

IMPACT OF GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON THE PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEE ATTRIBUTES IN RELATION TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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Abstract: *Employee performance has become more challenging for managers to manage with a diversified workforce in terms of age, background, lifestyle, upbringing, and exposure to technological advancement, that has flooded the industry. The variation in the age of this workforce poses the management with a new task to effectively manage them. Each generation having its own personality and characteristics, has a different perspective on problems and knowledge. Employee performance is vital to organizational productivity and therefore workplace motivation is crucial. Due to their generational differences, they have different viewpoints or stance on certain employee traits that affect the employee performance. Employee attributes impact both the aims and strategy of the company as well as the performance of its employees so it's important for an organization to consider these traits and attributes. Goal of this research is to understand the influence of generations on employee attributes and their eventual impact on employee performance. The focus of this study will be on generation X, Y and Z. This research offers both theoretical and practical insights. It shows the connection on how important the perceptual variations to performance results, theoretically advancing on generational impacts in organizational behaviour. Effectively, it gives organizational leaders evidence-based methods to improve generational alignment in work practices, which in turn improves employee motivation and organizational*

Keywords: *Employee Performance, Generational difference, Employee attributes*

Introduction

Employee performance—shaped by education, experience, and job demands—is crucial for organizational success (Ogbonnaya & Messersmith, 2019; Guan & Frenkel, 2018). Research highlights the importance of employee traits such as productivity, innovation, and readiness (Wulandari & Putriyanti, 2020). An ethical work environment and organizational trust significantly enhance individual performance (Hough et al., 2020; Sumlin et al., 2021). Managers must align conduct and processes to foster these elements (Sumlin et al., 2024).

Viewing employees as valuable assets supports resilience and productivity. Encouraging positive behaviours and recognizing personality differences allows managers to assign suitable tasks, boosting satisfaction and well-being.

Table 1: Analysis Of Workplace Characteristics In Relation To Different generations

Aspect	Generation X (1965-1980)	Generation Y (1981-1996)	Generation Z (1997-2012)
Work Ethics Values	- Flexible, adaptable - Self-sufficient -Sceptical of institutions -Strong sense of entitlement	-Work-life balance - Diversity and inclusion -Personal-professional interests -Autonomy and flexibility	-Pragmatic, resourceful -Tech-savvy, digital natives -Entrepreneurial mindset -Value-driven
What Works Means to Them	-Achievement after dues - Balance between work and life - Result-oriented	- Meaningful work - Professional growth and development - Collaboration teamwork	- Purpose-driven -Impactful contributions - Continuous learning
Communication Preferences	-Face-to-face, phone calls - Personal touch - Handwritten notes	- Multichannel (email, chat, social media) - Quick response time -Virtual meetings, video calls	-Instant messaging, emojis -Visual content sharing - Authenticity
Feedbacks and Reviews	- Constructive criticism - Appreciation for effort - Balanced, fair reviews	- Frequent feedback loops - Recognition and praise -Transparent performance evaluations	- Real-time feedback - Peer feedback - Data-driven insights
Motivation Factors	-Respect & recognition -Providing long-term value - Job security	-Professional development - Work-life integration - Challenging projects	- Purpose and impacts - Skill development - Autonomy and trust

Work-Family Life Management	- Work to live - Prioritize family time - Value quality time	- Remote work options - Family-friendly policies - Parental leave policies	-Flexibility & balance -Technology boundaries - Mental well-being
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Employees' decisions are influenced by their self-perceptions and personality types (Varshney, 2023). Younger generations bring unique skills, values, and energy to the workforce, making multigenerational management complex (Burawat, 2023). Generational traits shaped by historical experiences affect how individuals communicate and collaborate, potentially causing conflict and reduced productivity (Srisathan et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2020). In the 2023 McKinsey report stated that millennials (Generation Y) now form more over 35% of the global workforce, followed by Generation Z at around 25% and Generation X at nearly 30%, many of whom occupy important leadership roles. Despite this variability, the majority of management procedures and organisational policies remain generic and do not take into account the unique work values and performance motivators of each generation (McKinsey & Company, 2023; Deloitte, 2022).

To manage generational diversity effectively, organizations must implement targeted policies and programs that reduce conflicts, build trust, and encourage knowledge sharing (Hans et al., 2023).

Research Objective:

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine if the perception of employee attributes influence the employee performance.
2. To determine if Generation X influences the correlation between employee attributes and employee performance.
3. To determine if Generation Y influences the correlation between employee attributes and employee performance.
4. To determine if Generation Z influences the correlation between employee attributes and employee performance.

Research Questions:

RQ1 Is there a meaningful correlation between employee attributes and employee performance?

1. RQ1a Is there a discernible correlation between organisational citizenship behaviour and employee performance?
2. RQ1b Is there a discernible correlation between employee and employee performance?
3. RQ1c Is there a discernible correlation between leadership style and employee performance?
4. RQ1d Is there a discernible correlation between organizational culture and employee performance?
5. RQ1e Is there a discernible correlation between organizational flexibility and employee performance?
6. RQ1f Is there a discernible correlation between self-regulation and employee performance?

7. RQ1g Is there a discernible correlation between analytical thinking and employee performance?
8. RQ1h Is there a discernible correlation between creative thinking and employee performance?

RQ2 Does Generation X influence the correlation between employee attributes and employee performance?

RQ3 Does Generation Y influence the correlation between employee attributes and employee performance?

RQ4 Does Generation Z influence the correlation between employee attributes and employee performance?

Literature Review

This research aims to examine how employees' perceptions of their own attributes influence their performance, with a focus on generational differences shaped by lifestyle, upbringing, and technology. It helps management understand how generational perspectives impact employee self-assessment and productivity.

The study's theoretical framework, drawn from existing literature, synthesizes key theories that explain how generational context affects perceptions and workplace behaviour. It connects employee attributes to performance outcomes, providing a foundation to analyse how each generation evaluates and responds to these traits.

Perceived Qualities of Employees

Personality is a key factor organizations consider when hiring. Each employee is unique, so aligning individual traits with job requirements is essential for ensuring productivity and trustworthiness. Work-related attitudes also influence job performance, reflecting satisfaction and commitment (Al-Malki & Juan, 2018). In the Industry 4.0 era, leadership traits are more complex and play a vital role in shaping employee behaviour and organizational success. Effective leadership—especially transformational and ethical styles—enhances job satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Karia & Abu Hassan Azari, 2018; Lee et al., 2022; Rahaman et al., 2021). Employee preferences and personalities affect their abilities and performance. Positive traits contribute to a productive work environment and overall profitability (Lappalainen et al., 2019). This study focuses on eight key attributes: organizational citizenship behaviour, expectations, leadership style, organizational flexibility, culture, self-regulation, analytical thinking, and creative thinking.

Selection of Attributes

The previous literature clearly states that eight employee attributes (organizational citizenship behaviour, expectations, leadership style, organizational flexibility, organizational culture, self-regulation, analytical thinking and creative thinking) were included in this study because of the concern with those eight to explain fully their relationship on the employee performance as well as industrial outcomes. All of these attributes have a tremendous impact on how employees behave and perform which in turn impacts the effectiveness of the organization as a whole.

Generational Differences

Generational differences in personality, values, and career goals significantly influence workplace dynamics and employee performance (Ng & Parry, 2016). While generational diversity offers both benefits and challenges, it can also lead to conflict and reduced organizational effectiveness. Managers must understand these differences to coach and position employees effectively (Taylor, 2018). Perspective of how differing age groups perceive their roles in work, work ethic, and leadership, as well as the general experience of work in their lives lead to differences in employee attributes behaviours and performance (Seemiller, 2024). Workplace behaviours are shaped by generational values, attitudes, and advancement expectations, presenting both challenges and opportunities for organizational leadership (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). This research will do a detailed analysis for three generations only; generation X (born in 1965 to 1980), generation Y (born in 1981 to 1996) and generation Z (born in 1997 to 2012). These generational differences became relevant for investigation due to different attitudes towards work, career expectations and views on organizational life that the generation possess. This knowledge is necessary for the organizations to enhance the performance and engagement of their workforce in multiple age cohorts.

Impact on Employee Performance

Higher-skilled employees perform better, are more engaged at work and happier with their job opportunities. If the employees are performing with quality, the company will perform well. Thus, it is essential to understand how employees help fulfil an organisation's goals. When measuring the performance of each employee many aspects like commitment, productivity and quality of work are considered (Vosloban 2012 & Dall'Ora C. B.S. 2016). Managerial support for employee's action affects the work environment and development of the organizational climate. The management support also impacts the workplace and company culture. It reflects their management value of quality and standards. In other words, the way that supervisors support employees' behaviour is based on the rules and instructions of top management (Koys and De Cotiis 1991). When employees perceive that management is supportive, it will increase the job satisfaction of the employee. Performance mostly influences by an individual's immediate work environment, which shapes their attitudes and conduct. According to Mathis and Jackson (2017), there is a direct correlation between employee qualities and performance, and a negative workplace culture that devalues workers can result in resistance and disengagement.

Development of the hypotheses

Employee behaviour plays a crucial role in determining performance, making job characteristics important. This study proposes eleven hypotheses on how employee attributes influence performance. Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) involves discretionary actions beyond formal duties that enhance organizational effectiveness and workplace environment (Harvey et al., 2018). Transformational leadership qualities like honesty and trust significantly boost OCB performance. Research should explore sectors with varying norms, including non-traditional OCBs in diverse cultural contexts such as banking and education. Employee performance is influenced by cultural traits and social contexts shaping behaviours over time. Past studies link OCBs to improved organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction across sectors (Harvey et al., 2018). Given the above discussion, the hypotheses tested in this study are:

H1: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour has a significant relationship with employee performance.

Employee performance improves with expectations for career growth and supportive management. A warm, flexible work environment helps meet these expectations, which include beliefs about career progression, managerial support, job nature, and workplace conditions. Top-down expectations strongly influence performance and retention; unmet expectations increase turnover intentions. Overestimating company commitments can cause stress and harm performance due to perceived breaches of promises (Chillakuri, 2020; De Clercq et al., 2021). Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H2: Expectations have a significant relationship with employee performance

Leaders' normative expectations improve employee service performance by being internalized into employees' role identities, beyond just compliance or modelling (Binyamin, 2020). Leadership strongly shapes employees' attitudes and job performance (Gottfredson et al., 2020), mainly by boosting their self-efficacy and performance expectations (Salanova et al., 2020). Perceived leader support is a key resource that can enhance or diminish the effects of transformational leadership on productivity. Employees perform better when leaders display transformational qualities, so managers should combine these with other behaviours and manage both individuals and teams to boost output (Sürücü et al., 2022). This study tests hypotheses based on these insights. Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H3: Leadership style has a significant relationship with employee performance

Leadership style and social performance are closely linked. Organizational culture, shaped by shared values and history, influences how employees treat each other and view their roles. When employees feel respected and valued, they act altruistically, creating a positive work atmosphere that extends beyond the workplace (Wang, 1988). Good leadership can further strengthen this positive culture (Li et al., 2021). Conversely, a poor culture harms performance, especially in challenging times. Effective leadership that fosters a positive culture enhances employee satisfaction and performance (Li et al., 2021). This study tests related hypotheses. Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H4: Organizational culture has a significant relationship with employee performance.

Performance involves balancing professional and personal responsibilities by adjusting work schedules and environments. Organizational flexibility policies act as safeguards but can backfire if applied rigidly without cultural sensitivity (Kossek et al., 2023). Limited research exists on implementing these policies in diverse, fast-changing workplaces. Flexibility policies influence role fulfilment and performance at work and home, depending on context (Kossek et al., 2023). Well-designed flexible practices boost job satisfaction and performance, but poor implementation causes role ambiguity and lowers performance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). This study tests related hypotheses. Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H5: Organizational flexibility has a significant relationship with employee performance

Enhancing self-efficacy helps employees believe in their ability to perform well, which is crucial for high performance (Lappalainen et al., 2019). Employees with strong self-efficacy are more confident, use self-regulation techniques like self-checks and solution-focused

strategies, and are better at setting and achieving goals (Sousa et al., 1991). High self-efficacy predicts greater perseverance, adaptability, and career success. Empowering employees through self-confidence not only boosts performance but also increases revenue. This study tests hypotheses on how self-efficacy influences self-regulation and performance outcomes. Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H6: Self-Regulation has a significant relationship with employee performance

Employees possessing excellent analytic skills can more easily spot problems, better solve them and come up with new solutions to resolve these difficulties. As we adapt and search for innovative development paths in our respective fields, these abilities have aided us in raising our earnings. This upward advancement is what has enabled people all over the world to move ahead. Better problem-solving skills, productivity, flexibility, adaptability, and creativity are all enhanced by these skills. The worker possesses these attributes that benefit his or her development as a whole. Creativity and complex problem-solving are necessary for successful job performance by employees (Wolanin, M. 2022). Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H7: Analytical thinking has a significant relationship with employee performance

Employee creativity can improve performance, however fresh ideas are mostly met with scepticism, necessitating both intuition and inventiveness. New methods are needed when new work forms appear. While critical thinking strengthens performance, communication, and training, cultural perspectives on cooperation might motivate improved teamwork (V. Indrašienė, 2020). Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H8: Creative thinking has a significant relationship with employee performance

Most research on generational differences focuses on beliefs and attitudes rather than actual behaviour, though these differences do appear in the workplace (Cucina et al., 2018). Work values shaped by organizational culture may or may not align across generations, and conflicts between employee ideals and job conditions can harm performance (Marcus & Leiter, 2017). Organizations often struggle to manage generational performance effectively. Understanding employees' self-views and generational perspectives can foster innovative collaboration. This study examines three generations: X, Y, and Z. Hypotheses are tested accordingly. Therefore, the hypotheses tested in this study is:

H9: Generation X influences the relationship between employee attributes and employee performance

H10: Generation Y influences the relationship between employee attributes and employee performance

H11: Generation Z influences the relationship between employee attributes and employee performance

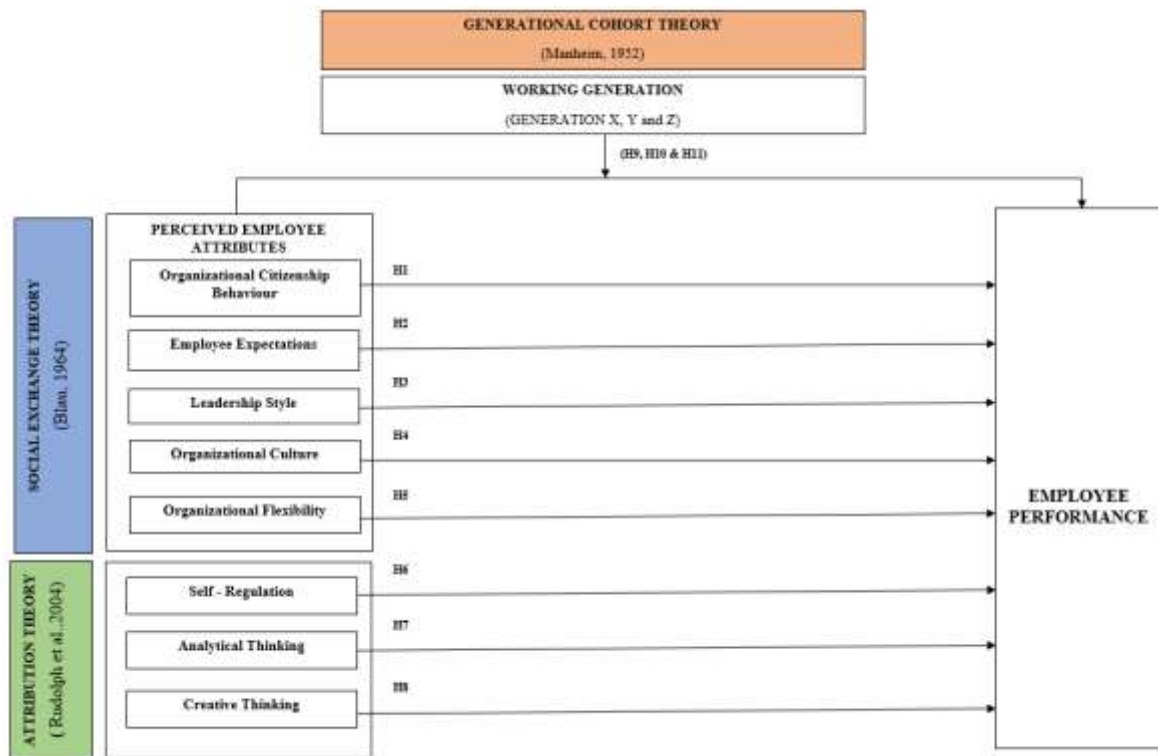


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

According to attribution theory, people interpret previous experiences to predict future outcomes, which helps to explain why they behave in certain ways. Management uses this theory to analyse employee performance based on their actions (Malik & Singh, 2020). According to the notion, employees' responses are influenced by how they understand external circumstances, such as HRM goals. Important antecedents of these attributions include knowledge, convictions, and motivation (Gym et al., 2022). Company values are reflected in organisational rules, therefore if employees obey the rules it will reflect in the attitude, commitment, performance, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Chaudhary, 2020). Employee identification with the firm and an improved external image are two other benefits of well implemented policies (Chaudhary, 2021; Hameed et al., 2020). Since attribution theory connects employee perceptions to performance results, it gives more reason to research on this study. Social exchange theory asserts that relationships are predicated on mutual reliance (Blau, 1964). In order to promote work-life balance, lower turnover, and strengthen reciprocity, organizational support tackles the socio-emotional components of this approach (Chang & Busser, 2020). In order to investigate employee-organization connections as mutually advantageous exchanges, this study applies this theory (Kim & Qu, 2020). Employee motivation and organisational citizenship behaviours are higher when they feel empowered and encouraged (Kang et al., 2020). Therefore, the idea is applicable to comprehending behaviour in the workplace.

Proposed Research Methodology

This research uses quantitative methods to test theories and identify cause-effect relationships through statistical analysis (Oberiri, 2017). It employs descriptive studies to examine variables,

trends, and traits, providing context on populations or phenomena. Survey (retrospective and cross-sectional), will gather data on Generations X, Y, and Z, focusing on employee qualities. Cluster sampling will group generations, with random sampling selecting participants (Mohapatra, 2018). Multivariate analysis will assess how each generation affects perceptions of employee attributes, while descriptive studies analyse independent variables (Ameer, 2021). Based on GPower tool, there will be minimum of 135 respondents that are needed for this study. The survey will be distributed to employees who have been working more than a year in the organization and falls within the age group of Generation X, Y and Z. Before, the survey been deployed to the respondents, it will go through a pre-test where by it will be tested by 3 to 5 respondents from each generation to ensure validity of the questions.

Conclusion & Expected Findings

The conclusion and expected findings of this study to identify if each generation perceive the employee attributes similarly or differently and if there is an impact on the employee performance. With this it can highlight the importance of understanding how different perception of each generation on employee attributes has an impact on employee performance. It contributes to attribution theory by explaining why generational views on these traits vary, helping managers reduce conflict and adapt strategies to motivate a diverse workforce (Okraś, 2020). When employees seek personal fulfilment and independence, managers must tailor feedback and motivation to generational preferences. Understanding these differences enables more effective communication, career mapping, and performance improvement, ultimately benefiting both employees and the organization.

With the understanding of the perception of each generation on the employee attributes that gives a positive impact on employee performance can help managers to shape the career for each employee towards the success of the employees and also the organization.

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