



Is there Really a Difference?

A Comparison on the Filipino Work Values between Generations X and Y

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Abstract

Utilizing a descriptive research design, this study compared the perceived level of work values among 144 employees under Generation X (n = 64) and Generation Y (n = 80). This study specifically tested if there were significant differences on the five work values between Generation X and Generation Y. The survey instrument was adapted from Filipino Work Values Scale which has been found to measure Filipino work values validly and reliably. It was revealed that respondents from both generations rated all five work values as very important. A statistical test also shown that there was no significant difference in each work value between the two generation groups being studied. The main recommendation of this study is to boost staff development programs leaning toward strengthening work values directed to both generation groups. Also, the programs should not be divided per generation group because the study suggests that both share the same perception toward the work values being evaluated.

Keywords: Work Values, Generation X, Generation Y, Millennials, Xers

Introduction

Culture surrounds an entire organization. It encompasses a lot of things, ranging from, but not limited to, the values, views, and customs of organizational members (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). Hence, it is a component that powerfully shapes the organization and interactions of its people (Page, Boysen, & Arya, 2019). In analyzing the culture of a particular group or organization, it is desirable to distinguish three fundamental levels at which culture manifests itself: (a) observable artifacts; (b) values; and (c) basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 1990). This is to understand the complexity of the culture and can aid explicate the intricacies, nuances, and inner cultural processes (Warrick, 2017; Edgell & Granter, 2019). Since work culture is broad and general, the researchers decided to narrow it to the concept of work values, which is specific and viable. Work values function as the evaluative standards people use to interpret their work experiences and determine the meaning that individuals attribute to work, jobs, organizations, and specific events and conditions (Uçanok, 2008).

The study of Cervera (1988) enumerated five Filipino work values. The following are (1) intellectual-achievement orientation which is associated with opportunity for independent thinking and for learning how and why things work, and linked with the feeling of accomplishment in doing a job well; (2) interpersonal which is related to people, “amor propio”, “hiya”, “utang na loob”, use of intermediaries, or go between, the value of loyalty, hospitality, “pakikisama”, emotional closeness, and respect for authority; (3) managerial which involves the coordination of human and material resources in order to accomplish the objectives of a work organization; (4) material which enables one to gain prestige, security and economic returns; and (5) occupational which means the exercise of one’s occupation, and subsumed in this are the following: fairness, competence, altruism, self-regulation or occupational autonomy and public service.



Generational differences are the subject of much popular speculation but with relatively little substantive research (Reeves & Oh, 2007). Lancaster & Stillman (2002) defined Generation X, otherwise known as Xers, as those born between 1965 and 1980, whereas Generation Y, also known as Millennials, are those born between 1981 and 1985. Generations are not typically analysed; however, in a way that reflects a more complicated and polarizing relationship between each generation (Troksa, 2016).

According to theory of generations, people are significantly influenced by the socio-historical environment (in particular, notable events that involve them actively) of their youth; giving rise, on the basis of shared experience, to social cohorts (Pilcher, 1994). Stirred with curiosity of how each generation perceives themselves and the environment they worked with, this research aims to present if there are significant differences in terms of work values between Generation X and Generation Y.

Objectives of the Study

This research identified the level of work values among employees in the Metropolitan Manila, and compared the difference of work values between Generation X and Generation Y. Specifically, it intended to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the participants in each element: gender, marital status, generation, education?
2. What is the occupational profile of the participants in each element: remuneration, tenure, and industry?
3. How do the participants perceive their work values when grouped according to each generation?
4. What, if any, are the significant differences in the work values between Generation X and Generation Y when grouped according to: intellectual-orientation achievement, interpersonal, managerial, material, and occupational?

Null Hypotheses

There are no significant differences in the work values between Generation X and Generation Y when grouped according to: (a) intellectual-orientation achievement; (b) interpersonal; (c) managerial; (d) material; and (e) occupational.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

Since the study attempts on describing the behavior of the sample population, the researchers utilized a descriptive research design. Also, it is the most suitable method because this study involves data collection to answer the research questions.

Respondents

Participating in this survey-questionnaire were 144 employees, both under Generations X ($n = 64$) and Y ($n = 80$), in the Metropolitan Manila. Following the premise of inclusive criteria, the respondents were all healthy, 18 years old and above, gave consent to participate in this research, and functionally literate in the English language. They were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in this study. Because the sample is based on those who were invited to participate through an online platform (Google Forms), no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. Also, to avoid taking it twice or more, the respondents were required to log-in first using their email account (GMail) before they fill out the survey-questionnaire.



Instrument

The survey questions that pertain to work values were adapted from Filipino Work Values Scale (Cervera, 1988) which has been found to measure a person's work values, especially of Filipinos, validly and reliably. Also, with the very high coefficient, it was concluded that the scale could accurately measure work values (De Jesus, 1995). Many local researchers utilized the same standardized values scale and reaffirmed its trustworthiness and cogency (e.g., Ayap & Macalalad, 2016; Susa, 2018; Llenares, Cruz, & Espanola, 2019).

This survey-questionnaire was composed of four demographic questions (gender, marital status, generation, and education), three occupational questions (remuneration, tenure, and industry), followed by 25 statements requiring a Likert-style response ranging from 1 (very unimportant) to 4 (very important). These statements were further grouped into five categories that correspond the work values (intellectual-orientation achievement, interpersonal, managerial, material, and occupational) being tested in this study.

Procedure

First, the researchers submitted the framework of their proposed research to their professor and the concerned committees. The research study, data collection process, and the structured survey-questionnaire were reviewed and given approval by the Department of Communication and University Research Ethics Committee of Polytechnic University of the Philippines-Graduate School. After approval, the researchers started to gather data from varied employees in Metropolitan Manila, through an online platform, Google Forms. This was made possible through the cooperation of managers, principals, officials, and networks. Their responses were gathered during April 2018, and were used as the basis of this study. Moreover, the researchers also used online scholarly databases to gather more information and to support the findings of the study.

Data Analysis

The collected data were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted. Frequency and percentage were used to describe both the demographic profile (gender, marital status, generation, and education), and the occupational profile (remuneration, tenure, and industry). On the other hand, weighted mean was utilized to determine how respondents perceive their work values when grouped according to generations (see Table 1).

Table 1 Four-Point Likert Scale

Scale	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	1.00 – 1.75	Very Unimportant
2	1.76 – 2.50	Unimportant
3	2.51 – 3.25	Important
4	3.26 – 4.00	Very Important

Lastly, to test if there are significant differences in the work values (intellectual-orientation achievement, interpersonal, managerial, material, and occupational) among employees in the two generation groups, the Mann-Whitney U test through the SPSS Statistics software (version 21) was employed.



Results and Discussion

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Demographic Variables

Demographic Variables	Subgroups	F	%
Sex	Male	76	53%
	Female	68	47%
Generation	Generation X (38–53)	64	44%
	Generation Y (19–37)	80	56%
Marital Status	Single	94	65%
	Married	38	26%
	Living with Partner	12	9%
Education	High School or Less	1	1%
	Some College	13	9%
	Bachelor's Degree	100	69%
	Graduate School	30	21%

The above table shows that out of the 144 participants, 56% were Generation Y which ages ranged between 19 and 37, and 44% were Generation X which ages ranged from 38–53. Their marital status ranged as follows: 65% single, 26% married, and 9% living with partner.

Table 3 Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Occupational Variables

Occupational Variables	Subgroups	F	%
Remuneration	below 20K	52	36%
	20K – 30K	52	36%
	31K – 40K	40	28%
Tenure	Less than one year	27	19%
	1 – 3 years	51	35%
	5 + years	14	10%
	4 – 5 years	52	36%
Industry	Educational Services	40	28%
	Health Care & Social Assistance	20	14%
	Information & Communications	22	15%
	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	23	16%
	Others	39	27%

This table entails that out of the 144 participants, 36% earned below 20,000 PHP, 36% earned between 20,000 PHP and 30,000 PHP, and 28% earned from 31,000 to 40,000 PHP. Additionally, majority of the participants (n = 40) were in the arena of educational services, to be followed by other industries (n = 39) which ranged from, but not limited to, religious, and development sectors.

The five work values being evaluated in this study include: intellectual–achievement orientation, interpersonal, managerial, material, and occupational. Each work value is represented by five situational statements in which respondents rated according to the level of importance. Table 4 below presents the comparison of the summarized weighted means of the statements per work value category.

Table 4 reveals that there is no difference in the way respondents, from both generation groups being studied, rated the work values according to their level of importance. Respondents from Generation X and



Generation Y perceive all the identified five work values as very important, meaning all computed weighted means are between the 3.26–4.00 range (see Table 1).

In both generation groups, intellectual–achievement orientation got the highest rating (very important) with similar weighted mean value of 3.63. This is also associated with systems thinking, or understanding how and why things work. Further, this work value equates to feeling of accomplishment after doing a job well (Llenares, 2015). This means respondents put high importance on opportunities for independent thinking and learning.

Meanwhile, the table reveals that also garnering a very important rating but with the lowest weighted mean is the interpersonal work value. This value was rated the lowest by both Generation X (WM = 3.46) and Generation Y (WM = 3.40) respondents. This work value puts high importance on *pakikisama* attitude and respect for authority (Llenares, 2015).

Table 4 Comparison of Work Values between Generations X and Y

Work Value	Generation X (n = 64) Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Generation Y (n = 80) Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Intellectual–Achievement Orientation	3.63	Very Important	3.63	Very Important
Interpersonal	3.46	Very Important	3.40	Very Important
Managerial	3.44	Very Important	3.42	Very Important
Material	3.59	Very Important	3.57	Very Important
Occupational	3.58	Very Important	3.51	Very Important

Table 5 Comparison of Ratings for Intellectual–Achievement Orientation

Work Value Situational Statements	Gen X (n = 64)	Gen Y (n = 80)
Work assignments which are challenging enough to motivate you to study continuously.	3.55	3.49
A work organization where programs are conducted for the improvement and occupational advancement of the employees.	3.73	3.75
A boss who gets your opinion about your work.	3.73	3.68
Membership in work and/or professional organizations, which provide a greater chance for intellectual advancement.	3.55	3.57
A job which gives you opportunity for independent thought and action.	3.64	3.72
Weighted Mean	3.63	3.63

The intellectual–achievement orientation work value is more associated with opportunity for independent thinking and feeling of accomplishment for doing tasks that yield results (Llenares, 2015). “A work organization where programs are conducted for the improvement and occupational advancement of the employees” and “A boss who gets your opinion about your work” statements were rated highest by Generation X and Y. This can be interpreted as both generations put premium on staff development and employee empowerment.

**Table 6** Comparison of Ratings for Interpersonal

Work Value Situational Statements	Gen X (n = 64)	Gen Y (n = 80)
Working with people who have pakikisama i.e., who are yielding to the will of the leader or the majority so as to make the group completely agree in decisions	3.48	3.34
A job which is in line with your education and training.	3.22	3.25
Working with people who do not gossip.	3.56	3.43
A job which gives you opportunity to know more people and to gain more friends.	3.40	3.31
Working with people who show concern for your well-being.	3.64	3.65
Weighted Mean	3.46	3.40

Interpersonal work value is related to the feeling of “pakikisama”, “utang na loob”, and respect for authority (Llenares, 2015). This can be interpreted that showing concern for wellbeing of co-workers is essential in building good work relationships among the two generation groups.

Table 7 Comparison of Ratings for Managerial

Work Value Situational Statements	Gen X (n = 64)	Gen Y (n = 80)
A job which requires you to integrate the activities of people.	3.48	3.44
A place of work which recognizes your ability to make human and physical resources of your work organization productive.	3.58	3.64
Working with superiors who train you to integrate and coordinate organizational resources (men, materials, money, time and space, for examples) towards the accomplishments.	3.59	3.61
A boss who tells you about the overall plans of the organization and allows you to get involved in the implementation of this plan.	3.69	3.69
A job which gives you more right and power over others.	2.88	2.76
Weighted Mean	3.44	3.42

The managerial work value is related to the coordination of human and material resources in order to accomplish the objectives of a work organization (Llenares, 2015). It is interesting to note that “A job which gives you more right and power over others” statement got the lowest rating, while the statement “A boss who tells you about the overall plans of the organization and allows you to get involved in the implementation of this plan” statement got the highest rating in both generation groups. This could be interpreted as the managerial value for both generations can be related to tasks that let them help the organization achieve its goals rather than having high standing and more influence than others.

Table 8 Comparison of Ratings for Material

Work Value Situational Statements	Gen X (n = 64)	Gen Y (n = 80)
A job which has security tenure.	3.69	3.66
A work which has a program for promotions and salary increases.	3.77	3.76
A job, which offers you many opportunities to earn extra money.	3.53	3.49
Fringe benefits such as housing, SSS/GSIS insurance, vacation, sick or study leaves with pay, free sack of rice and others.	3.72	3.76
A job which gives you prestige.	3.25	3.18
Weighted Mean	3.59	3.57



This material work value is related to security and economic returns (Llenares, 2015). The statement “A work which has a program for promotions and salary increases” got the highest rating, while the statement “A job which gives you prestige” got the lowest rating from both generation groups. This could be interpreted as both generations put value in recognition and compensation rather than just having high standing.

Table 9 Comparison of Ratings for Occupational

Work Value Situational Statements	Gen X (n = 64)	Gen Y (n = 80)
A job which gives you authority proportionate to your position.	3.39	3.41
Working with people who recognize your merit.	3.67	3.48
Membership in work and/or professional organizations which satisfy your need for acceptance.	3.38	3.29
Working with honest superiors.	3.77	3.75
A job which allows you to help those in need of your service.	3.69	3.64
Weighted Mean	3.58	3.51

This value is related to the exercise of occupation that practices fairness, self-regulation and public service (Llenares, 2015). This can be interpreted as both generation groups putting premium on fair recognition of achievements that leads to opportunities to further career.

To statistically determine the difference between the work values of Generation X and Generation Y, the Mann-Whitney test was used. Based on the results, it can be noted that there is no significant difference in work values between the respondents from two generation groups.

The SPSS was used to get the asymptotic significance (p-value). All work values got $p > 0.05$ which means there are no statistically significant differences per work value between Generation X and Generation Y. In determining statistical significance the p-value should be less than 0.05 for a statistically significant relationship between two variables be considered.

Table 10 Results of Mann-Whitney U Test on Work Value Differences between Generation X and Y

	Intellectual- Achievement Orientation	Interpersonal	Managerial	Material	Occupational
Mann-Whitney U	2273.500	2437.500	2346.000	2466.000	2546.000
Asymptotic Significance (2-tiered)	.235	.618	.614	.698	.956

Conclusions and Recommendations

The main research question this study aims to address is whether there is a significant difference in terms of Filipino work values between Generation X and Generation Y. Work values serve as the evaluative criteria people use to interpret their work experiences and determine the meaning that individuals attribute to work, organizations, and particular conditions (Uçanok, 2008). This study specifically covers the intellectual-achievement orientation, interpersonal, managerial, material, and occupational work values.

The 144 respondents (Generation X = 64; Generation Y = 80) rated themselves how they view the work values according to importance. By getting the weighted mean of all the responses, it was revealed that respondents from both generations rated all five work values as very important. To statistically test if there is a significant difference in each work value between the two generation groups, the Mann-Whitney U test was



utilized. This also revealed that there is no significant difference, with both generations scoring higher than 0.05. In the light of the foregoing conclusions, it is recommended that companies and organizations should boost the intellectual-achievement orientation of employees, since both generations value it most (WM = 3.63). They should also not neglect reinforcing the remaining work values, including interpersonal for Generation X (WM = 3.46) and Generation Y (WM = 3.40).

Officers in the field of human resources are encouraged to provide staff development opportunities leaning towards strengthening the five work values directed to both generation groups. Development programs should not also be divided per generation group because the study suggests that both share the same perception towards the work values being evaluated. Future researchers may conduct similar studies widening the coverage by extending it to the regional and national scope. Researchers may utilize quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods approach to explore various perspectives in relation to work values. They may also employ longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. The usage of other work values instruments is suggested. It is an option as well to conduct work values research in a new angle such as cross-cultural or cross-national in its nature.

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