

Work Attitude and Work Performance in Women: Differences in Terms of Generation Cohorts and Occupations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences across three generational cohorts (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) from three occupational classes (Doctors, Teachers and Bankers) on work attitude and work performance. A paper and pencil questionnaire was administered on 259 potential participants. Findings suggest that as far as work attitude and work performance are concerned there are significant differences in attitude towards work and work performance with regard to the three generations, and with regard to the three occupations. Occupation based difference in work attitude and work performance could be seen across the generations. The paper also reveals a strong positive linear relationship between work attitude and work performance.

Keywords: Generational differences, women, work attitude, work performance.

Introduction

"We are on the verge of having more women in the workplace than ever before and on the verge of having more women in positions of power"(Raymond, 2001). According to Indian census (2001), the work participation rate of women increased from 19.67% in 1981 to 25.68% in 2001. The 21st Century has introduced different generations of women to the workplace with different experiences, ambitions, and styles of communication. Managers are realizing that generation has just as much to do with employees' hopes, learning styles, and expectations as do culture, gender and other characteristics. By understanding each generation and giving employees what they need to thrive, leaders can do more to increase productivity, morale and employee retention (Kogan, 2001).

By definition, a generation is a group of people who, based on their age, share not only a chronological location in history but also the experiences that accompany it. These common experiences, in turn, prompt the formation of shared beliefs and behaviors (Erickson, 2009). The most common years stated in the literature for grouping the generations are as follows:

- Baby Boomers: born between 1946 and 1964
- Generation X: born between 1965 and 1980
- Generation Y: born between 1981 and 1999.

Generational Gap or Generational Differences in Work Attitude at Workplace

Generation gap is a more modern term for the difference between generations, or milder than the extreme definition which calls this difference as the "clash" between the opinions, the attitudes and the behaviors of the younger and the older generations. Even though the members of each generation tend to have a unique group personality, (and we will describe the common attitudes and beliefs characteristic of that group), it would be a mistake to assume that all members of a particular generation are alike. Business owners looking for ways to improve worker productivity can start by evaluating the attitude their employees bring to the job each day.

Baby Boomer Women

"The women of the Baby Boomer generation entered young adulthood in the late 1960's, a time of enormous social change, their thoughts and actions directly challenged society's narrow and stifling rules for girls, going where women had never gone before" (Evans, et al.,1999). Baby Boomer women have become the predominant female role models in the workplace for Generations X and Y. This generation is driven and good at building and sustaining relationships. They believe in "going the extra mile" and want to please others. Like their parents, they dislike conflict and are reluctant to disagree with their peers or supervisors. Rather than focusing on the process used to complete a job, they are, instead, results-oriented. In other words, getting the job done is the most important thing, not how a person does it. Boomers live to work, and they respect authority and hierarchy in the work place. They expect their loyalty to the company to be rewarded through promotions based on seniority. They like being the star of the show

and getting credit for everything perceived as positive in the workplace. They tend to have big vision for their departments and for the company (Bryner, 2010).

This group is often viewed as self-absorbed, especially by members of the Silent Generation. Boomers are seen as clueless, self-righteous political workaholics by their Generation X children. Generation Y believes that the Boomers are cool, especially about music and know how to enjoy themselves (Patricelli, 2010).

Generation X Women

The women of Generation X grew up in a time of increasingly flexible gender roles. According to Patricelli (2010) the career decisions made by Generation X are not based entirely on money, but also on growth, learning, and what will help them get ahead in their careers. Generation X is apt to challenge established ways of doing things and reason that there is always a better way than the existing one (Bryner, 2010).

They expect immediate recognition through title, praise, promotions and pay. They also want everyone including their supervisors and managers to be direct with them. They work to live. Their job provides the means to enjoy their life. Their life outside of work is very important for them. They have very low tolerance for bureaucracy and rules, especially regarding time and attendance. They tend to prefer companies that offer flexible schedules, independence, professional growth, mentors, interesting work and time off. They expect more from the company they work for such as free workout facilities, free childcare facilities, and free meals (Gursoy, et al., 2008). Just like the Baby Boomer women may find the gap with women of Generation X, "Generation X sees Generation Y as arrogant and entitled, while Generation Y sees Generation X as a bunch of whiners" (Gelston, 2008).

Generation Y Women

Generation Y women are coming into the workforce with confidence and an attitude of 'wanting it all,' with the belief that they actually can have it all. It is no wonder Generation Y women are viewed as 'spoiled,' and think they are 'entitled'. Youngest groups placed more importance on status and freedom work values than the oldest group. (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Like Generation X, they prefer flexible schedules. Work is not a priority for

them. Their priorities are with friends and family (Freeman, et al., 2009). Generation Y employees are more likely to be planning to quit their jobs, are more likely to perform poorly if their co-workers are doing so, and are also more likely to switch jobs for no particular reason (Solnet & Kralj, 2011).

However, this does not mean that they do not take their job and professional development seriously. They are hard and ambitious workers but unlike the Baby Boomers, they are not workaholics. Work-life balance is seen as a basic consideration which must be present in the job for Generation Y and it affects their organizational commitment (Rajput, et al., 2012).

Methodology

The present paper was planned based on the doctoral thesis. It was aimed at probing the area of generational differences and its reflection in the working women vis-à-vis their attitude. The generational gap has been made pronounced by taking into consideration three generations and three different occupations in each of the generations. The focus on women has been warranted by the fact that in the present century, women have made significant and eye-catching inroads into various occupational areas and professions which hitherto was the domain of predominantly men. The present work in the absence of any similar, worth noticing work in Indian context, was exploratory in nature (because empirical evidence is lacking). To keep the work in boundaries and getting to the right things in right contexts, these broad hypotheses were formulated:

- **Hypothesis 1:** There would be difference amongst the three generations in the expressed work attitude and work performance.
- **Hypothesis 2:** There would be difference amongst the three occupations across the generations in expressed work attitude and work performance.
- **Hypothesis 3:** The between correlations of the two main dimensions in the present work would be positively correlated.

Quantitative research approach was taken for the present study. The sample (n = 259) comprised of working women from three generation groups-Baby Boomer, Generation X and Generation Y, present in today's workplace, extending across the following occupational classes: Doctors, Teachers and Bankers (government institutions/organizations). Purposive (strategic) random sampling was used.

The questionnaire was a five page document consisting of two hundred eight items/questions. Section 'A', Performance scale Mott (1972), adapted by Sinha (1997), was aimed to gauge the performance and contain eight questions/items. Section 'B', the Inventory of Work Attitude and Motivation (iWAM) by Merlevede (2000), had two hundred items aimed at getting to the work attitudes of the sample in focus. To score the responses, employees were requested to respond on a five point scale for each statement / item. Questionnaires were distributed within the government hospitals, colleges/ universities and banks in the cities- Jodhpur, Jaipur and Mumbai identified to partake in the research study.

Results and Discussion

The analysis was carried out using Mean, SD, t-test (to get into the significance of difference between various groups and dimensions) and correlation (to probe into the relationships).

1. Table 1 presents the quantitative reflections of work attitude amongst the three generations. The highest mean is for the Baby Boomer and the lowest for Generation Y. These results were similar to the attitudinal generational differences indicated in the works of Gursoy, et al. (2008) and Parker (2007).
2. For work performance (Table 2), herein also the Baby Boomer is at the highest mean score and the Generation Y, the lowest. Riketta (2008) and Randhawa (2005) found this pattern in their works.

With reference to work attitudes and work performance, all the three comparisons were found to be significant ($p < 0.05$). The works of Eaton (2008) and Liao, et al (2012) reveals similar findings. The observable differences of mean given in the Table 1 and 2 are further elaborated in Figure 1.

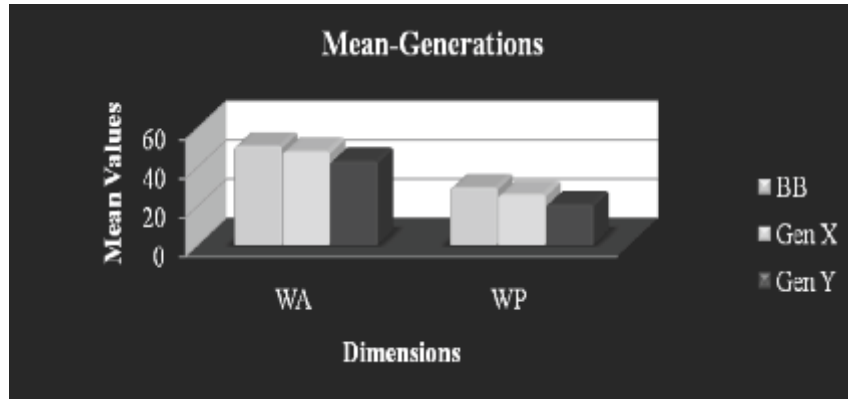
Table 1. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work attitude amongst the three generations

<i>Generation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. 2-tailed</i>	<i>Alpha level 0.05</i>
<i>BB</i>	96	50.70	2.96	7.31	182	.000	0.05
<i>Gen X</i>	88	47.86	2.29				
<i>BB</i>	96	50.70	2.96	18.04	169	.000	0.05
<i>Gen Y</i>	75	42.88	2.61				
<i>Gen X</i>	88	47.86	2.29	12.97	161	.000	0.05
<i>Gen Y</i>	75	42.88	2.61				

Table 2. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work performance amongst the three generations

Generation	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Alpha level 0.05
BB	96	29.35	4.07	6.29	182	.000	0.05
Gen X	88	25.81	3.53				
BB	96	29.35	4.07	14.45	169	.000	0.05
Gen Y	75	20.77	3.55				
Gen X	88	25.81	3.53	9.04	161	.000	0.05
Gen Y	75	20.77	3.55				

Figure 1. Graphical representation of means showing comparative states of the three generations-BB, Gen X and Gen Y-regarding work attitude and work performance.



3. Work attitude has always been important for any occupation. Table 3 contains the means for different groups on this aspect. Apparently, the Doctors figuratively seem to have better work attitude among the three.
4. Work performance amongst the three occupations (Table 4) highly differs in their mean scores for occupations. Doctors having high mean scores than the other two occupations. This difference in mean values was more between Doctors and Bankers.

Here, Doctor-Teacher, Doctor-Banker and Teacher-Banker, were found to be significantly different in work attitude and work performance ($p < 0.05$). Hannay and Fretwell (2011) revealed findings for professors across the generations. All above results and tabulation presentations are shown in figure 2 with graphical presentation for effective understanding.

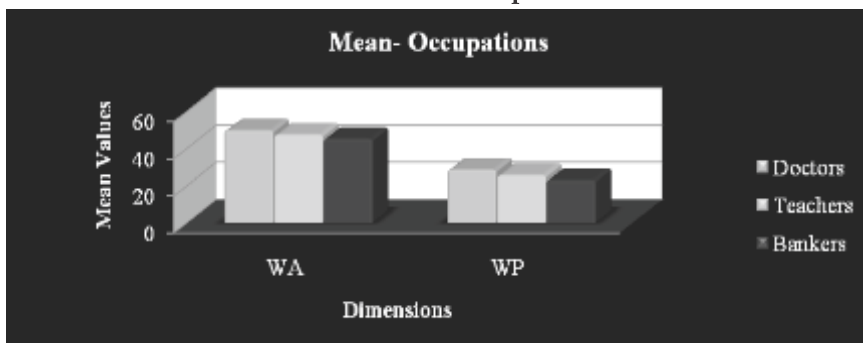
Table 3. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work attitude amongst the three occupations

Occupation	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Alpha level 0.05
Doctor	80	49.78	3.34	4.21	175	.000	0.05
Teacher	97	47.50	3.78				
Doctor	80	49.78	3.34	7.99	160	.000	0.05
Banker	82	45.17	3.97				
Teacher	97	47.50	3.78	4.02	177	.000	0.05
Banker	82	45.17	3.97				

Table 4. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work performance amongst the three occupations

Occupation	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Alpha level 0.05
Doctor	80	28.45	4.02	4.20	175	.000	0.05
Teacher	97	25.59	5.03				
Doctor	80	28.45	4.02	7.85	160	.000	0.05
Banker	82	23.04	4.72				
Teacher	97	25.59	5.03	3.48	177	.001	0.05
Banker	82	23.04	4.72				

Figure 2. Graphical representation of means showing comparative states of the three occupations-doctor, teacher and banker regarding-work attitude and work performance



5. As shown in Table 5, work attitude among three occupations in Baby Boomer, Doctors are having higher mean than Teachers and Bankers.
6. Table 6 explores work attitude among three occupations in Generation X. It reveals that Bankers have lowest mean and Doctors have highest mean.

7. Table 7 shows work attitude amongst the three occupations of Generation Y Teachers have mean more than Bankers and less than Doctors.

When comparing all the three occupational groups in Baby Boomer, work attitude was found to be significantly different in all of them. Similar results were found for Generation X except one comparative group i.e. Teacher-Banker ($p>0.05$). While for Generation Y again all the comparative groups were significantly differing. No studies were found particularly defining generations in depth occupation wise, may be because of lack of sources. All results are shown in figure 3 with graphical presentation which shows comparative state of intra generation among three occupations.

Table 5. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work attitude amongst the three occupations of Baby Boomer

Generation	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Alpha level 0.05
BB	Doctor	30	52.55	2.35	3.24	69	.002	0.05
	Teacher	41	50.53	2.75				
	Doctor	30	52.55	2.35	5.60	53	.000	0.05
	Banker	25	48.75	2.67				
	Teacher	41	50.53	2.75	2.58	64	.012	0.05
	Banker	25	48.75	2.67				

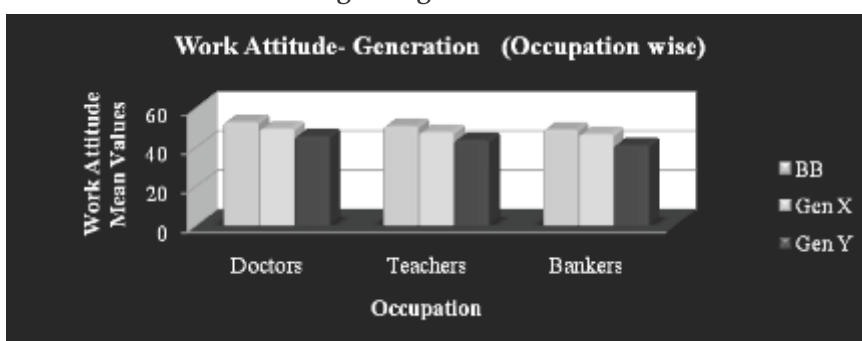
Table 6. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work attitude amongst the three occupations of Generation X

Generation	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Alpha level 0.05
Generation X	Doctor	36	49.18	2.08	3.11	59	.003	0.05
	Teacher	25	47.49	2.08				
	Doctor	36	49.18	2.08	5.51	61	.000	0.05
	Banker	27	46.44	1.76				
	Teacher	25	47.49	2.08	1.96	50	.056	NS
	Banker	27	46.44	1.76				

Table 7. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work attitude amongst the three occupations of Generation Y

Generation	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Alpha level 0.05
Generation Y	Doctor	14	45.41	2.12	3.12	43	.003	0.05
	Teacher	31	43.51	1.78				
	Doctor	14	45.41	2.12	6.06	42	.000	0.05
	Banker	30	41.04	2.27				
	Teacher	31	43.51	1.78	4.73	59	.000	0.05
	Banker	30	41.04	2.27				

Figure 3. Graphical representation of means showing comparative states of the three occupations - Doctors, Teachers, Bankers for intra generational comparison between three generations - BB, Gen X, Gen Y- regarding work attitude



8. Table 8 reveals that work performance amongst the three occupations of Baby Boomer, mean differences are wider. There is a wide mean difference between Doctors and Bankers; here Doctors have high mean by 4.16. And Teachers come in mid mean values amongst the three.
9. In Generation X work performance amongst the three occupations are shown by Table 9. Here results are more surprising than above results, which show wider mean difference between Doctors and Bankers i.e. Doctors scored higher mean values. Less mean difference is observed between Teachers and Bankers i.e. high mean in Teachers than Bankers.
10. Work performance of Generation Y amongst the three occupations is shown in Table 10. Doctors and Teachers have higher mean than Bankers but this difference is not very significant.

In work performance of Baby Boomer, when comparison was done for Doctor-Teacher no significant difference was found whereas the rest two comparative groups were found significantly different for the same. On the other hand in Generation X, it was found that Teachers were somewhat equal to Bankers in Work performance as no significant difference was found but the other comparative groups were found to be significantly differing. While in Generation Y only Doctor-Banker was differing on work performance, rest groups were found to be somewhat equal in performance level. While going to in-depth study very few or no related relevant studies were found may be because of lack of sources. All the above tabulation results, for clear presentation were shown in graphical manner in figure 4.

Table 8. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work performance amongst the three occupations of Baby Boomer

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Occupations</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. 2-tailed</i>	<i>Alpha level 0.05</i>
<i>Baby Boomer</i>	<i>Doctors</i>	30	31.20	3.45	1.98	69	.052	NS
	<i>Teachers</i>	41	29.41	3.97				
	<i>Doctors</i>	30	31.20	3.45	4.20	53	.000	0.05
	<i>Bankers</i>	25	27.04	3.89				
	<i>Teachers</i>	41	29.41	3.97	2.37	64	.021	0.05
	<i>Bankers</i>	25	27.04	3.89				

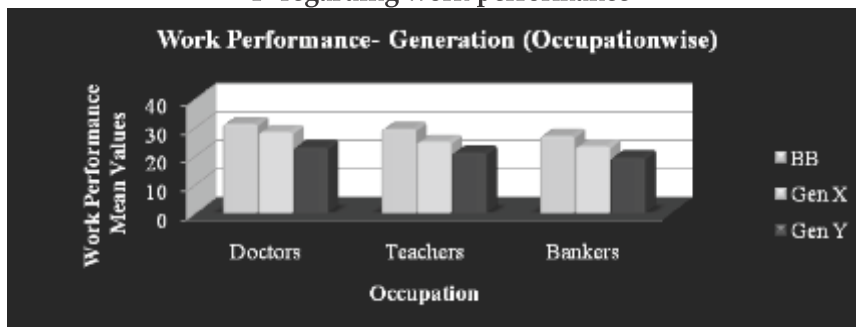
Table 9. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work performance amongst the three occupations of Generation X

<i>Generation</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. 2-tailed</i>	<i>Alpha level 0.05</i>
<i>Generation X</i>	<i>Doctor</i>	36	28.28	2.15	5.02	59	.000	0.05
	<i>Teacher</i>	25	24.92	3.08				
	<i>Doctor</i>	36	28.28	2.15	6.70	41.53	.000	0.05
	<i>Banker</i>	27	23.33	3.35				
	<i>Teacher</i>	25	24.92	3.08	1.77	50	.082	NS
	<i>Banker</i>	27	23.33	3.35				

Table 10. Table for Mean, SD and t values of work performance amongst the three occupations of Generation Y

Generation	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Alpha level 0.05
Generation Y	Doctor	14	23.00	3.16	1.85	43	.072	NS
	Teacher	31	21.06	3.30				
	Doctor	14	23.00	3.16	3.25	42	.002	0.05
	Banker	30	19.43	3.49				
	Teacher	31	21.06	3.30	1.88	59	.065	NS
	Banker	30	19.43	3.49				

Figure 4. Graphical representation of means showing comparative states of the three occupations - Doctors, Teachers, Bankers for intra generational comparison between three generations - BB, Gen X, Gen Y- regarding work performance



Relationship between work attitude and work performance

Table 11 for convenience and clarity of elaboration has been presented in three parts (a, b and c) representing the correlations between the variables of the three generations.

- Correlation between work attitude and work performance was positively significant for Baby Boomer, Generation X and Generation Y. Randhawa (2005) and Khalid and Irshad (2010) found attitudes having positive correlations with Work Performance and Job Satisfaction.

Table 11. Showing the significant relationships between work attitude and work performance for generation

TABLE 11 (a): Generation- Baby Boomer (N=96)			
Generation		Work Attitude	Work Performance
Baby Boomer	Work Attitude	X	.84**
	Work Performance		X

TABLE 11 (b): Generation- Generation X (N=88)			
<i>Generation</i>		<i>Work Attitude</i>	<i>Work Performance</i>
<i>Generation X</i>	<i>Work Attitude</i>	X	.80**
	<i>Work Performance</i>		X

TABLE 11 (c): Generation- Generation Y (N=75)			
<i>Generation</i>		<i>Work Attitude</i>	<i>Work Performance</i>
<i>Generation Y</i>	<i>Work Attitude</i>	X	.59**
	<i>Work Performance</i>		X

2. Correlations between the two dimensions for occupation group as presented in Table 12 (a, b and c) for Doctors, Teachers and Bankers respectively, reveals a highly significant correlation between work attitude and work performance in all the three occupations. Ahmad, et al (2010) and Liao, et al (2012) found similar results.

Table 12. Showing the significant relationships between work attitude and work performance for occupation

Table 12(a): Occupation-Doctors (N=80)			
<i>Occupation</i>		<i>Work Attitude</i>	<i>Work Performance</i>
<i>Doctor</i>	<i>Work Attitude</i>	X	.83**
	<i>Work Performance</i>		X

Table 12(b): Occupation-Teachers (N=97)			
<i>Occupation</i>		<i>Work Attitude</i>	<i>Work Performance</i>
<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Work Attitude</i>	X	.89**
	<i>Work Performance</i>		X

Table 12(c): Occupation-Bankers (N=82)			
<i>Occupation</i>		<i>Work Attitude</i>	<i>Work Performance</i>
<i>Banker</i>	<i>Work Attitude</i>	X	.82**
	<i>Work Performance</i>		X

Guideline: Significant 2-tailed correlations are marked with asterisk sign: single asterisk shows significant correlation at 95% confidence interval and double asterisk shows significant correlation at 99% confidence interval.

Conclusion

This study corroborates previous research showing differences in work attitudes of different generational groups. It can be said that amongst

women the generational differences have ample effect on work attitude and furthermore these generational differences through the work attitude are quite capable of moderating and controlling the behavior at the workplace, like work performance for betterment. As it was evident in results that a strong positive correlation was found between work attitude and work performance. The significance of difference between the means of the dimension as per the occupation (between the different occupations) is also in line with the hypothesis and the objectives undertaken. The relationship between work attitude and work performance is very high with very high correlations in terms of occupation, whereas the degree of relationship between these two factors is not as high in terms of the three generations. Thus we conclude that generational differences are like an element of diversity that leaders of organizations need to be aware of and manage. On the basis of findings of the present work some suggestions could be made for institutions and organizations for managing different generations at the work place and to avoid adverse effects of generational diversity at work. It is evident that different generations can complement each other in the workplace and work smoothly together if managed well. The problem arises not from a worker's motivation or work ethic, but from the motivational tools not matching what the employee values.

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