
**INFLUENCE OF MULTIGENERATIONAL TEAMWORK ON EMPLOYEE
PERFORMANCE: UNDERSTANDING THE MILLENNIALS**

^{1*}Rose Mbithe Mutteti & ²Dr. Kennedy Nyariki

¹Scholar, Mount Kenya University

²Senior Lecturer, Mount Kenya University

Accepted, November 14th, 2022

Abstract

Multigenerational teamwork has become the current norm in many organizations. Baby boomers are in close to retire and millineals will soon be taking over the workforce. As a result it is imperative for organizational managers to learn more about multigenerational job satisfaction and organizational commitment levels. The study surveyed 148 individuals, with a result indicating males across the generational teams in the workplace had higher job satisfaction levels compared to their female counterparts. Also to note, females had higher organizational commitment levels compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, millenials with graduate degree were likely to stay at their organizations compared to their counterparts without a degree. Recommendations and implications were discussed for top managers leading, hiring and managing the millennials in the workforce.

Keywords; *Understanding the millennials, Multigenerational Teamwork, Employee Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 60 years, three generations dominate the workplaces. The baby boomer generation, generation X and generation Y also referred to as millineals. All the named generations coexisted in the workplace, with organizational behaviors changing to adapt to every generation. The management is dealing with a generation with unique work ethics compared to the more compared more experienced colleagues. Interestingly organizations and researchers are just now beginning to address issues related to generational differences that may have a significant impact on the leadership and success of the organization” (Penny, 2019).

With an analysis of the different generations existing in the workplace, the study focused more on whether all generation cohorts both male and female have the same scores as to job satisfaction. Teams across all generation cohorts have the same scores in regards to organizational commitment and whether or not millenials with a graduate level degree are more likely to stay with an organization than millenials without a graduate level degree. Baby boomers are starting to retire and as a result more millenials are being hired throughout the

nation. As such, the differences among the generations in the workforce can create some problems for managers who are responsible for making sure that tasks are being completed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multigenerational teams in the workplace

Evaluation of the current generational distinctions is key since it leads to understanding the values and traits of the individuals that shares experiences and events at a particular time. Understanding the common work values and characteristics of each generation will help facilitate practices within an organization that will combat workplace challenges associated with age diversity (Salau et al., 2020). Within multigenerational teams, understanding and appreciating generational characteristics, preferences, and tendencies will help to formulate effective value creation, interaction, and generational composition. Nevertheless, generations cannot be simply defined by birth dates for a specific population.

Considerably, there should be a deep analysis of demographic, attitudinal, labor market, and behavioral measures within a frame of time. Different generational cohorts developed different distinguishable characteristics and personalities at the work place. The different traits, and values have been shaped by common experiences like cultural, economic, political and technological events (Eberz, 2020). Although there exist differences among the individuals within each generation, research indicate that the common and shared experiences created some common shared characteristics and work value system within each generation.

It is also important to understand the stereotypes attributed to the different generational groups since they are the perceptions held by a particular generation cohort about the other. The attributes are viewed as accurate by different study groups, thus treat the stereotyped generation based on the views.

Also to note, stereotypes help humans to quickly process stimulus by generalizing a particular group of individuals, and that can be formed automatically, although they cannot be relied upon as they are prone to bias within the workplace (Sarraf, 2019). Individual's bias creates negative performance expectations as well as normative behavior expectations that can cause harm because of their inaccuracy. Additionally, to biases, stereotypes are prone to internal conflicts, diminish relationships, and degrade the work environment within the multigenerational workforce.

Baby boomers

As stated, this is the generation born from 1946 -1946, after the end of World War II. Birthrates were elevated in most of industrialized countries that created the baby boomer term for people born during that period. From the period of 1999 to 2019, boomers consisted of the largest adult generation and a pivotal one too.

Baby boomers' experiences

These generations lived through a variety of notable experiences termed as unique to the generation. In addition, the generation inherited, encountered and redirected a social change. The cohort was exposed to civil rights movement, political and economic wars and economic prosperity (Sarraf, 2019). The cohort exposure to the events gave them an experience with controversy, conflict and idealism. The generation was also the first one to experience a large transformation of popular tastes, lifestyles and a mass consumer revolution.

Boomers common characteristics

Different experiences common to baby boomers shaped the way and experience of the world around them. Historical events experienced by this generation contributed to development of

attributes shared throughout their generational cohort. Therefore, they are commonly referred to as hardworking, achievement oriented and competitive.

Many of these characteristics exhibited are symptomatic of the strong values that Baby Boomers hold. Baby Boomers are very goal oriented. They also value a sense of community and teams, and value a structured environment (Dahl, 2019c). Loyalty is something that Boomers value deeply and have sometimes been criticized as being loyal to the point of personal detriment to their workplace. Considering the type of historical events that Baby Boomers were exposed to, it is not surprising that Boomers are “motivated to change the world with their idealism and considered optimistic”.

Stereotypes

Baby Boomers also have some prevalent stereotypes from the other generations that include being overbearing, resistant to change, being bad with technology, and caring too much about the chain of command.

Table 1: Common characteristics, values, and stereotypes of the Baby Boomer generation

Common characteristics	Values	Stereotypes
Achievement oriented	Goal oriented	Overbearing
Experienced	Loyalty	Resistant to change
Team players	Teamwork	Bad with technology
Resourceful	Structured environment	Too much caring on the command chain

Generation X

The middle generation or generation X was the term used for the population born between 1965 - 1981. Changes experienced, and uncertainties by generation X shaped their characteristics. The generation is used with self-reliance, and resilience that pushed them to seek outside help when necessary. As a result, the generation is open to attending conferences and external coaching. The cohort is also a device friendly one almost familiar with all platforms. The generation also, is entrepreneurial, and don't work for an institution (Sarraf, 2019). They also have a cynical sense of humor. This generation was lined up with many events to an extent that they had to navigate in their formative years.

Stereotypes

The stereotypes attributed with the Xers generation included a distrusting authority, and easily frustrated lack of promotions and increased paychecks.

Table 2: Generation X characteristics, values and stereotypes

Characteristics	Values	Stereotypes
Cynical	Questions traditions	Skeptical to authority
Open to coaching	Variety/change	Disregard rules
reliable	Work and life balance	Loyal o personal goals compared to organization goals

Millennials

This was the generation born in 1981 to 1987. Currently, the generation has the biggest numbers in the workforce. Similarly, there are several significant events: cultural economic, societal, that shaped the millennials. The generation was the first to experience mobile communication and other smart devices.

Common characteristics.

The millennial exhibit confidence, hopefulness inclusive and goal oriented. Higher percentage hold a bachelor's degree or a higher academic expertise compared to the previous generations (Hisel, 2020). Based on researchers, the cohort are not engaged in work. Also to note, the group is technologically savvy, highly skilled, and less politically affiliated. The generation is also termed as less structured, thus less team oriented compared to the previous generations.

Values

A wide range of values has been attributed to this cohort. Due to ethnic diversity, the generation values some tolerance and welcoming to difference. Also in the work place, millennials value flexibility in working hours, lifelong working opportunities, individual's development opportunities and technology (Brahmbhatt, 2019). The generation also values workplace accountability and role clarity.

Stereotypes

The generation is full of stereotypes that range from entitlement, praise and constant desire for feedback. However, the generation is also attributed with lack of motivation, impatient and being lazy.

Table 3: Millennials characteristics, values and stereotypes

Characteristics	Values	Stereotypes
Confidence	Accountability	Entitled
Not engaged to work as previous generations	development Role clarity	Desire for feedback and praise
Goal oriented	Tolerant	Impatient
Inclusive	Flexibility in working hours	Unmotivated
Technologically savvy		Lazy

Multigenerational teamwork outcomes

Age diversity within the taskforce is significant, since it contributes to success or failure of organizations. Based on a fact that the current workforce in almost every organizations work in teams, the team outcomes not only affect a specific cohort, but individuals within the team and the better organization as well.

Multigenerational teamwork in organization amongst the staff promotes value addition in an organization. For instance, the younger generation has been accustomed to wide range developing tech thus a quick adaption of the changes derived by the new technology (Vertesi, 2019). Similarly, the mature employees have expertise that can guide towards sound decision making based on their durational experience. Significantly, the collaboration that exist between experience, wisdom and innovation brings forth increased organizational productivity.

There are some key benefits associated with multigenerational workforce. To start with, multigenerational teamwork brings forth problem solving abilities among employees. A combination of multiple perspectives and diverse skills creates creative solutions to obstacles. Different life experiences inflated influence how individuals interact, and address challenges together with conflicts (Stutzer, 2019). As a result, multigenerational teamwork offers a variety of ways employees can address their work related obstacles.

Multigenerational teamwork also promotes mentoring activities in the workplace. The more age diversity exists in the workplace, the more individuals interact and learn from each other's insights, in particular the mutually beneficial mentoring activities (Maciaszczyk & Kocot, 2021). The experienced taskforce gets in a position to advice the younger employees on their career development. Also, considering the current trend of reverse cross generational mentoring, the

junior employees also are able to educate the mature ones with the familiarity with the current trends and technology.

Also to note, knowledge transfer is a key factor to the longevity of an organization. It ensures that valuable experiences and employee expertise do not vanish on shifting. Having individuals from different generations with varying experience levels, gives a potential towards capturing and transferring knowledge throughout the organization. Previous studies on multigenerational teamwork indicated that the amount and quality of knowledge transfer depends on the dynamics of multigenerational teams (Maciaszczyk & Kocot, 2021). Individual workers perception towards age diversity within taskforce is positively correlated with knowledge sharing, based on the fact that individuals perceiving different levels of experience that get along with age diversity.

Also, individuals within a team that have positive diversity beliefs engage in higher amounts of knowledge transfer than those with no positive diversity views (Stutzer, 2019). Scheduling specific knowledge sharing times as well as maintaining a positive team climate with psychological safety are also factors that contribute to increased knowledge sharing within multigenerational teams.

Study methodology

A small survey was conducted to 190 millennial employees in the county government of Makeni. Of the 190 surveys distributed, 148 were completed, 74 by males and 74 by females, representing a 77% response rate. The small sample population would be used as a pilot study due to the convenience of the sampling method which would never be generalized to entire population in government institutions.

The research question for the small study was: is multigenerational teamwork easier to manage in terms of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Research hypothesis for the study are as follows.

H1: All generation cohorts both male and female have the same scores as to job satisfaction.

H2: Teams across all generation cohorts have the same scores in regards to organizational commitment.

H3: Millennials with a graduate degree are just as likely to quit their jobs as Millennials without a graduate degree.

For the purpose of this study, job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences and organizational commitment is defined as the aspiration on the part of an employee to remain a member of the organization.

STUDY RESULTS

Table 4: Numbers of participants

Males	74
Females	74
N=	148

H1: All generation cohorts both male and female have the same scores as to job satisfaction.

Table 5: Job satisfaction mean scores

	Male	Female
Mean (job satisfaction)	3.870	3.011
Std. deviation	.751	.941

Table 6: Job satisfaction: T-test and P –value

T-test	-5.471
P-value (sig)	.000

The first hypothesis, stating that All generation cohorts both male and female have the same scores as to job satisfaction was rejected ($t=-5.472$, $p=.000$). As shown in Table 3, male workers across all generational cohorts have a significantly higher mean in job satisfaction compared to female workers.

H2: Teams across all generation cohorts have the same scores in regards to organizational commitment.

Table 7: Organizational commitment mean score

	Male	Female
Mean(organizational commitment)	3.310	3.878
Std. deviation.	.978	.860

Table 8: Organizational commitment T-test and P-value

T-test	3.751
P-value (sig)	.000

The second hypothesis, stating that teams across all generation cohorts have the same scores in regards to organizational commitment both male and female is rejected ($t= 3.750$, $p= .000$). As shown, female in generational teams have a significantly higher mean in job commitment than males.

Table 9: Quitting job mean scores

	Graduate degree	
Mean (quitting job)	1.730	1.385
Std.deviation	.447	.490

Table 10: Quitting job: T-test and P-value

T-test	4.324
P-value(sig)	.000

Based on the results , the third hypothesis stating that millennials with a graduate degree are just as likely to quit their job as millennials without a graduate degree is rejected ($t= 4.324$, $p= .000$). The table indicates that millennials with a graduate degree (mean=1.1730) are less likely to quit their job than millennials without a graduate degree (mean=1.385). In this case, millennials with a graduate degree are more likely to keep their jobs than millennials without a graduate degree.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The study came up with key results, useful by practitioners and researchers to understand the millineals generation better, away from their stereotypes. Also to mention, millineals have some specific traits that should be considered by managers for example, the millennial generation is referred to as over achievers, and accountable for their actions. At times, they feel pressured to surpass all of their goals and aspirations. They are able to multi-task and improvise when needed. Thus, managers and supervisors should feel confident in delegating tasks to millennials. Furthermore, millennials are team-oriented and enjoy working with others. They have grown up in a diverse world and understand the importance of learning and embracing new perspectives in order to avoid groupthink.

Significantly, millennials are confident and therefore should be considered for leadership positions because of their overall mentality that has been molded by previous generations. Millennials like to have flexibility and dislike dealing with too many rules and regulations. Based upon the results of this study, managers may want to consider hiring millennials with a graduate level degree because they may stay with the organization for a longer period of time. Interestingly enough, several studies indicated that individuals with a graduate level degree were more satisfied with their job than those without a graduate level degree. A graduate level degree may provide a millennial employee with additional confidence and a higher salary resulting in higher job satisfaction levels.

The results of this current study also indicated that millennial males have showed higher job satisfaction levels compared to their female counterparts. An assumption is that it is from the result of the glass-ceiling phenomenon where women face a glass-ceiling in upper management positions resulting in lower job satisfaction levels. Furthermore, men still dominate the workforce and as a result have more opportunities for advancement. It is also a known fact that there is a salary disparity between men and women

Recommendations for Improvement

Concerning the effects of generational differences, organizations should practice performance based promotions to improve employee satisfaction across the generational cohorts, with the manner succession management is handled. Also to enhance employee productivity across the generations, organizations should initiate mentoring programs that help in developing the staff professionally and at their individual level. Implementation of these and other human resource development practices at the organization should apply universally across the different generational cohorts.

Additionally, there is a need for the organizations to consolidate positive perceptions with their teams with reward management practices, and make the teams feel that their contributions in the organizations are recognized. In this regard, managers and supervisors are required to be super sensitive on needs of each generational cohort. Not to forget, every other organizational aspect of reward management should follow the equity doctrine.

On matters of the team's relations and productivity, organizations should consider improvements on two dimensions of employee relations which require a change in the communication culture within the organization. In order to enhance productivity, the communication culture of the organization should foster a sense of employee involvement and participation through consultation especially on matters concerning their work and employment at the organization. This applies especially across the board, without discrimination to a particular generation.

Recommendations for future research.

The paper highlights the current knowledge on the influence of multigenerational workforce on team experiences and outcomes, and then points out new findings. In particular, the review gives suggestions that, there are new study areas that require further development to boost our understanding on the influence of multigenerational workforce.

First, there is a need to examine what combination of generations is effective in multigenerational teams. For instance, would paring Baby Boomer with 3 Millennials and 1 Gen Z be more effective compared to 2 Gen Xers with 3 Millennials? What are the possible differences when different combinations are made? What are the possible strengths of having more of one generation? Are there combinations to consistently be avoided?

Second, there needs to be further research into multiple levels of diversity at once. For example, comparing the outcomes of teams with ethnic and generational diversity with the outcomes of

teams that are purely ethnically diverse is an area that needs to be explored further. Controlling for other additional diversity factors while studying a specific type of diversity is important to deepen the understanding of specific types of diversity on outcomes.

Lastly, further research needs to be conducted on Generation Z's functioning within a team. Some research has found Generation Z to not be as comfortable as other generations within a team setting. However, because of this generation's relative novice in the workforce there is scarce research on the long-term outcomes of Generation Z functioning within teams. The increased number of Generation Z progressing in the workforce in the coming years should present ample experiences to increase opportunities for further examination in this area.

CONCLUSION

Age diversity makes teams smarter. As a result, it is significant for individuals to feel that they can be themselves and are able to contribute to their diverse ideas and strengths to the organizational progress. Understanding, appreciating, and making provision for differences is a step towards authentic inclusivity in an organization. When members of differing generations can bring their authentic self to a team, they are better able to function closer to their full capacity. When team members perceive that they are appreciated, supported, and valued within a team they are not inclined to hide the strengths that make them unique. Although the differences between generations within multigenerational teams often result in miscommunication and negative conflict, these differences can also produce optimal team outcomes when there is preparation and understanding integrated into the multigenerational team.

REFERENCES

- Brahmbhatt, A. R. (2019). Multi-Generational Diversity in the Workplace—Its Impact and Challenges. *Emerging Trends in Global Management and Information Technology*, 215.
- Eberz, F. (2020). Generational Differences in the Workplace?: Let's Ask the Managers!. In *Global Applications of Multigenerational Management and Leadership in the Transcultural Era* (pp. 163-195). IGI Global.
- Hisel, M. E. (2020). Measuring work engagement in a multigenerational nursing workforce. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 28(2), 294-305.
- Maciaszczyk, M., & Kocot, D. (2021). Challenges and Problems in Managing Multigenerational Team in Era of Industry 4.0. *Industry 4.0*, 201-214.
- Montaudon-Tomas, C. M., Pinto-López, I. N., Montaudon-Tomas, I. M., & Muñoz-Ortiz, M. (2020). High Performance Teams in a Multigenerational Workforce: An Example from Academia in Mexico. In *Global Applications of Multigenerational Management and Leadership in the Transcultural Era* (pp. 76-107). IGI Global.
- Salau, O. P., Osibanjo, A. O., Igbino, E. E., Joel, O. O., Atolagbe, T. M., Adegbuyi, A. A., ... & Adeniji, C. G. (2022). Sustaining Employees' Work Fulfilment through Multigenerational Diversity and Emotional Communication in Federal Civil Service Commission of Nigeria. *Sustainability*, 14(9), 5018.
- Sarra, A. R. A. (2019). Managing multigenerational organizations. *Economic Alternatives*, 1, 93-105.
- Sessoms-Penny, S. G. (2019) Collaborative and Strategic Planning to Meet the Needs of a Multigenerational Workforce and the Organization.
- Sessoms-Penny, S. G. (2019) Eberz, F. (2020). (Salau et al., 2020)
- Stutzer, K. (2019). Generational differences and multigenerational teamwork. *Critical Care Nurse*, 39(1), 78-81.

Vertesi, J. A. (2019, December). Teamwork over a Long Durée: Sociological Contributions to an Interstellar Probe Mission. In *AGU Fall Meeting Abstracts* (Vol. 2019, pp. SH54A-03).