iyer & Reisenwitz, (2009) Murphy, (2010), Dogan et al., (2008) Zemke et al., (2000)
Technology Savvy	Spiro, (2006), Dogan et al., (2008)
Casual	Gursoy et al., (2008)
Fun Loving	Tay (2010)
Work-Life Balance	Barron et al., (2007), Hammill, (2005)
Value Prompt Recognition & Reward	Spiro, (2006), Tay, (2011)

Motivation

Motivation is one of the most important factors that affect human behavior and performance. The term motivation has being discussed and conceptualized by various researchers. Wregner and Miller (2003) described motivation as something that energizes individuals to take action and which is concerned with the choices the individual makes as part of his or her goal-oriented behavior. According to Fuller et al. (2008), motivation is a person's intensity, direction and persistence of efforts to attain a specific objective. In recent research, motivation is defined by Saraswathi (2011) as the willingness to exert high levels of effort, toward organizational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need. Based on the above definition individuals' motivations start with recognition of a desire that is not present at the time the individual noticed, followed by mental desire to achieve something, thus following by physical actions to obtain the desire.

The level of motivation an individual or team exerted in their work task can affect all aspects of organizational performance. Among all content and process theories of motivation, Frederick Herzberg's well known Two-Factor Theory has introduce a simple yet distinctive factors of employees' motivations. The setting of theory has separated employees' motivation factors into Extrinsic and Intrinsic. Extrinsic Factors also well known as job context factors are extrinsic satisfactions granted by other people for employees (Robbins, 2009). These factors serve as guidance for employers in creating a favourable working environment where employees feel comfortable working inside. Intrinsic factors on the other hand are the one that actually contribute to employees' level of job satisfactions. It has widely being known as job content factors which aims to provide employees meaningful works that are able to intrinsically satisfy themselves by their works outcomes, responsibilities delegated experience learned, and achievements harvested (Robbins, 2009). Intrinsic Factors are very effective in creating and maintaining more durable positive effects on employees' performance towards their jobs as these factors are human basic needs for psychological growth.

Previous studies have shown that both extrinsic and intrinsic factors have influenced employee work motivation. For instance, Lahoud (2006) discovered that motivation factors are correlated positively with person's education and life experience. In another study among Japanese Electrical and Electronic Manufacturing Companies Mohani et al., (2010) revealed that older executives who have more work experience showed a higher level of motivation compared to the younger executives.

Several findings have probed deeper into preferences of Intrinsic and Extrinsic work Motivation Factors for Generation X and Generation Y. From a research conduct by Ringer and Garma (2006), Generation X was found to display higher preference for intrinsic motivations compared to Generation Y. Besides, Jang (2008) has concluded that Generation Y employees seem to be more motivated by extrinsic motivation than their elder generations. They are more likely to leave their jobs when another company provides better Extrinsic factors such as pay and benefits. In conclusion, this indicates that Generation Y employees have heavier needs in Extrinsic Motivations from their jobs compared to elder generations. Moreover, Leahy et al. (2011) also concluded from their research that Generation X have higher preferences on Intrinsic Motivation Factors, while Generation have mixed preferences for both Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Factors. Another research contributed by Alley (2011) also supported that Generation Y is motivated by Extrinsic Factors than Intrinsic Factors and they are highly oriented towards achievement value. Furthermore, research finding arrived from Lourdes et al. (2011) has concluded with similar statements, where Generation Y give their priorities to Extrinsic Motivations such as fixed working hours and job security, while Generation X give greater importance to Intrinsic Motivation Factors such as Recognitions for their work and sense of Achievements received from their community. In a recent study Zhou (2012) also found similar result in which Gen Y's are largely dissatisfied with their work, significantly more than their elder generations. Moreover, according to the Centre for Management Communication at University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business (2012; cited from Tim, 2012), Generation Y workers are less likely to be satisfied with their jobs. The reportage commented that across all major fields and industries, job satisfaction levels for new Generation Y professionals are plummeting. Lastly, a recent research that focuses on total of 370 individuals for Work Preference Inventory, Shea (2012) has suggested that Generation Y were greatly motivated by Extrinsic Motivation Factors compared to Generation X. Vice versa, they are less intrinsically motivated than their previous generations.

In summary, this research accepted that both Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors have their own motivation effects towards the two generation cohorts, rather than following conventional setting of theory where Extrinsic Factors will either arises job dissatisfaction or being neutral toward jobs, while Intrinsic will be the factors of employees' motivations. A numbers of research finding have further introduced to support this research model.

3. Methodology

This research was designed based on quantitative approach. A research model has been developed based on Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Figure 1). Based on the model a set of questionnaire consisted of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation factors were designed to determine respondents' preferences in Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors. The respondents were asked to answer each statement using Five point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly dissatisfied) to 5 (strongly satisfied).

The process of data collection is using drop-and-collect method. A total of 124 respondents from Electric and Electronic companies in Johor, Malaysia answered the questionnaires. The data captured then were analysed using SPSS version 20. Two types of data analysis have been performed are descriptive and T-test.

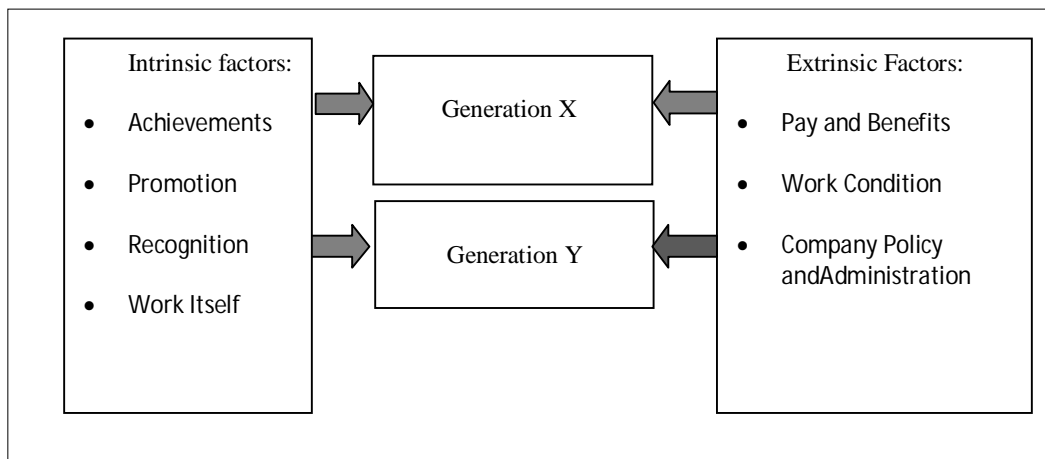


Figure 1. Research Model

4. Results and discussions

The findings as shown in Table 3 show that significant differences on level of both Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors for Generation X and Generation Y. Generation X respondents found to have high level of motivation on Work Itself and moderate motivation for Achievements, Recognition, and Promotion under Intrinsic Factors; while high satisfaction with Work Condition and Company Policy and Administration and moderate satisfaction with Pay and Benefit under Extrinsic Factors. In contrast, Generation Y respondents were found moderate motivation on Promotion, Recognition, Achievements and slightly motivation in Work Itself that categorised under Intrinsic Factors; while moderately motivation for all three extrinsic Work Condition, Company Policy and Administration as well as Pay and Benefit.

Table 4 presented the result of t-test for generation X and generation Y employees' intrinsic motivation factors. The value of Levene's Test for Equality of Variance is 0.00 and is less than 0.05, then the row labelled Equal variance not assumed are further being referred. Since results arrived from t-test has detected a significant where $r = 0.00$, $p < 0.05$, hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. In conclusion, at significant level .05 generation X and Generation Y employees in Electric and Electronic Industry in Malaysia are differing in their intrinsic motivation factors.

Table 5 presented the result of t-test for generation X and generation Y employees' Extrinsic Factors. The value of Levene's Test for Equality of Variance is 0.00 and is less than 0.05, then the row labeled Equal variance not assumed are further being referred. Since results arrived from t-test has also detected a significant where $r = 0.00$, $p < 0.05$, hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. In conclusion, Generation X and Generation Y employees in Electric and Electronic Industry in Malaysia are differing in their extrinsic motivation factors.

Table 3. Summary of motivation level for generation X and Y

Factors		Mean		Extents of Satisfaction	
		Generation X	Generation Y	Generation X	Generation Y
Intrinsic	Work Itself	3.60	2.49	High	Slightly
	Achievements	3.36	2.60	Moderate	Moderate
	Recognition	3.35	2.61	Moderate	Moderate
	Promotion	3.33	2.83	Moderate	Moderate
Extrinsic	Work Condition	3.61	2.75	High	Moderate
	Company Policy and Administration	3.51	2.81	High	Moderate
	Pay and Benefit	3.23	2.59	Moderate	Moderate

Table 4. Intrinsic motivation factors for Generation X and Y

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Intrinsic Factors	Equal variances assumed	39.192	.000	25.277	122	.000	.89939	.03558	.82895	.96982
	Equal variances not assumed			24.300	80.954	.000	.89939	.03701	.82575	.97303

Table 5. Extrinsic motivation factors for Generation X and Y

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Extrinsic Factors	Equal variances assumed	41.903	.000	25.818	122	.000	.90214	.03494	.83297	.97131
	Equal variances not assumed			27.018	89.751	.000	.90214	.03339	.83580	.96848

Findings of this study support earlier study by Mohani et al., (2010), in which employees' motivation are affected by years of working experience. Results have confirmed Generation X and Generation Y are differing from both satisfactions for Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivational factors. This revelation shows an instance where motivational factors are favouring only one side of party. The longer service periods Generation X has exerted for their organizations have directly or indirectly modulated working environments to fit their characteristics, whereas Generation Y that join in afterwards has found their characteristics un-match with it, hence reduce their extent of satisfactions towards same packages of motivational factors. Research results are further consistent with Zhou (2012) that focuses on Generation Y in China and Tim (2012) that conducted study in Southern California. In conclusion, same finding on Generation Y's low satisfaction on motivational factors have spanned across different geographical areas.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The fundamental purpose of this research was to study the satisfactions on motivation factors for Generation X and Generation Y employees. Significant differences on extents of satisfactions for both Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors on Generation X and Generation Y respondents have being confirmed from statistical calculations. Findings have presented that Generation Y respondents are having less satisfactions on Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation Factors compare to Generation X respondents. Findings arrived from the study has confirmed that generation cohorts have their own groups of characteristics, aspirations, and workplace expectations that in will subsequently turned up different extents of satisfactions for motivation factors. Moreover, among the seven motivation factors employed for this study, there were three factors as Work Itself, Work condition, and Company Policy and Administration found dissimilar in extent of satisfactions for the two generations. As these three factors are intercommunities between employees towards their work task, working environment and organizations' regulations, this study has concluded that the setting of overall organizational operations have match with Generation X work preferences; however, fail to satisfied Generation Y.

As the finding has reviewed most of the motivation factors were found in moderate level, it may denote that the generations of workers are not well motivated. It is recommended that organizations should reinforce the supply of motivation factors towards employees. In order to stimulate employees' satisfactions for motivation factors, organizations should review current employee appraiser and feedback systems that will ideally cover two groups of generations' work preferences. With successful system implementation, employees will inspired with better self-recognitions, higher sense of achievements and bring up equal promotion opportunities.

Among all factors used in this study, the most distinct of motivation factors was Work Itself where Generation X employees were highly satisfy but Generation Y employees were slightly satisfy with it. It is recommended that organizations should consider the design of work task that will not favour either generation of employees. Process of job re-design may be necessary in order to satisfy generational differences for ways of conducting works tasks. Besides, Work condition, and Company Policy and Administration were also found dissimilar in extent of satisfactions for the two generations. Organizations should also review their operation procedures and organizational regulations to increase adaptability of Generation Y employees towards working environment and organizations' regulations.

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