

**THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING PEOPLE WITH A BIG
GENERATION GAP IN THE WORKPLACE**



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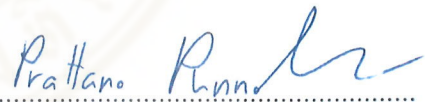


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THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING PEOPLE WITH A BIG GENERATION GAP IN THE WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the challenge of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace, and to provide practical solutions for managing multigenerational teams.

Qualitative research was utilized to collect data through in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. The findings revealed three distinct values and attitudes: work-life integration, result orientation versus process orientation, and collaboration versus independent work.

There are three main challenges associated with working with different generations: organizational culture that is inflexible, different expectations of leadership styles, and communication content barriers between generations. To address these challenges, three key practices were identified: understanding generational differences, effective communication, and appropriate methods of motivation.

The recommendations that can add value to management include paying attention to the voices of the younger generation, improving communication between different generations, adopting a more flexible approach when interacting with team members, and creating a positive team environment by organizing events that facilitate socialization beyond work roles.

KEY WORDS: Generation gap / Multigeneration in the workplace / Management challenge in workplace / Management strategy.

30 pages

CONTENTS

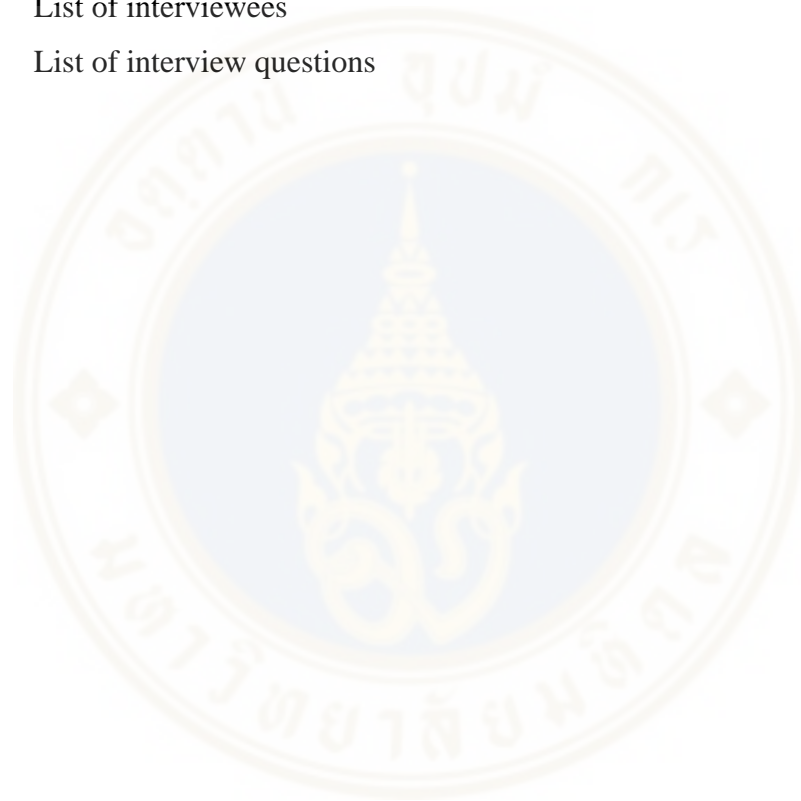
	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research questions	2
1.2 Research objectives	2
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	3
2.1 Generations	3
2.2 Values towards work	7
2.3 Millennials in the Workplace	7
2.4 Managing a multi-generational team	8
CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY	10
3.1 Sampling plan	10
3.2 Qualitative method	10
CHAPTER IV DATA ANALYSIS	14
4.1 Values and attitudes that differ from generation to generation	14
4.1.1 Work-life integration	14
4.1.2 Result oriented versus process oriented	15
4.1.3 Work collaboration versus work independently	16
4.2 Challenges of working with different generations	17
4.2.1 Organizational culture that is inflexible	17
4.2.2 Different leadership style expectations (Feedback and Recognition)	18

CONTENTS (cont.)

	Page
4.2.3 Communication content barrier between generations	19
4.3 Management strategies for dealing with generational differences	20
4.3.1 Understand the generational differences	20
4.3.2 Effective communication	21
4.3.3 Appropriate method of motivation	22
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	24
5.1 Conclusions	24
5.2 Recommendations	25
5.3 Limitation	27
REFERENCES	28
BIOGRAPHY	30

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Compares the characteristics of the X and Y generations (Berkup, 2014)	4
3.1	List of interviewees	11
3.2	List of interview questions	12



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
3.1	Research framework	11
5.1	The challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace	24



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the presence of technology has brought about fast and significant transformations. Technology's rapid development and evolution have created a symbiotic relationship with each other, leading to the emergence of new technologies. These changes have affected individuals born in different time periods, leading to diverse personalities, perspectives, and values. The alterations in the economy, culture, and politics have deeply influenced individuals' perceptions, expectations, and viewpoints. Through these interactions, generational boundaries are established.

As a result, in today's business world, it is common to see people of different generations working together. And because each generation has its own set of values, skills, and characteristics, managing employees from different generations presents both challenges and opportunities for managers. Moreover, work values are the primary cause of generational differences and a significant source of workplace conflict.

Also in Thailand, most workplaces today have staff in each department from two generations: GenX, who has been with the company for a long time, and GenY-Z, who is a newcomer and has only recently joined the company.

Then, in some departments, there is a major problem with people in the team not getting along, and things appear to be getting worse. However, in some departments, they get along very well.

This research study will be conducted at company X, in 3 different departments. In each department team members will be selected from two groups, one of which is Gen X employees who have been with the company for at least 15 years. Another group is Gen Y-Z, who are the newcomers, some of whom have recently graduated or have recently moved from another company, and their work experience ranges from 0–5 years. As a result, these two groups in some departments do not get along and make the team atmosphere extremely uncomfortable.

So, in order to determine the root cause of this problem, I'd like to study and understand how managers handle situations. What is the perspective of each generation on the other, and how can we help them understand each other better?

In order to conduct research, I will use the qualitative method and interview people in three major departments: accounting, Marketing & Sales, and Administrative department. For each department, I will interview three people (Manager, Staff-Gen X, Staff-Gen Y)

The main perspective, value, and attitude of each generation are expected to be revealed, and we will see which perspectives, values, and attitudes differ significantly between the two generations. Then we'll know how to improve intergenerational communication and manage it in the future.

1.1 Research questions

1. What are the most important factors for management to consider when managing people with a big generation gap?
2. How should managers handle generational differences? And do values and attitudes influence how workers of different generations interact in a team?

1.2 Research objectives

- 1. To identify the factors that have the greatest influence on management when dealing with teams who have a big generation gap.**

Using qualitative methods to collect and analyze data through interviews. To fully comprehend why this factor has the greatest influence.

- 2. To understand the perspectives of each generation toward the workplace and to provide better solutions for management, employees, and team members.**

Using the qualitative data from the interviews with the interviewees from three groups in order to understand the value and attitude from all of its perspectives. Then, from each interview, we identify their conflict and then recommend the best solution that can be used in the future.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Keywords: Generation, value and attitude, Work Characteristics, Y Generation, X Generation, Millennials in the Workplace, Managing the millennials)

2.1 Generations

Generations, according to Kopperschmidt (2000), “are people born and raised in the same general time frame, a specific group of people who share almost the same birth year, age, location, and significant life experiences”. Furthermore, their research found that a generation's values are inspired by the key historical and social life experiences they share during the era in which they were born and raised. According to Glass (2007), the three generations most represented in the workplace today are: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials (also known as generation Y) (as cited in Gursoy et al. (2013d)).

According to a Berkup (2014) study, there are generational differences in the workplace. Members of different generations who were born in various generations and grew up in very different circumstances may show characteristics depending on their aspects when they go to work. The differences between generations' perspectives on business must be understood and managed as the generation gap narrows and, as a result, three or four generations may be required to collaborate due to changing circumstances.

Table 2.1 compares the characteristics of the X and Y generations, which are the most represented members of the working life in terms of business.

Comparison of Generation X and Y Organization Values and Perspectives on Workplace (Berkup, 2014)

Table 2.1 compares the characteristics of the X and Y generations (Berkup, 2014)

Organization Values and Perspectives on Workplace	Generation X	Generation Y
Fundamental Job and Company Values and Beliefs	Work in order to live. Work wisely rather than for long periods of time. Request for structure and direction Skepticism	Working comes after living. Working hard while having fun, multitasking, entrepreneurship, and tolerance for differences.
Educational Background for Success in Business	A path that will allow you to get there	Extremely expensive spending
Career Improvement	A career that is adaptable, A proactive approach to career advancement in order to gain more promotion and experience within and outside of the corporation, Willing to learn about all options	Careers in parallel (multiples), With more experience entering the business world, Inquiring about opportunities and experience, Career paths frequently and abruptly change.
Working Style	Working until a result is obtained, A 'let you have a life' mentality Office and home adaptation to a flexible picture, Workstyle that is adaptable	Working on a short-term and flexible basis, Willingness to specify a workplace and a time frame Office and home adaptation to a flexible picture, Adaptable working style
Communication Style in Job Environment	Communication can be informal, direct, or electronic. Feedback is required. Email communication with the customer. Considering colleagues to be friends, To resolve conflicts, open communication with colleagues is required.	Communication that is quick, informal, direct, and technologically advanced, Customers can be contacted via email, instant messaging, and messaging. Communication that is goal-oriented and motivational, Informal and social relationships with coworkers In the event of a conflict, discussing and challenging.

**Table 2.1 compares the characteristics of the X and Y generations (Berkup, 2014)
(cont.)**

Organization Values and Perspectives on Workplace	Generation X	Generation Y
Loyalty to Corporation and Job Changing	Changing jobs if necessary, and paying attention to inner feelings	Job changes are an expected occurrence.
Balance between Business and Social Life	A better balance of family and work	Balance not only between business and life, but also between business, relationships, and personal development. Hours are flexible. Collaboration on the job
Job Expectations	Needing a reason for a task, or looking for a connection for another position	Desire to make a difference, pleasant working environment
Education, Development and Consultancy	Willingness to learn exactly what is required, Learning flexibility, Working in an informal team structure and independently with less control, Talent and skill-based leadership mentality	Willingness to take chances. Ignore making mistakes and view them as a learning experience. Teamwork, fun training, individual work with control and guidance Harmony and unity underpin leadership.
Feedback related to works carried out	Because of their self-sufficient personalities, describing the general structure of the task would suffice.	Collaboration and soliciting feedback
Authority Concept and Corporate Structure	A lack of trust in authority, To avoid being influenced by authority, Changing bureaucratic regulations	High trust in authority, Not to accept bureaucratic rules, but to respect authority in order to improve their abilities.

**Table 2.1 compares the characteristics of the X and Y generations (Berkup, 2014)
(cont.)**

Organization Values and Perspectives on Workplace	Generation X	Generation Y
Technology in Working Environment	If it is necessary to achieve, technology must be used, such as using a mobile phone and a laptop, using the Internet for research, and checking emails and mobile phones on a daily basis.	Willingness to work with cutting-edge technology Using technology as a tool to do better work, Making a database and using the Internet to research and set up a network 7/24 checking emails, mobile phones, and instant messages
Retirement	The mindset of 'I might retire earlier if I save my money,' as well as the desire to have diverse experiences and careers	It is still uncertain, despite having characteristics similar to Generation Y.
Motivational Tools and Rewards	Freedom, remuneration for Fun Fair, Extra earnings in exchange for more work working, enjoyable environment Allow them to question authority figures and experts.	Personal fulfillment, Given the opportunity to take on project responsibility and work as part of a team, Need for entertainment and environmental control Work that is meaningful, Making a name for yourself as a hero, Working with creative individuals, Working from home, Developing new abilities. new learning possibilities
Diversity inside Corporation	United	There will be no race for the majority.
Give me more.... in work environment	Time	Acknowledgement

**Table 2.1 compares the characteristics of the X and Y generations (Berkup, 2014)
(cont.)**

Organization Values and Perspectives on Workplace	Generation X	Generation Y
Job	The quickest way to obtain a result	Satisfaction
Career.....	It's a part of me.	It is an opportunity to be appreciated
Basic Demand regarding Work	Being enterprising.	Consider following a hero.

2.2 Values towards work

According to Gursoy et al. (2013c) define that “what people believe to be fundamentally right or wrong is defined by their values”.

According to Henson (2007), generation Y prefers to have more flexibility in their working hours so that they can devote more time to other activities such as spending more time with friends or their children. Baby boomers, on the other hand, want the flexibility to work part-time, but some want to retire early, and so on. As a result, human resource managers must plan and design a standard framework for the workforce that allows them to manage their options with flexibility. With the current global business environment in mind, HR managers must plan for outsourced suppliers for full-time or part-time employees.

2.3 Millennials in the Workplace

Because Millennials are the newest members of the workforce, there is a growing discussion about Millennials in the workplace from a variety of perspectives. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) investigated how the Millennial generation approaches the workplace and proposed that Millennials integrate technology into their lives and

expect organizations to accommodate them based on their experiences, needs, and desires.

According to Kowske, Rasch, and Wiley (2010) discovered that Millennials have higher levels of overall company satisfaction and satisfaction with job security, recognition, and career advancement than Generation Xers and Baby Boomers in their empirical study of the effect of generation on work attitudes.

Moreover, from Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) study, discussed the workplace expectations of Millennials, communication styles, and relationships with team and organizational members. These researchers specifically suggested that Millennials work well in teams, are motivated by significant tasks, prefer open and frequent communication, and understand communication technologies.

In addition, Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010) discovered that Millennials value individualism, seek career advancement and skill development, and strive for a meaningful and satisfying life outside of work in their field study of the Millennial generation.

2.4 Managing a multi-generational team

Hatfield (2002) suggests that in order to bridge the generation gap in the workplace, team sessions, regular meetings, and flexible work arrangements should be provided for all employees. Team sessions aim to foster beneficial working relationships and to prepare the team to face potential crises. Hatfield believes that by encouraging staff to share their experiences and ask questions, diverse values and beliefs from different generations can be utilized to create a stronger and more successful team. Additionally, offering flexible work arrangements can benefit all employees, as it provides a break for those who are experiencing burnout and supports personal choices for those who value their lifestyle. To further bridge the gap, Hatfield proposes that encouragement and rewards should be offered in a way that caters to the individual's values and beliefs. By providing rewards that align with what different generations value, retention of vital employees can be increased. (as cited in Dwyer (2009)).

In a study conducted by Zetlin (1992), it was found that older employees have a different perspective on their jobs than younger managers. Zetlin noted that

younger managers are more concerned with career growth, future salaries, and bonuses, whereas older workers prioritize job security and benefits.

To effectively manage baby boomer employees, younger managers should understand these differences and be open-minded in their approach. Zetlin suggests that by giving credit for group/team successes to the employees under their supervision, younger managers can build trust and cooperation.

Moreover, Zetlin recommends that organizational leaders provide newly promoted younger managers with specific details regarding their promotion, particularly when a baby boomer has been passed over in favor of a younger person. This can help to mitigate any negative feelings or concerns that may arise among older workers. (as cited in Dwyer (2009)).

Williams (2000) offers various strategies to address the generation gap and leverage its advantages, which have been explored by other researchers as well. Given that each generation is situated in a distinct life stage, Williams underscores the importance of comprehending the unique values and attributes that each generation possesses. For instance, individuals belonging to the baby boomer generation may prioritize familial commitments and may be more inclined to work extended hours, aligning with their generational values, compared to their counterparts from the Y generation, who are less likely to be married. (as cited in Dwyer (2009)).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sampling plan

The purpose of this study is to look into the challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace. The participants in this study are employees of one multinational corporation located in Bangkok, which is not specific to any industries. Furthermore, the samples are over 18 years old, which is taken into account because it indicates that the respondent is old enough to understand and recognize their own behaviors, and because the age is over 18 years old, no parental consent is required to conduct the interview.

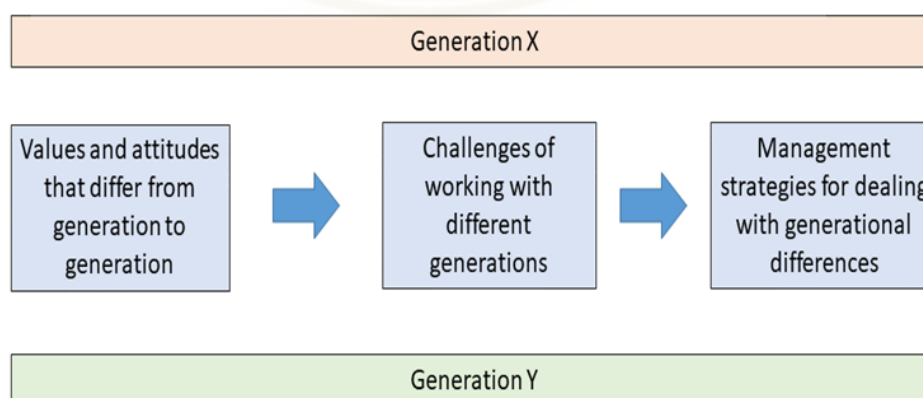
3.2 Qualitative method

A qualitative method is used to gather and analyze non-numerical data such as text, audio, and video in order to better understand concepts, beliefs, or experiences. It can be used to gain a comprehensive understanding of a situation or to generate new research ideas (Taylor, 2006). This study interviewed three different groups of samples. This research conducted interviews with three departments, sales and marketing, accounting, and the administrative departments. And each department will have three people: the manager of the department, a generation X employee who has been with the company for more than 15 years, and a generation Y employee who has only been with the company for 0-5 years. So, total, there will be nine interviewees for this interview process.

Table 3.1 List of interviewees

Interviewee Code	Work Experience with current company	Role	Age	Generation	Gender	Department
A-1	10 years	Manager	35	Generation Y	Female	Sales and marketing
X-1	18 years	Assistant manager	48	Generation X	Female	Sales and marketing
Y-1	1 year	Staff	29	Generation Y	Male	Sales and marketing
A-2	25 years	Manager	53	Generation X	Female	Accounting
X-2	19 years	Supervisor	49	Generation X	Female	Accounting
Y-2	6 months	Staff	24	Generation Y	Female	Accounting
A-3	22 years	Manager	50	Generation X	Female	Administrative
X-3	16 years	Supervisor	42	Generation X	Female	Administrative
Y-3	2 years	Staff	30	Generation Y	Male	Administrative

This research aims to collect primary data from in-depth interviews to learn about the challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace. Figure 3.1 illustrates the connection between the revelation of the value and perspective of each generation in the research framework.

**Figure 3.1 Research framework**

Open-ended questions: To learn about the main challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace, as well as the value and perspective on work in each generation. Open-ended questions are designed and approached to interviewees to allow them to be full participants while also giving them the fluidity to answer the question based on their own experiences. As shown in Table 3.2, a list of interview questions is created.

Table 3.2 List of interview questions

Role	Interview Question
Manager	<p><u>General Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How old are you? 2) How long have you been with the current company? 3) How long have you been in a management or leadership position? 4) How many members are on your team? <p><u>Topic questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the current issues you are dealing with in terms of team management? 2) Do you have any experience dealing with generational conflict among your team members? 3) What are the specific differences between different generations – what kind of differences have they observed? 4) What are the main factors that you believe have a direct impact on each generation's ability to get along with or not get along with the team? 5) How have you dealt with generational differences when managing multigenerational teams? 6) What strategies have you used to overcome this problem? 7) How do you manage a multigenerational workforce, and what expertise or strategies do you employ? 8) Do you have any team parties, dinners, or trips planned as a group? If yes, does it help to solve generational problems? 9) What motivates you to improve or build member relationships on a team?

Table 3.2 List of interview questions (cont.)

Role	Interview Question
Assistant manager/Supervisor/Staff	<p data-bbox="655 421 895 454"><u>General Questions</u></p> <ol data-bbox="655 459 1366 674" style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How old are you? 2) How long have you been with the current company? 3) How many members are on your team? They are same generation or different generations? 4) How many team members do you have with whom you can discuss issues other than work? <p data-bbox="655 714 863 748"><u>Topic questions</u></p> <ol data-bbox="655 752 1382 1556" style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What do you enjoy most and least about your job? 2) Could you please describe your ideal job and work environment? What is important for you in your job/work environment? Why? 3) What is the current role's working and communication style in the workplace? 4) What do you expect to get from this job? What motivates you to go to work every day? 5) Is there anything bothering you about your job? 6) How do you feel about working with people from older/younger generation? Did you experience any benefits in working with people from an older/younger generation? Any difficulties? 7) Have you ever had a disagreement with a coworker who is older or younger than you? What did you do? 8) Do you feel comfortable discussing job-related issues with your boss directly? (How about other topics?) 9) What do you think about the colleague? Can you talk to them about anything or just about work? 10) What issue would you like to report to upper management in an anonymous way to help them improve this workplace to make it a better place?

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Following the completion of the qualitative research through interviews, the collected data is analyzed and summarized in this chapter, which is divided into three main aspects: the values and attitudes that differ from generation to generation, and the challenges of managers to adapt and create strategies to manage their teams.

4.1 Values and attitudes that differ from generation to generation

Different generations have grown up in various surroundings, which have influenced them to have distinctive characteristics and perspectives on the world.

The first topic is to identify the values and attitudes toward work that differ between generations X and Y. Each employee chosen for an interview shared their experience and opinions, which are summarized into five primary aspects:

4.1.1 Work-life integration

Interviewees Y-1 and Y-2 expressed similar feelings about their jobs and how their flexible working hours allow them to do things outside of work. While interviewees X-1 and X-3 did not mention flexible hours, they do prefer to work in the office rather than from home. So, it appears that from the perspective of the new generation, they have the flexibility and their own value of time to do things other than their job so that they can manage their own lives. Then they believe that if they can work from anywhere, the outcome will be the same, and all they have to do is complete their task. In contrast, an older generation appears to believe that their job is a part of their life and that they must work in an actual work environment in order to achieve a good result.

Interviewee Y-1: *“I prefer the job that has Saturday and Sunday for days off, my previous job was work on Saturday as well which is just one day left for relaxing.*

As a result, I believe it is insufficient and makes me unhappy. This job fits my preferences because it is more flexible; I can clock in at any time and simply count the working hours. However, it would be preferable if they provided some options, such as allowing employees to work from home once a week.”

Interviewee Y-2: *“This company is very close to my house, which takes about 30 minutes by BTS, so I save a lot of time after work to do things like watch movies and meet friends. Furthermore, I like how flexible the hours are here; for example, if I arrive at work early, I can leave the office early as well.”*

While interviewees X-1 and X-3 did not mention flexible hours, they do prefer to work in the office rather than from home.

Interviewee X-1: *“I don't like working from home, even though I can save time on transportation and traffic congestion, but I get used to working at the office, and the atmosphere at the office can motivate me to work harder.”*

Interviewee X-3: *“Working at the office is more convenient for me because it has all of the necessary support devices, equipment, internet, and printers. If the company provides the option for employees to work from home, I will continue to come to work at the office.”*

4.1.2 Result oriented versus process oriented

In contrast to interviewees X-2 and X-3, interviewees Y-2 and Y-3 are mentioned in the same way about the focusing result of their work. This is the different perceptions of risk in the work for each generation. With many years of working and extensive experience, the older generation emphasizes a high value on the process of completing a task, and they are extremely cautious and do not want to take any risks that may result from a poor process. While the younger generation appears to value their time more, they try to focus more on the outcome of their task and try to find a better way or solution to complete their task without mentioning any risks that may occur.

Interviewee X-2: *“I am always cautious and do my part to follow company procedures, communicate, and ensure with other departments to avoid any risk that may arise, as I am only a small employee with no authority to be held accountable for major mistakes involving company expenses.”*

Interviewee X-3: *“I believe I am doing my job carefully for each step, and I mostly follow the same process, which I believe makes it easy to track back when mistakes occur.”*

While interviewees Y-2 and Y-3 are more concerned with the results, which they believe will save them more time.

Interviewee Y-2: *“Something I have against an older colleague is that the job that results from my plan is the same as the job that results from their current process, but my plan saves more time to do other things, but they don't need to change and persist with the old process.”*

Interviewee Y-3: *“If I could improve my current working style in my department, I would like to improve and find the short-cut of many processes in the organization that flow better and save time. Some processes, I believe, are unnecessary, as is redundancy with other departments.”*

4.1.3 Work collaboration versus work independently

Interviewees Y-1, Y-2 and Y-3 are mentioned in the same way about work environment and expectations while contrasting with X-2 and X-3. The new generation prefers to work collaboratively with others because they expect to gain more knowledge, experience, learning opportunities, and may build connections in the workplace because they believe that if the relationship with others in the workplace is good, then they will be able to create a good environment in the workplace as well. While the older generation prefers to work simply in a peaceful and quiet environment, they may believe that it is necessary to be serious when doing the job, to concentrate and focus in order to appear to be working. And if they work with others a lot, they will have a lot more topics and issues to discuss, which may not be in the way they prefer.

Interviewee Y-1: *“My ideal job and work environment are ones in which we can get along with everyone in the company or, at the very least, work as a team, helping each other. I also expect us to work well with other departments, sharing knowledge and information that I don't know, so that I can learn from others and develop myself. It will also be a good opportunity for the future if I have experience in many areas.”*

Interviewee Y-2: *“My ideal job is one where I can do and learn new things while still doing my current job, where I can improve many skills by dealing with other departments, and where there is no need for high pressure. And the work environment should not be toxic, for example, with everyone doing their own thing and not caring about others, bringing negative feelings to others, and so on.”*

Interviewee Y-3: *“I believe that if everyone in the department can communicate with everyone else in the company or across departments, it will make work more flow and easy, with no trouble or politics, which is an ideal job and workplace for me.”*

Interviewee X-2: *“My ideal job and workplace are those in which everyone has their own task, no one bothers each other too much, there are fewer meetings, and there is a private zone for lunch and a private table.” “With more collaboration with other departments, there will be more issues to discuss and longer meetings.”*

Interviewee X-3: *“My ideal job and work environment include no chaos, everyone doing their part, no nonsense talk such as gossip, and no loud speaking. I prefer peaceful but not completely silent environments.”*

4.2 Challenges of working with different generations

The second topic is identifying the challenges that managers face when dealing with multi - generational teams. Interviewees who were shortlisted for interviews revealed their prior experiences. The findings are summarized in three primary challenges listed below.

4.2.1 Organizational culture that is inflexible

Interviewees A-1, A-2 mentioned organizational culture. According to two interviewees, the current organizational culture makes people management challenging. The ability to change or improve the procedure is limited due to the Japanese organizational structure, which has a hierarchy, many processes. Some believe that the current process is already good and there is no need to approach and adjust things. This may lead the new generation to believe that it is inflexible for them, whereas the old

generation, who have grown accustomed to it and see no need to change anything, may believe that the new generation is overly demanding.

Interviewee A-1: *“Another important factor that makes each generation appear different from one another is organizational culture; older generations who have been with the company for a long time may have become accustomed to the current process and culture of the company. However, the new generation who has just joined the company may not understand why we have to do this thing in a certain way or why some issue has to take a long time to consider, etc., which makes the new generation feel that it is not a good solution, but with the Japanese company, which is quite seniority oriented, they may be afraid to share their ideas directly.”*

Interviewee A-2: *“I believe that organizational culture is one of the factors that influences how each generation views the company or job. For example, the older generation may believe that the current procedure is good and has no problems, whereas the younger generation may believe that our entire method needs to be improved. Personally, I believe that changing the culture is difficult, but it may continue to have an impact.”*

4.2.2 Different leadership style expectations (Feedback and Recognition)

Interviewees X-1 and Y-1 stated that they require a different perspective on improving leadership style. An older generation is more concerned with the recognition of their management; they would like to show the management that they exist and put in a lot of effort to do their job, and then the management should reward them in return. Furthermore, it should be equitable to assign separate tasks to each member. While the younger generation is more focused on feedback that is more tangible and more frequent because they need to improve themselves and continue to develop their skills.

Interviewee X-1: *“I would like them (management) to focus more on the performance, responsibility, and intention toward work. Management should give some reward to the person who has a high capability and should be fair on how to separate the job to each member of a team.”*

Interviewee Y-1: *“I need more feedback from them (management), and I need it more frequently, because right now I only get feedback at the end of the year*

during the appraisal period, which may allow me to improve faster if I know where I need to improve prior”

4.2.3 Communication content barrier between generations

Interviewees X-1, X-2, Y-1, and Y-2 are given similar reasons why they don't talk to each other much aside from work. Both generations in the workplace mentioned the same thing: it's difficult to find other topics to talk about apart from work, possibly because their habits, hobbies, lifestyles, perceptions, politics, and so on are so different or so distant that they can't talk to each other casually. They appear to be focusing on different things as they grow up in a different era and the surrounding circumstances. So, in order to avoid any misunderstandings or conflicts, they are extremely cautious about the content that they will discuss aside from topics related to their work.

Interviewee X-1: “I don't mind working with younger people; I think it's great to have new blood on my team. If I don't know how to use something, like a new presentation program, I ask them to teach me. Anyway, aside from work, I barely talk to them, possibly because I don't know what they talk about with their friends. To be honest, some topics baffle me, but I know they are relevant to the younger generation. So I mostly discuss work with them.”

Interviewee X-2: “I don't have any problems working with the new generation; I understand how the employment cycle works, and I believe that having many generations in the workplace will benefit the company because the new generation may have something new to share.” “I mostly talk with them about our work because we rarely have anything in common to talk about aside from work; I just ask about her background, hometown, or any general things.”

Interviewee Y-1: “Working with the older generation, I don't have any problems at all. In contrast, I think it beneficial for me as I can learn many experiences from them and I also consult with them when I have some problems which is hard to find a solution as I am very new in this work area”

“Many older colleagues here are very generous and willing to teach me when I ask them, It's really different from my previous workplace that everyone mind their own task”

“I mostly talk about work with the older generation because I'm not sure if they'll understand my topic or joke. So, aside from work, I always talk with colleagues who are the same age or close in age to me because we have more in common.

Interviewee Y-2: *“I have no problems working with the older generation; in fact, I have a benefit because I can learn the carefulness and attention to detail for every step because the older generation prefers to do things manually.” “I mostly talk about work with them only, just a rare topic apart from work that we have in common but just some people depend on the personality as well like some older generation who have a nice and funny character, I can talk and play jokes with them naturally. So, I believe that, in addition to generation, personality influences how I approach people in my team.”*

4.3 Management strategies for dealing with generational differences

The third topic is identifying the solutions that managers face when dealing with multi - generational teams. Interviewees were asked what strategies, techniques, or activities they used to overcome obstacles. The findings are summarized in three primary solutions listed below.

4.3.1 Understand the generational differences

Interviewees A-1 and A-2 expressed similar sentiments about understanding each other's personal characteristics. Two interviewees stated that it is critical to ensure that they understand the individual team members' characteristics of each generation, but there are other variables that influence the individual's behavior or perspective. As a result, it is better for people management if the leader does not presume one person based on one aspect but instead tries to perceive them as a human being.

Interviewee A-1: *“I believe that personal characteristics is one of the most important factors that has a direct impact on how each generation or even each individual gets along with the team. And team members should understand each other's characteristics so that we don't think too much about them when they do things. I believe our team members can get along very well because we know each other are introverts, so we understand each other better.”*

Interviewee A-3: *“One of the main factors that I believe has a direct impact on one person's ability to get along with the team is personality and the way that each person expresses and talks. I understand some of their ideas or how they perceive this new generation because my son recently graduated, and I spoke with him about his first job. However, none of my team members have children. As a result, they may be unfamiliar with the new generation's characteristics and communication style.”*

4.3.2 Effective communication

Interviewees A-1, A-2, and A-3 all expressed similar views on how to handle conflict in a team. To overcome the challenge, all interviewees stated that effective communication is a good solution. All interviewees mentioned that having effective communication could address the problem when it comes to people management in a multigenerational team. Effective communication refers to more than just informational interactions. It is about recognizing the other person's feelings and intended outcomes. Interviewees mention genuinely listening and responding in a reasonable manner, choosing the best communication method, and team building events to be more effective in communication.

4.3.2.1 Genuinely listening and responding in a reasonable manner

Interviewees A-1 and A-2 mentioned that they were genuinely listening and allowing everyone to share their thoughts, and that they should be reasonable in their response to the problem.

Interviewee A-1: *“One of the things I did was have everyone talk as a team, be reasonable, not bring emotions or personal things to the current problem, and try to find the best way that is most fair for everyone who is involved. Furthermore, it must be completed and finalized within the session; otherwise, the meeting will end without a solution. Otherwise, it may result in miscommunication or gossip outside of the meeting, allowing the problem to escalate.”*

Interviewee A-2: *“To deal with any conflict, I always call a team meeting and have everyone share their thoughts first. I then keep silent and observe the situation before attempting to summarize everything and offer a solution. The*

younger generation is currently very brave in sharing their own ideas, and the older generation is also listening to them.”

4.3.2.2 Choosing the most appropriate communication method and timing

Interviewees A-3 stated that the way she resolves conflicts should be quick and direct communication with team members. Furthermore, in order to encourage team members to better understand one another, she set a monthly team meeting to discuss and share ideas.

Interviewee A-3: *“When there are conflicts within a team, I will act quickly and directly talk to my team, listen to their problems, and try to find the best solution that is fair to everyone. I believe that a quicker fix is preferable to allowing the problem to worsen. Furthermore, I scheduled a monthly meeting and encouraged them to spend time talking with one another after we finished our meeting point about work. Because I believe that if we talk to each other, we will better understand each other.”*

4.3.2.3 Team Building Events

A team building event has an extensive effect on fostering cooperation. Furthermore, it can help all team members interact more effectively, maintain a positive relationship, and make beneficial connections. One interviewee stated that because her organization's culture does not have any events as a whole party or team, she would like to encourage the team to have a team event to connect everyone in the team, which may help to improve their communication and relationship in the team.

Interviewee A-3: *“Perhaps because our organization culture does not encourage team or company parties. I believe that if we hold an event or at least as a team, everyone will get to know each other more than just as coworkers; we will get to know their true personalities, which may help to bridge the relationship gap between each employee.”*

4.3.3 Appropriate method of motivation

Interviewees A-1 and A-3 mentioned a slightly different method for motivating each generation. Both interviewees stated that one of their solutions is to

look at the specific requirements of each generation and discover a method to generate motivation to achieve the goals.

Interviewee A-1: *“In my team, the older generation is far more assertive than the younger generation. If they are uncomfortable expressing their opinion or idea in front of everyone, I try to encourage them to participate more by informing them that if they have anything else to add or share after the meeting, they can send an email directly to me. When I received their email, I knew they had an idea as well, so I spoke with them and discovered that they were afraid to share it in front of everyone because they were afraid it would not work or be nonsense. After that, I don't press them to share their ideas in person, but email is fine as well.”*

“I want to rotate work areas (markets that each salesperson is responsible for) for the younger generation in my team so that they can learn many skills and know how to solve problems in a variety of situations, which I believe they will enjoy more than working in the same area. In contrast, the older generation stated that they are satisfied with their current area and do not wish to change.”

Interviewee A-3: *“My team is split evenly between the older and younger generations. As if we were conversing with them. The older generation prefers to return home and spend time with their families after work, whereas the younger generation prefers more activity after work in order to maintain a positive team relationship. So I decided not to compel the older generation to accompany them (younger generation). So, on some occasions, such as the new year or the birthday of an employee. I'll give a gift card to the older generation and let them explore on their own. However, for the younger generation, I will let them choose the restaurant and will cover the cost of their dinner.”*

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

According to the research questions, the challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace have been investigated and analyzed. These challenges include identifying discovered value and attitudes toward work of each generation, challenges of working with different generations, and management strategies for dealing with generational differences. The sample included three managers, three employees from generation X, and three employees from generation Y. all from the sales and marketing, accounting, and administrative departments.

The findings are summarized in the study's research framework, as shown in Figure 5.1 below.

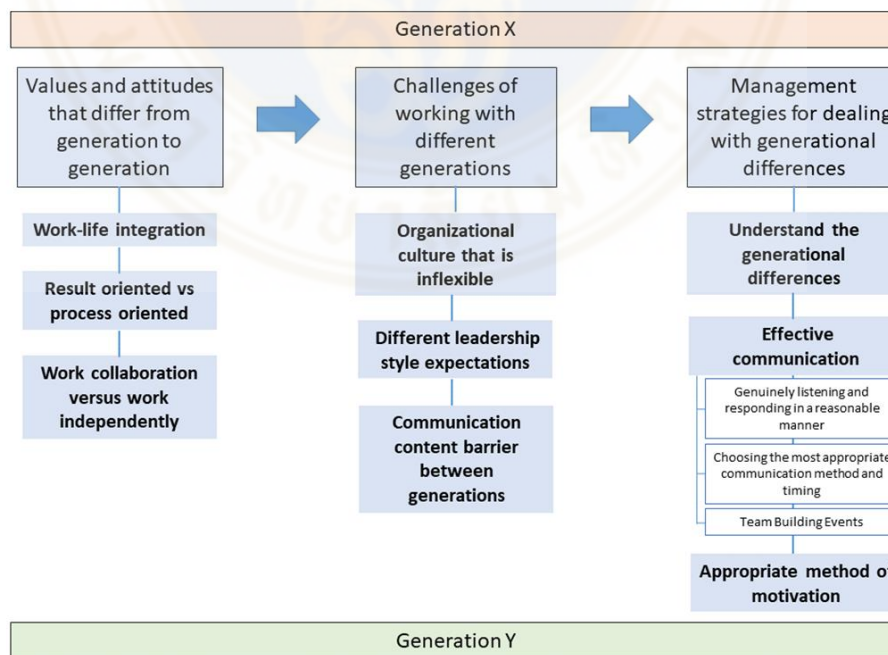


Figure 5.1 The challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace

It can be concluded that each generation has a unique set of values and attitudes toward work. The first is about work-life integration, which generation Y is more concerned about. The second factor is working style; Generation X is more process oriented, whereas Generation Y is more result oriented. The third factor is collaboration; while generation X prefers to work in their field, generation Y prefers collaborative work that allows them to gain more experience.

Following the challenges of working with different generations, one of the main factors is an organization culture that is inflexible, as generation Y is very focused on flexible things and eager to improve for better processes, whereas generation X is used to the current culture and may believe that generation Y is thinking too much. Another factor is management style; generation X expects rewards for good performance, whereas generation Y expects feedback and recognition from management to continue to improve. Last but not least, because of the content barrier, they communicate less.

As a result, managers must understand and recognize the challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace. The first is unique to each generation's characteristics and perspective. Managers should understand how different each generation is so that we can approach them in an appropriate manner, which leads to the next topic about the effectiveness of communication. Once they understand each generation's characteristics, managers can use the appropriate method of communication with them, such as direct or indirect communication, genuinely listening, and responding in a reasonable way. The third one is about motivational methods; Because each generation has different values and attitudes, managers should provide different motivational methods accordingly. Last but not least, there is the issue of organizational culture, which is a major challenge for managers to help employees of all generations understand and improve.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the important results of this study, we can draw the conclusion that generation is one of the people management aspects to which organizations could also pay close attention in order to accomplish their goals in operating a company, and

managing a multigenerational workforce can be difficult for managers. Each generation has its own set of characteristics and values, and managers must devise strategies to bridge the generation gap and promote a harmonious workplace. The following recommendations in this paper will assist in connecting the generation gap and reducing the challenges of managing people with a big generation gap in the workplace:

- Understand that changing an organization's culture is challenging. However, small steps can be taken beginning today. The management team should pay attention to the small voice of the new generation and try to start or at least adapt only a portion of it. Communicate more about why we need to do certain things for the new generation, as well as why we need to change or adapt things for the older generation.

- Because each generation has different characteristics and expectations, management should adjust themselves to be more flexible in interacting or leading team members, giving feedback privately, and rewarding employees who have a high performance with tangible criteria and no bias.

- Management can help to create a positive environment by organizing a special event each month that allows everyone on their team to get to know each other outside of their roles. For example, the manager could schedule a birthday lunch once a month, and team members could attend the small lunch to have more time to break the ice and learn more about what each generation has in common.

- Moreover, according to the interview in this research that we asked management strategies on how they managing people with this big generation gap in the workplace, their current solution can conclude as following;

- Understand each other's personal characteristics in team members of each generation, and leaders should not assume one person based on one aspect, but must see them as a human being from every angle aside from working mode.

- In every situation, effective communication should be used, with managers genuinely listening and responding in a reasonable manner, especially in a serious situation involving a sensitive issue. And the manager must select the most appropriate communication method and timing, as well as direct communication with team members. Furthermore, in order to encourage team members to better understand one another and communicate with one another, managers should schedule a team monthly meeting to casually discuss and share ideas. The next step in fostering member

cooperation is to arrange some team building events that will allow all team members to interact more effectively and make beneficial relationships and connections.

- Managers should use a motivational method that is appropriate for each generation's needs. Managers must observe and apply the appropriate method for each generation to achieve the goals because they have some different perspectives and values.

5.3 Limitation

Despite the fact that the results from this research are aligned with those in the literature review part, the study's limitation is the small sample size of interviewees. Because the interviews were conducted with only three managers, three employees from generation X and three employees from generation Y, the sample size may be insufficient to draw general conclusions. It would be preferable if research could be conducted with a larger sample size and another quantitative method to support the result.

Another limitation is the variation of backgrounds among many interviewees. For example, if an employee from generation Y is newly graduated and has no prior experience with another company, she does not have a benchmark to compare against. Compared with some interviewees that have had a bad experience with their previous company, they may believe that the current one is adequate and not expect much.

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