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THE ESSENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC WORKFORCE – A PARADIGM CHALLENGE

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ABSTRACT

Today, the business environment has become more diverse, comprising employees from five different generations. The presence of multigenerational workplace affects the company's management styles. This fact emphasizes the need to understand how people with distinctive characteristics, values, experiences, and work styles can work together more efficiently and effectively. This paper serves to study the characteristics of a more holistic and age conscious Human Resource Management and to describe the specific challenges confronted in the context of demographic change. The study further analyses the difference in the age and satisfaction of respondents in employee perception. The methodology used for the study Mann Whitney U – test is a non-parametric test which is used to analyse the difference between the medians of two data sets. The findings of the study have been identified for the age group 30-40 (work culture openness, challenging tasks, good counselling mechanism), 41-50 (expression of feelings to colleagues, appreciation at work, prestige associated at work and preference to new assignments) above 50 (benefits appealing, goals well defined and team spirit). Suggestions are also given to bridge the gap of differences among employees and align their personal interest with that of the organization. This would eventually help to identify the areas in human resource management that serve to maintain productive, motivated and healthy workforce till their retirement.

Keywords: Demographic, Generation Gap, Workforce, Job Security, Organization.

INTRODUCTION

As demographics is concerned with the different characteristics of population it plays a vital role for any organization in framing the policy decisions. In this information age knowledge explosion is a serious concern and it is quite impertinent to ensure that the workforce adapts to the ever-changing trend. The efficiency and the productivity of the workforce irrespective of their age has to be consistently monitored and ensured. Motivation,

job satisfaction and performance will in future depend on human resource management policy which aim to maintain the workability and employability of employees at all ages.

GENERATIONAL GAP IN THE WORKPLACE

The generational gap in the workplace refers to the difference in behaviours and outlook between groups of people who were born at distinctly different times. Each generation is brought up in a different context and, consequently, have different work expectations. So, there are chances for problems to arise in the workplace owing to the differences in preferences and expectations in completing the job responsibilities.

Types of Generation

Subject	Generation Z (1997 – 2012)	Millennials (1981 – 1996)	Generation Xers (1965-1980)	Baby boomers (1946-1964)	Silent generation (1928-1945)
Characteristics	Tech savvy	Communicating digitally and addicted to smart phones	More educated, self-reliant, hardworking	Strong work ethic, goal centric tendencies, only face to face interactions	Diligent financial habits, hard working with strong core values
Mode of attraction	Usage of cutting-edge technology	Mobile optimization, Skill structured training programmes	Comfortable with face-to-face interactions and also habituated to technology	Traditional working environment, awards	Requires a fair pay, prefer to work as advisors
Ideal working environment	Job security Flexible working hours	Help them to work remotely, encourage them to work for company's mission	Individual emphasis, need a psychological space	Job security, strong alignment to job	Encouraging them to share their experience and knowledge
Mode of approach	Strong forum to learn and grow	Measure their performance based on their results, transparent and honest approach	Greater autonomy, less supervision, good work experience	Ensure recognition for their skills	Healthcare and retirement benefits
Employee benefits	Competitive salary, financial incentives	Work-life balance, monetary gifts, career development programmes	Monetary benefits, stock options, gift cards	Health care and retirement benefits	

CHALLENGES OF AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORKPLACE

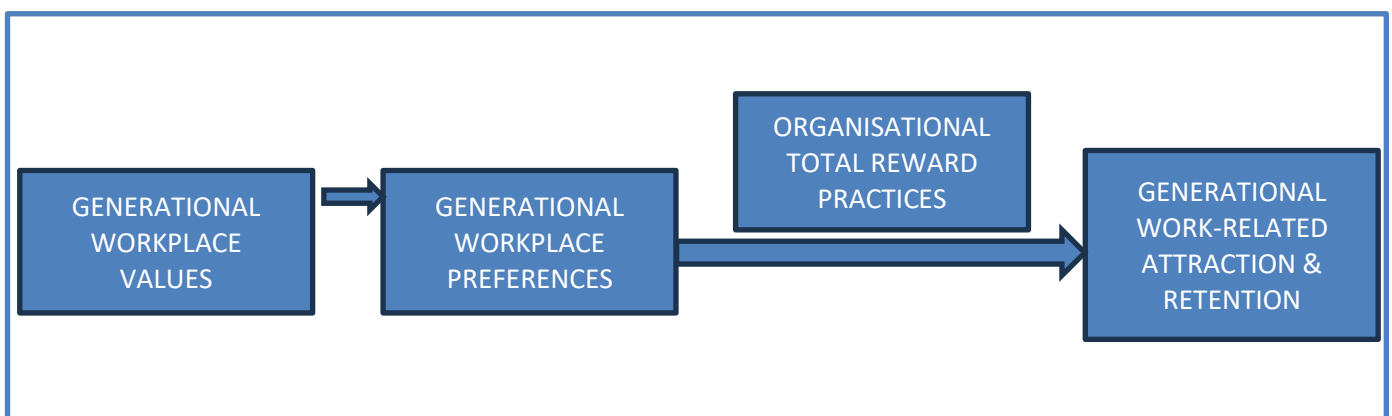
A multigenerational workplace poses a challenge for the managers to bring employees together both physically and digitally. In a way it benefits the employers by providing them with a wide range of experiences and creative problem-solving skills. So, dealing with multigenerational workforce sensitizes various work styles and communication channels. The different issues to be addressed are explained as follows.

1. **Stereotyping** - This arises where Gen Z can believe that baby boomers and Gen X are less likely to take risks and don't possess sound knowledge about technological advancements. Similarly, old professionals can believe that young workers are lazy, informal and less responsible.
2. **Age Bias** - The fact of age is considered in priority to race, gender, appearance, religion and culture. Age is the key factor being considered for promotions.
3. **Communication** - Young employees prefer face to face communication while older generations opt for the traditional method of communication. This may either lead to magnifying facts or missing the reliability in the workplace. Since each generation can have a different preferred communication method, the potential exists for information to be missed by certain employees who are not as reliant on technology.
4. **Work Expectations** - It differs among generations. The freshers expect a great degree of freedom while the old generation prefer to be monitored. Baby boomers value salary, health benefits and insurance while Xers value job security and advancement within the company.
5. **Job Responsibilities** - Each generation has its own way regarding the procedure of job responsibilities. Experienced people adhere to formalities strictly while youngsters. Gen Xers, baby boomers, and members of the silent generation may be more deferential to authority than their later-born counterparts. They may also put more stock in loyalty to a specific company

SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDERSTANDING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

The aspect of work values plays a vital role to influence the attitudes, preferences of the workforce and motivate them to be associated with the organisation. These values of work reflect the outcomes that people want to attain in their workplace. They are not only closely associated with motivation and job satisfaction but also correlated with retention and organisation commitment. The work attitudes can either be cognitive or emotional to the various aspects of work (Hulin & Judge, 2003). The avenues of the work environment, compensation package, promotional opportunities serve as a motivational factor to either be associated or leave the organisation. Consequently, the values of a generational workplace led to attitudinal workplace perceptions. These attitudinal perceptions moderated by organisation's rewards package led to motivated behaviours of attraction and retention.

This aspect is demonstrated by the chart below:



are listed as follows:

- Businesses will be better equipped to understand the demographics of their clients, and therefore reach a broader client base.
- Managers will have a better understanding regarding the way to attract, motivate, retain, and reward employees. This, in turn, can lead to increased performance and profitability.

- Engaging members of all generations in conversation might lead to improved decision-making. Managers can build strategies to increase effectiveness when interacting with different
- generations.
- Understanding different communication styles will encourage employees to stop and think before jumping to conclusions or making assumptions.
- Managers will be able to harness multiple levels of experience, skill, and expertise to build more efficient and cohesive work teams.
- Understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses can help teams that are experiencing conflict.
- Raising generational awareness within the workplace and focusing on productive behaviours can help bridge a gap between generations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To exhibit the characteristics of a more holistic and age conscious Human Resource Management.
- To describe the specific challenges confronted in the context of demographic change.
- To study the demographic profile i.e., gender, age of the respondents in the job satisfaction of employee perception.
- To analyse the difference in the age and satisfaction of respondents in employee perception.

Hypothesis Development of the Study

- H_0^1 = There is no significant difference in age in respect of the determinants of job satisfaction in employee perception.

Research Methodology

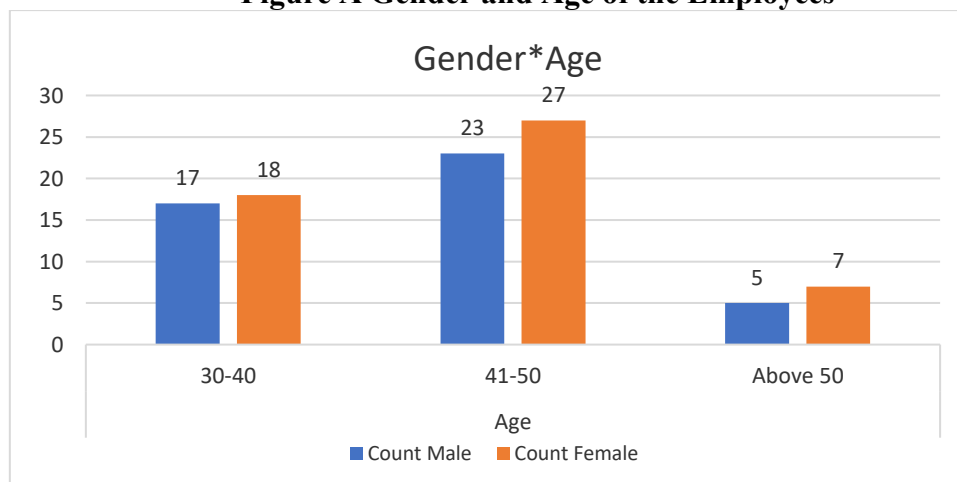
Sample Size – 97 , Sampling – Convenience Sampling, Type of Data – Primary, Period of Study – March 2025, Tools used - Mann Whitney U - Test

The Mann Whitney U – test is a non-parametric test which is used to analyse the difference between the medians of two data sets. Mann Whitney U-test can be used to compare any two data sets that are not normally distributed. Formula for calculating Mann Whitney U-test is:

$$U_1 = n_1 n_2 + \frac{n_1(n_1 + 1)}{2} - R_1$$

Where n_1 is the sample size for sample 1, and R_1 is the sum of the ranks in sample 1

Figure A Gender and Age of the Employees



Source: Computed data collected from primary source.

Figure - A shows the demographic profile of the respondents' viz., gender and age. Out of 97 respondents, 45 (46.39%) are male and 52 (53.61%) are female. Out of 45 male respondents, 17 (37.77%) fall under the age group of up to 30-40 years, 23 (51.12%) fall in the age category of 41-50 years and 5 (11.11%) fall in the age category of Above 50 years. Out of 52 female respondents, 18 (34.62%) fall under the age group of up to 30-40 years, 27 (51.92%) fall under 41-50 years category and 7 (13.46%) of them fall in 46-60 years category.

Table 1 Ranks for Age and Employee Perception

	Age	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Goal at work defined	30-40	35	35.93	1257.50
	41-50	50	47.95	2397.50
	Above 50	12	52.58	631.00
	Total	97		
Team spirit	30-40	35	45.40	1589.00
	41-50	50	41.32	2066.00
	Above 50	12	53.50	642.00
	Total	97		
Work culture of openness	30-40	35	45.33	1586.50
	41-50	50	41.37	2068.50
	Above 50	12	41.67	500.00
	Total	97		
Expression of feelings to colleagues	30-40	35	23.79	832.50
	41-50	50	56.45	2822.50
	Above 50	12	40.00	480.00
	Total	97		
Appreciation at work	30-40	35	36.80	1288.00
	41-50	50	47.34	2367.00
	Above 50	12	36.00	432.00
	Total	97		
Prestige associated with job	30-40	35	23.97	839.00
	41-50	50	56.32	2816.00
	Above 50	12	18.08	217.00
	Total	97		
Challenging tasks	30-40	35	52.90	1851.50
	41-50	50	36.07	1803.50
	Above 50	12	7.00	84.00
	Total	97		
Good counselling mechanism	30-40	35	58.07	2032.50
	41-50	50	32.45	1622.50
	Above 50	12	54.00	648.00
	Total	97		
Benefit appealing	30-40	35	41.70	1459.50
	41-50	50	43.91	2195.50
	Above 50	12	46.17	554.00
	Total	97		
Preferability of new assignments	30-40	35	24.43	855.00
	41-50	50	56.00	2800.00
	Above 50	12	44.00	528.00
	Total	97		

Source: Computed data collected from primary source.

INFERENCE

Table 1 indicates the age with the highest mean rank is considered as having the higher satisfaction in employee perception. It shows that the age group between 30-40 years has the

highest mean rank in work culture openness, challenging tasks as well as good counselling mechanism by the respondents. This implies that the workforce is more responsive to change fostering trust, creativity and are ready to contribute beyond their immediate job responsibilities.

It shows that the employees belong to age group of 41-50 years have higher satisfaction in expression of feelings to colleagues, appreciation at work, prestige associated at work and also in Preferability of new assignments in job. Such employees acknowledge other's contribution and at the same time gain recognition through accomplishments influencing career progression.

Benefit appealing, goals at work defined and team spirit has the highest mean rank for the age group of respondents above 50, which indicates that the respondents above 50 has the higher satisfaction in goals defining, benefit appealing as well as team spirit.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The respondents in the age group of 30-40 are Tech Savvy and are more inclined towards cutting edge technology expecting a more digitised work environment. Usually, this generation brings in a lot of benefits to the organization with their prioritization on diversity and focus on personal development. So, the aspects of providing development opportunities in career, inclusive work culture and collaboration with software and cloud technology will not only provide flexible working arrangements but also impart a feel of security by providing a platform for developing personally and professionally.
2. With regards to the respondents in the age group of 41-50 they focus on value alignment at work. Exhibiting candid feedback of their performance and providing a constructive framework of how they must grow would enhance their morale and efficiency. By understanding their primary concerns and providing ample opportunities to grow with a good and cordial working environment will keep them tied with the organisation
3. As far as the respondents in the age group of above 50 are concerned, they prioritize on a collaborative, communicative and respectful work culture. Providing opportunities for professional advancement, well-being, adopting recognition and award policy and rendering high level of autonomy are necessary to retain this generation in an organisation for a balanced approach.

Table 2 Results of Mann Whitney U- Test for Age towards Employee Perception

Test Statistic	Goal at work defined	Team spirit	Work culture of openness	Expression of feelings to colleagues	Appreciation at work	Prestige associated with job	Challenging tasks	Good counselling mechanism	Benefit appealing	Preferability of new assignments
Mann-Whitney U	47.000	36.000	178.000	198.000	246.000	139.000	6.000	30.000	124.000	150.000
Wilcoxon W	1322.000	1311.000	1453.000	1473.000	1521.000	217.000	84.000	1305.000	1399.000	1425.000
Z	-6.361	-4.854	-2.388	-2.027	-1.234	-3.314	-5.685	-5.211	-3.286	-3.145
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.017	.043	.217	<.001	<.001	<.001	.001	.002

Source: Computed data collected from primary source.

INFERENCE

Table 2 provides test statistic, U statistic, as well as the asymptotic significance (2-tailed). It shows that the age towards employee perception like goals at work defined ($U = 47$, $P = .001$), team spirit ($U = 36$, $P = .001$), work culture of openness ($U = 178$, $P = .017$) expression of feelings with colleagues ($U = 198$, $P = .043$), appreciation at work ($U = 246$, $P = .217$) and prestige associated with job ($U = 139$, $P = .001$), challenging tasks ($U = 6$, $P = .001$) good counselling mechanism ($U = 30$, $P = .001$) benefit appealing ($U = 124$, $P = .001$) and Preferability of new assignment ($U = 150$, $P = .002$) of the female respondents. Hence, the values of U statistic and asymptotic significance clearly indicate how much the ranks of the two groups diverge and the existence of a strong relationship thereby rejecting the null hypothesis H_0 ¹. So there is a significant difference in the age about the determinants of satisfaction in employee perception except in appreciation at work for the employees in their workplace.

The above two interpretations confirm that is crucial for companies to analyse the demographic data for talent management, HR planning and overall business strategy. Further the gaps in skill set can be identified helping the companies to create a more inclusive and productive workplace.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study about the demographic workforce plays an important role in succession planning. Today every organisation is facing changing and challenging realities at work place. The workforce is the only reliable segment to carry out the organization's mission and achieve its goals. So, a careful planning and preparation is required by the organizations to manage the changes and meet the requirements of the staff to ensure its stability and sustainability. The global climate change in workplace calls for implementing policies and procedures that reduces inequities and enhances the occupational health. So, it is quite impertinent to monitor the demographics periodically to subordinate their personal interests with that of the organisation. This helps to foster workplace inclusivity and worker empowerment.

The above study is an effort to understand the mechanism of job satisfaction in demographics with regard to age. The elements of job satisfaction has been identified for the age group 30-40 (work culture openness, challenging tasks, good counselling mechanism), 41-50 (expression of feelings to colleagues, appreciation at work, prestige associated at work and preference to new assignments) above 50 (benefits appealing, goals well defined and team spirit). Moreover, the test of significance for various elements of job satisfaction with age has been proved to be in existence and hence the null hypothesis can be rejected. So, considering the workforce growing diversity, it is necessary to formulate work centered safety and healthy approaches to hedge the work-related risks.

Work environment is an amalgamation of different generations. So, every organization must make an effort to understand the demographics to result in a credible workforce. Hence predictive prescriptive analytics help the employer to mitigate the needs of changing workforce demographics and leverage the organisation towards success

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