

Resolving Generational Conflicts between Lower and Higher Order Generations Bridging Generation Gap

V. Vaidehi Priyal*, N. Ramkumar**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to identify the spiritual awareness level of Coimbatore city and to find the spiritual growth parameters among the generations. Through 'Disproportionate Stratified Random Sampling' data was collected from services (academic, hospital, spiritual center, IT) and manufacturing (textile, auto-component) sectors in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Out of 600 respondents, 490 gave valid responses. Research revealed that spiritual awareness level of majority of the population in Coimbatore city possessed Creativity and Expression (CE). It is found that spirituality plays a pivotal role in resolving generational conflicts and also contributes for organizational and individual performance.

Keywords: *Generational Conflict, Law of Attraction, Spiritual Growth Parameters, Lower Order Chakras, Higher Order Chakras*

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the last two decades, generational diversity has received increased attention around the world. At present, rapidly growing organisations are confronting the challenge of understanding a multi-generational workforce and devising policies and procedures to build collaboration between them. 'Generation' as a construct is elusive and efforts have been taken by researchers in various disciplines to unpack the generational differences (Joshi et al., 2010). Generation is defined as an identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

* Assistant Professor, BBA, Nehru Arts and Science College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: vaidehipriyal.psgim@gmail.com

** Assistant Professor (Selection Grade), PSG Institute of Management, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: ramkumar@psgim.ac.in

In the western, the widely accepted classification of generations comprising four groups: Veterans, Baby boomers, Gen X and Gen Y. Researchers in the Asian context has tended to use the same categorisation of generations mentioned by Western researchers, even though many of the significant events mentioned in the context of the developed countries are not relevant in Asia (Turner et al., 2011; Yu & Miller, 2005). Saundarya Rajesh and Ekambaram (2014) have done an exploratory study on generational diversity in the Indian workforce, identifying behavioral patterns and beliefs of every distinct cohort. The generations identified were 1) Veterans, 2) Free-Gens, 3) Gen X, 4) E-Gens, and 5) Gen Y. As veterans are a rarity in the modern Indian workplace, they are not indicated. Free Gens (1945-1960, 20% of India's active workforce) are hardworking and loyal. Gen X (1961-1970, 25% of the Indian workforce) have a great sense of duty, they treat work as a challenge and are ready to run the extra mile to meet this challenge. E-Gens (1971-1980, 29% of modern India's workforce) are competitive, an entrepreneurial streak and value hard work, believe that efforts in the right direction will bring results. Gen Y (1981-1990, 26% of the total workforce) is techno brilliant, carry global mindsets and value diversity due to their multicultural upbringing.

Individuals with different values, different ideas, different ways of getting things done and different ways of communicating in the workplace have always existed. At work, generational differences can affect everything, including recruiting, building teams, dealing with change, motivating, managing and maintaining and increasing productivity. People communicate based on their generational background. Each generation has distinct attitudes, behaviours, expectations, habits and motivational buttons (Elmore, 2010; Gesell, 2010). Bridging these differences and managing the varied interests of each of the distinct generations can lead to better collaboration, increased knowledge sharing, greater innovation, improved productivity and an increased competitive advantage. In nutshell, if the art of appreciating generational diversity is mastered by every worker on India Inc.'s network, a store house of tacit knowledge possessed by the older generations can be captured that can enable the younger generation's quest for greater leadership capabilities (Saundarya Rajesh & Ekambaram, 2014).

Every human in this world are in different levels of spiritual growth, depending on their life experiences and spiritual knowledge. There are seven spiritual growth parameters incorporated from the Hindu traditionalism, which are: survival and self-preservation (Base Chakra), sensuality and procreation (Sacral Chakra), assertion of will (Solar Plexus

Chakra), unconditional love (Heart chakra), creativity and expression (Throat Chakra), intuition and wisdom (Third Eye Chakra), and higher consciousness (Crown Chakra). These seven levels of consciousness describe the seven steps that an individual goes through in his personal and spiritual development process towards spiritual maturity. It describes the whole rainbow of our consciousness. The seven levels of consciousness are also called 'The chakra system' and is a map of human consciousness. It is about the psychology of enlightenment, the science of inner transformation (Rama, Ballentine & Ajaya, 1976; Scotton & Hiatt, 1996). The chakra system seeks to develop and integrate the physical, emotional, psychological, mental, social and spiritual aspects of our being into one coherent whole.

Management Guru Peter Drucker (1988) envisioned that universities would someday connect the teaching of management to a spiritual ground and a higher cause. Research suggests that the encouragement of spirituality in the workplace can lead to benefits in the areas of creativity, process improvement, customer service, honesty and trust, personal fulfillments, and commitment, which will ultimately lead to increased organizational performance (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature is categorized under generational differences and spiritual growth.

Review on Generational Differences

In every organisations today, multi-generational workforce exists (Vasanthi Srinivasan, 2012). There are four generations - Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials (Generation Y) working together to achieve a common goal, the organizational success (Wagner, 2007; Ott et al., 2008; Elmore, 2010; Beekman, 2011). However, generation conflict is always there eventhough they work together mainly due to lack of understanding between the young and the old (Govitvatana, 2001; Wood, 2005) and through effective strategies, devising policies and procedures help to fill in this generation gap.

Today's young generation will bring change to the workplace by continuing to shake up how we communicate, consume media, browse the web and make products (Townsend, 2011; Geise, 2011). But the

loyalty among them is questionable (Binder & Reeves, 2010), which is a critical element of organizational success. National survey of American White workers revealed that while technology is widely embraced among working professionals, significant gaps exist among generations regarding its use and application in workplace (Anonymous, 2009).

Bridging the generation gap leads to diversity conscious and harassment-free workplace, enhance productivity, strengthen work relationship between and among employees, productive staff and retain customers. There were also explanations from authors that in reality generation gap do not exist, since there are more similarities than differences (Giancola, 2006; Deal, 2007).

Review on Spiritual Growth

The chakra system is the seven jewels of human consciousness (Panchadasi, 1916). It describes the seven life areas and dimensions of the human consciousness, under eight categories; physical reality, mental attitude, emotional makeup, social style, personal power and leadership style, financial choices, career options, and spirituality (Bowers, 1989). The chakra system seeks to develop and integrate these eight constructs into one coherent whole.

According to Tosey and Llewellyn (2002), there are seven dimensions of energy in organizations, where the employees fall in any of these seven 'ideal qualities' of organizational energy, which are: survival and self-preservation (Base Chakra), sensuality and procreation (Sacral Chakra), assertion of will (Solar Plexus Chakra), unconditional love (Heart chakra), creativity and expression (Throat Chakra), intuition and wisdom (Third Eye Chakra), and higher consciousness (Crown Chakra) (Wilber, 1986; Best, 2010). The instrument is developed based on these seven dimensions of organizational energy, where the term has been coined as, 'spiritual growth parameters'. Here, the eight constructs are common for all the seven stages of spiritual growth.

The three lower chakras (base, sacral and solar plexus) relate to the personality, the psychological I, and the outer world. It belongs to the physical world. The four higher chakras (heart, throat, third eye and crown) belong to the spiritual world. The first chakra (base) represents our relationship to the body, to the earth, and the seventh chakra (crown) represents our relationship to consciousness, to the sky.

The previous literature indicates that spiritual growth of an individual is decided by seven chakras namely root, sacral, navel, heart, throat,

brow and crown chakras. Yoga and meditation practices improved the human consciousness. Individual spiritual transformation improves organizational productivity.

OBJECTIVES

- To find the spiritual awareness level of Coimbatore city.
- To identify the spiritual growth parameters among the generations.
- To determine and solve the generational conflicts.

METHODOLOGY

For the research, the sampling method adopted was disproportionate stratified random sampling. The sampling frame consisted of individuals from service (academic institution, hospital, spiritual centre and IT field) and manufacturing (textile and auto component manufacturing units) sectors in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, where 490 respondents as detailed in Table 1, gave valid responses.

Table 1: Sample Description

Sectors	Sample	Number of Valid Responses	Response Rate
Service Sector			
Academic Institution	200	166	83
Hospital	100	96	96
Spiritual Centre	100	80	80
IT Field	100	55	55
Manufacturing Sector			
Textile Unit	50	46	92
Auto Component Manufacturing Unit	50	47	94
Total	600	490	83

From 2011 urban population report in Coimbatore of five year age group, the total population of four generations: Gen Y, E-Gens, Gen X and Free Gens were gathered (Table 2).

Table 2: Census 2011 Population of Four Generations in Coimbatore

Generations	Age Group	Population	Total
Gen Y (< 32 years)	15-19	78725	360517
	20-24	88749	
	25-29	98803	
	30-34	94240	
E-Gens (33-42 years)	35-39	93424	176955
	40-44	83531	
Gen X (43-52 years)	45-49	73815	132869
	50-54	59054	
Free Gens (> 53 years)	55-59	48191	48191
Total			718532

Based on Census 2011, the target sample size (600) and sampling method (Disproportionate stratified random sampling) have been decided. The Table 3 compares the population percentage in Coimbatore between respondents and census 2011 among four generations.

Table 3: Comparison of Population (%) in Coimbatore between Respondents and Census 2011 with Regard to Generations

Generations	Sample Size %	Respondents %	Census 2011 %
Gen Y (< 32 years)	300 50%	282 57.6%	360517 50.2%
E-Gens (33-42 years)	150 25%	98 20.0%	176955 24.6%
Gen X (43-52 years)	100 17%	73 14.9%	132869 18.5%
Free Gens (> 53 years)	50 8%	37 7.6%	48191 6.7%
Total	600 100%	490 100%	718532 100%

The data collected for this research was analysed using Crosstab Analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Crosstab analysis was carried out to find the spiritual growth parameters among the generations and the spiritual awareness level of Coimbatore

city. It was also used to identify the classification of four generations: Gen Y, E-Gens, Gen X and Free Gens across the seven spiritual growth parameters (Table 4).

Table 4: Crosstab of Generations and Spiritual Growth Parameters

Sr. No.	Generations	HO				LO			Total
		HC	IW	CE	UL	AW	SP	SS	
1.	Gen Y (< 32 Years)	21	23	101	56	17	10	54	282
2.	E-Gens (33-42 Years)	5	12	42	20	2	0	17	98
3.	Gen X (43-52 Years)	2	5	38	16	4	0	8	73
4.	Free Gens (> 53 Years)	0	5	23	4	2	1	2	37
Total		28	45	204	96	25	11	81	490

Out of 490 respondents in Coimbatore, maximum respondents of 204 were in Creativity and Expression (Table 4). Since Coimbatore is a serene place of many pilgrims and spiritual centres, spiritual awareness is high and the city is in fifth level of spiritual awareness.

Irrespective of age groups, the four generations Gen Y, E-Gens, Gen X and Free Gens fall in all the seven spiritual growth parameters (Table 5). Here, Gen Y and E-Gens are younger generations and the older generations are Gen X and Free Gens. The seven spiritual growth parameters are categorized as Lower Order (LO) and Higher Order (HO) chakras, where survival and self-preservation, sensuality and procreation, and assertion of will are LO chakras and the HO chakras are unconditional love, creativity and expression, intuition and wisdom, and higher consciousness.

Table 5: Crosstab of Young and Old Generations in Higher and Lower Order Spiritual Growth Parameters

Sr. No.	Generations		HC	IW	CE	UL	AW	SP	SS	Total
			Higher Order				Lower Order			
1.	Gen Y (< 32 years)	Young	YHO				YLO			380 77%
	E-Gens (33-42 years)		280 57%				100 20%			
2.	Gen X (43-52 years)	Old	OHO				OLO			110 23%
	Free Gens (>53 years)		93 20%				17 3%			
Total			373 77%				117 23%			490 100%

Table 6: Generational Conflict and Law of Attraction

Higher and Lower Order Generation Cohort	Generational Conflict	Law of Attraction
Young LO + Old LO	No conflict	Like people attract
Young HO + Old HO		
Young LO + Young HO	Conflict	Unlike people repel
Old LO + Old HO		
Young LO + Old HO		
Young HO + Old LO		

The generational conflict between young and old was observed. This may be due to the difference in the higher and lower order chakras in both the generations. According to the Universal ‘Law of Attraction’ there is no conflict when young and old cohorts of higher order meet, similarly in the case of lower order. The conflict arises only when generations of different spiritual levels encounter (Table 6).

FINDINGS

From the findings it is concluded that Coimbatore city is in the fifth level of spirituality, since maximum people are in Creativity and Expression. It is also found that the young and old generations fall under both higher order and lower order chakras regardless of the age groups. The generational conflict is not only because of the differences between generations, but also within generations and it is due to the variances in the heights of spiritual growth.

It is found that the generational conflict is because the young and the old generations fall in both higher order and lower order chakras. The generation gap can be resolved, when people of lower order chakras though young or old start accepting the guidance of higher order chakra people who act as mentors or counsellors. This helps lower chakra people to spiritually evolve, and as they grow older they gradually transform following the footsteps of higher order spiritual people.

DISCUSSION

Global business, now-a-days, faces a lot of drastic and unexpected changes that influence the global economy. This has warranted to revisit

the management issues in particular, the corporate culture and values to meet out competitive work culture. The most competitive work force is engaging a loyal, workaholic and goal oriented individuals. In every organizations, multigenerational employees exists. This result in multigenerational conflict, frustration, and poor morale value. Therefore, most of the corporates are willing to employ happy and joyful employees. In this situation, work place spirituality plays a paramount role in improving the well-being of the employees by reducing the stress and strains to achieve organizational goal.

In Tamil Nadu, big cities like Coimbatore are gifted with many corporate companies, top ranked educational institutions, large multi-specialty hospitals, textile companies, high tech auto component manufacturing units etc. The individuals employed in these establishments are in high level of awareness with respect to spiritual activities and programs. From the result of this research it is observed that individuals working in different organizations possess High Order of spiritual growth attributes like Creativity and Expression. They are always associated with spiritual programs, irrespective of generation. They practice Yoga or Meditation regularly. This has improved the loyalty, workaholism and goal orientation of individuals of all generations.

The intergenerational conflict is because the young and the old generations come under both Higher Order and Lower Order chakras of spiritual growth. Here, younger generations, possessing LO and HO when newly exposed to world experiences become overwhelmed or disappointed or depressed. Whereas, the elder generations of LO and HO have faced various encounters of world experiences over the years and are familiar to the problems that young generation would face. Therefore, the old generations act as mentors or advisers and guide youngers appropriately. They try to explain them the problems they are undergoing and the consequences they might face. But, the young generations are immature and are unable to apprehend, as their experiences are new and leave them confused to believe the truth. However, these younger generations will realize the advice of the elders due to repeated and continuous guidance and evolve gradually.

The intergenerational conflict occurs not only because of the generational differences, but also when people in lower and higher order chakra meet and work together for achieving same goals. This might be

due to fact that the multiculture conflict exist between and also within the generations. Since both Higher and Lower Order people exist in younger and older generations, conflict arises when Lower Order young cohort meets the same cohort of Higher Order; similarly, the same with the older cohort (Table 7). The conflict will also happen with Lower Order young cohort and Higher Order old cohort and vice versa (Table 8). This is because of the variation in the levels of spirituality within and among generations.

Table 7: Matrix - Generational Conflict within Generations

Generations	Higher Order (HO)	Lower Order (LO)
Young (Y)	YHO ← → YLO	
Old (O)	OHO ← → OLO	

Table 8: Matrix - Generational Conflict between Generations

Generations	Higher Order (HO)	Lower Order (LO)
Young (Y)	YHO	YLO
Old (O)	OHO	OLO

From the Table 9, it is to be noted that according to the universal ‘Law of Attraction’ conflict does not arise between same spiritual level cohorts as ‘Like attracts Like’ (Attri 2012). But, it occurs only when they are in different spiritual heights.

Table 9: Matrix - No Generational Conflict

Generations	Higher Order (HO)	Lower Order (LO)
Young (Y)	YHO ↑	YLO ↑
Old (O)	OHO ↓	OLO ↓

From the matrix model (Table 10) derived, it is found that young and old generations can be classified as Young Higher Order (YHO), Young Lower Order (YLO), Old Higher Order (OHO) and Old Lower Order (OLO). Here, OHO generations act as mentors along with the support of YHO, who collectively help YLO and OLO generations to mutually evolve and uplift humanity. This intergenerational gap is to be narrowed down and the generational conflict is resolved only, if all the individuals trust that career development opportunities are equal for all, irrespective of generational age.

Table 10: Matrix Model on Generations and Spiritual Growth Parameters

Generations	Higher Order (HO)	Lower Order (LO)
Young (Y)	YHO Supporters	YLO Beginners
Old (O)	OHO Mentors	OLO Learners

The corporate executives can educate individuals on generational conflicts and issues for better understanding of respect and productivity. The executives can also identify appropriate motivating factors of employees of different generations and keep them engaged always.

CONCLUSION

Research conducted in Coimbatore city revealed that spiritual growth of majority of the population were in 'Creativity and Expression (CE)' awareness level. It is found that Coimbatore is in the fifth level of spirituality

because of the prevalence of many devotional places and spiritual organizations (Art of Living, Pranic Healing Centre, Isha Foundation, Christa Sishya Ashram, Osho Premveena Meditation Centre, Spiritual Wellness Centre), who preach and guide generations to transcend; and help in spiritual evolution.

As it is understood from the findings, higher and lower order of spirituality is found irrespective of generations, whether young or old. Here, individuals possessed higher order of spirituality due to their rich experiences and knowledge could guide those in lower order of spirituality and motivate them to practice spiritual activities. They support for enhancing work performance in an organization, thereby bridging generation gap. Thus, by improving employee's performance through spiritual management result in employee's commitment, positivity and productivity; ultimately leading to organizational productivity and success.

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