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Assessing the Role of
Generational Conflict in the Performance Appraisal Process

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Performance appraisal, a critical component of human resource management, serves as a cornerstone for organizational success by providing valuable feedback to employees, aiding in performance improvement, and facilitating strategic decision-making. However, the performance appraisal process has challenges, including the potential for perceived conflicts that may vary among individuals from different generational backgrounds. Understanding these generational differences in the perception of conflict within the performance appraisal process is vital for organizations seeking to optimize their talent management strategies. This study delves into the intricate interplay between generational class and the perception of conflict inherent in the performance appraisal process.

Performance appraisals are a pivotal component of organizational management, and they serve as a mechanism to evaluate employees' job performance and provide constructive feedback (Cappelli & Conyon, 2018). However, despite their intended benefits, the impact and influence of generational differences may lead to conflicts in the context of performance appraisal processes within many workplaces (Venne & Hannay, 2018). Among the plausible triggers for conflict are disparities in performance ratings, biases in the evaluation process, and the establishment of unrealistic performance expectations (Alferjany & Alias, 2020; Farr et al., 2013; Roch & Williams, 2013). These sources of conflict undermine the intended positive outcomes of performance appraisals and may lead to decreased employee morale, hindered productivity, and strained working relationships, necessitating a deeper understanding of their dynamics (Grubb, 2007; Onashile, 2017).

Background

Conflict and the Performance Appraisal Process

Conflicts related to performance appraisals can manifest in multiple ways. Rating disagreements occur when managers and employees diverge in their assessments of an employee's performance, often reflecting differing interpretations of performance criteria or job expectations (Dangol, 2021). Both conscious and unconscious biases can distort evaluations and contribute to conflicts by affecting the perceived fairness and objectivity of the appraisal process (Dangol, 2021). Unrealistic expectations arise when performance targets are set unreasonably high, causing tension and resentment when employees perceive these goals as unattainable (Janson et al., 2023). Moreover, organizational politics, unequal distribution of rewards, and lack of clarity in performance criteria can amplify these conflicts (Wang & Chen, 2022).

In modern workplaces, the coexistence of multiple generations, each with distinct attitudes, values, and communication styles, has added a layer of complexity to various organizational processes (Lowe et al., 2020; Schroth, 2019; Teng, 2020). Performance appraisals, a critical component of workforce management, may not be immune to the influence of generational differences. Factors such as communication styles, feedback preferences, and technological proficiency can significantly impact the effectiveness of performance appraisals and potentially lead to generational conflicts (Giadhani et al., 2019; Meyer, 2023; Strawser, 2021).

Generational conflicts in performance appraisals are rooted in the variations in communication preferences among different age groups. For instance, older generations might value face-to-face feedback, while younger generations are often more accustomed to digital communication (Strawser, 2021). Feedback preferences also diverge, with some generations favoring regular feedback and others preferring periodic reviews (Giadhani et al., 2019; Meyer, 2023). Additionally, technology proficiency varies among generations, potentially affecting their ability to navigate digital performance appraisal systems (Giadhani et al., 2019). These differences can result in misinterpretation, frustration, and a sense of exclusion, further exacerbating conflicts during performance evaluations.

The existing literature on conflicts in performance appraisals highlights the role of rating disagreements, biases, unrealistic expectations, and organizational factors (Dangol, 2021; Janson et al., 2023; Wang & Chen, 2022). It also underscores the impact of generational differences on these conflicts, particularly in communication styles, feedback preferences, and technology proficiency (Gaidhani et al., 2019; Meyer, 2023; Strawser, 2021). However, there is a need for further research to under-

stand the nature and management of these conflicts, as well as the potential oversimplification of attributing conflicts to generational differences (Angeline, 2011; Appelbaum et al., 2022; Urick et al., 2017).

The paucity of research into the generational impact on conflicts during performance appraisals poses challenges for organizations seeking to foster inclusive and harmonious work environments. Primarily, this research gap hinders the comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between generational differences and the potential conflicts that may arise during performance evaluations. Organizations need actionable insights to develop tailored strategies for conflict mitigation, and the absence of research limits the advancement of best practices and leads to ongoing common misconceptions that can impede productive cross-generational interactions.

Ultimately, this effort to address the scholarly void will contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies that facilitate informed decision-making and enable organizations to navigate the complexities of managing a multigenerational workforce (Rudolph et al., 2021). In an era characterized by unprecedented intergenerational coexistence, understanding the delicate relationship between performance appraisals and generational dynamics is critical for fostering harmonious and productive workplaces (Ashtalkoska et al., 2023; Teng, 2020).

Generational Cohort Theory

Generational Cohort Theory (Okros, 2020) posits that individuals born within the same time period, typically spanning about 15 to 20 years, share unique and distinguishable social, economic, political, and technological experiences during their formative years. These shared experiences, in turn, shape their values, behaviors, attitudes, and expectations, creating distinct generational cohorts. Notable examples of generational cohorts in many Western societies include the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials (also known as Generation Y), and Generation Z.

The theory suggests that these generational differences can influence a wide range of phenomena, from workplace attitudes and preferences to consumer behavior and communication styles. Each cohort is thought to possess distinct characteristics. For example, Baby Boomers are often described as hardworking and motivated by position, perks, and prestige, while Millennials are characterized by a desire for work-life balance, meaningful work, and are highly adept at using technology.

In the context of a study examining the relationship between generational class and the perception of conflict inherent in the performance appraisal process, Generational Cohort Theory would suggest several potential mechanisms or reasons for observed phenomena.

Communication Styles and Preferences

Different generations have unique communication preferences, which can influence how they perceive and engage in the performance appraisal process. For example,

Baby Boomers may prefer more formal, face-to-face interactions, while Millennials and Generation Z might favor digital communication platforms. These preferences can impact how feedback is given and received, potentially affecting perceptions of conflict.

Work Values and Expectations

Generational cohorts may have differing values and expectations regarding work, feedback, and career progression. Millennials and Generation Z, for instance, are often thought to seek regular feedback and opportunities for growth, while older generations might value stability and longevity. These differences can lead to misunderstandings or conflicts in how performance appraisals are conducted and perceived.

Attitudes Toward Authority and Hierarchical Structures

Generational differences in attitudes toward authority and organizational hierarchy can influence perceptions of performance appraisals. Younger generations might question traditional authority structures and prefer a more collaborative approach, while older generations may be more accepting of top-down decision-making. This could affect how performance appraisals are viewed and the degree of conflict experienced during the process.

Technological Comfort and Utilization

The extent to which different generations are comfortable with and utilize technology can impact the performance appraisal process. Younger generations' propensity for leveraging technology could lead to innovations in how appraisals are conducted, possibly clashing with traditional methods preferred by older generations.

Adaptability and Change Management

Generational cohorts may vary in their adaptability to organizational changes, including those related to performance appraisals. Younger generations may be more open to change and innovation in appraisal methods, while older generations may prefer consistency and traditional approaches, potentially leading to conflict.

Generational Cohort Theory, therefore, provides a useful framework for understanding potential sources of conflict in the performance appraisal process by highlighting how generational differences in communication styles, work values, attitudes toward authority, technological comfort, and adaptability can influence perceptions and experiences.

Generational Definitions

Baby Boomers

The cohort of individuals born between 1946 and 1964 is commonly referred to as the Baby Boomer generation. This term originated from the substantial rise in birth rates following the conclusion of World War II (Król, 2020). This generation was raised amidst a period of economic prosperity, societal and cultural transformation, and noteworthy technological advancements. Baby Boomers are frequently identified as being idealistic, politically in-

volved, and oriented toward personal accomplishment (Teng, 2020).

Notably, Baby Boomers were the first demographic to experience widespread access to higher education, and as a result, many achieved high-profile positions in government, business, and the arts (Conwell & Quadlin, 2022). Moreover, Baby Boomers are renowned for their dedication to social and political causes, such as the civil rights movement, women's rights, and environmentalism, indicating a strong sense of activism and civic engagement.

Generation X

Generation X, commonly shortened to Gen X, refers to individuals born between 1965 and 1980 (Jones et al., 2019). This generation was raised amidst a period of notable economic, social, and technological transformation (Harari et al., 2023; Teng, 2020). The Gen X cohort witnessed significant events such as the end of the Cold War, the proliferation of the internet, and the emergence of new forms of entertainment and media (Christensen et al., 2018). Additionally, they were affected by the economic obstacles of the 1970s and 80s, including increasing unemployment rates and inflation (Christensen et al., 2018).

Gen Xers are frequently identified as being autonomous, skeptical, and adaptable (Christensen et al., 2018). They matured when values were evolving and social norms were transforming (Teng, 2020). Influenced by punk and grunge music scenes in the 1970s and 90s, which accentuated individuality and nonconformity, Gen Xers established a reputation for their independent streak. Furthermore, this cohort was among the initial adopters of new technologies and enthusiastically embraced personal computers and the Internet (Erickson, 2010; Teng, 2020).

Millennials

The Millennial generation, occasionally called Generation Y, comprises individuals born between 1981 and 1996 (Adamy, 2018; Jones et al., 2019). This cohort is distinct in that they are the first to have been raised in the digital era and came of age during significant global events, including the 9/11 attacks, the Great Recession, and the emergence of social media. Millennials are frequently identified as technologically proficient, heterogeneous, and socially aware. The rapid advancement of technology defined their upbringing, with many being exposed to computers and the internet at a young age. Consequently, they are comfortable using technology and quickly embrace novel digital platforms and tools. As a result, Millennials have significantly altered how they approach work, communication, and social interactions.

Millennials tend to be exceptionally diverse and inclusive. Their formative years occurred during increased political and social activism, and many are passionate about social justice, climate change, and gender equality. Moreover, Millennials are renowned for emphasizing achieving a work-life balance and often seek flexible work arrangements that enable them to pursue their interests outside of work (Bucuta, 2015).

Generation Z

Generation Z, or Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2015, has spent their entire lives in the digital era (Jones et al., 2019). This generation is frequently called "digital natives," as they are renowned for their technological and social media fluency. Gen Z grew up during rapid technological advancement, and the majority have never experienced a world without smartphones and social media (Prensky, 2001; Stimac et al., 2022). Therefore, they have a high degree of comfort with technology and are often early adopters of new digital tools and platforms. Gen Z's exposure to constant streams of online content and news has also enabled them to quickly process and filter vast amounts of information (Stimac et al., 2022).

Its broad diversity and inclusivity characterize Gen Z. They are a generation raised in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, making them more open-minded and accepting of different cultures, lifestyles, and identities than previous generations (Lev, 2021). Gen Z is also recognized for its activism and social awareness, with many passionately advocating for various causes such as climate change, gun control, and social justice.

Methodology and Analysis

The decision was made to focus on a single exploratory hypothesis, driven by the preliminary nature of empirical evidence in this specific area, which warranted an exploratory approach initially.

Hypothesis

At the heart of this study lies the null hypothesis (H0), which posits that there is no statistically significant relationship between generational class and the perception of conflict inherent in the performance appraisal process. In other words, H0 suggests that generational class does not play a role in shaping how individuals perceive conflicts within this HR practice.

Conversely, the alternative hypothesis (H1) suggests that there is a statistically significant relationship between generational class and the perception of conflict inherent in the performance appraisal process. H1 implies that generational differences impact how individuals interpret and experience conflicts during performance appraisals. Such differences could be driven by varying values, expectations, communication styles, or attitudes among different generational cohorts.

The significance of this hypothesis lies in its potential to shed light on a relatively unexplored aspect of organizational behavior and human resource management. While numerous studies have investigated the influence of generational differences on various workplace dynamics, there has been limited research focusing specifically on the perception of conflict within the performance appraisal process.

Extant theoretical foundations implicitly informed development of this exploratory hypothesis in the form of the aforementioned generational cohort theory, which

supports the relationship between generational class and perceptions of conflict.

Data Collection

A comprehensive data collection process was employed to investigate the relationship between generational class and the perception of conflict inherent in the performance appraisal process. The primary data collection instrument for this research was a structured questionnaire. A rigorous development process was undertaken to ensure the survey's validity and relevance to the research objectives. The survey was designed to capture respondents' perceptions of their experiences with the performance appraisal process, with a specific focus on identifying potential conflicts. The survey questions were crafted to assess various dimensions of this experience, such as satisfaction with feedback, perceived fairness, and communication during performance appraisals.

In addition to questions related to the performance appraisal process, the survey also included a section dedicated to collecting demographic information from respondents. This section aimed to capture essential data about the participants' generational class, age, gender, educational background, and job tenure. Gathering this demographic information was crucial for the subsequent analysis, allowing for the segmentation of respondents into different generational cohorts and facilitating comparisons between these groups.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure the representation of a diverse cross-section of the workforce. Participants were drawn from various industries and organizations, including both private and public sectors. Efforts were made to include a balanced distribution of generational classes, with a focus on capturing responses from Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. The sampling process aimed to minimize bias and ensure that the study's findings were reflective of the broader population. A total of 54 unique responses were received. Given the exploratory nature of the study, while this sample size may be considered small, emphasis is placed on the qualitative insights and patterns observed in the data. These insights are valuable for generating hypotheses and guiding future research with larger and more representative samples.

The survey, a copy of which is available in Appendix A, contained 32 questions. A clear and concise set of instructions accompanied the survey to guide participants through the completion process. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses to encourage candid feedback. Informed written consent was obtained from participants to ensure that participants were fully informed about the nature of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and how their data would be used and protected.

Data Analysis

Three types of analysis were performed: descriptive statistics, preliminary analysis, and inferential statistics.

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the distribution of the variable observations using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Preliminary analysis was conducted to address the issue of validity and reliability. This was done using confirmatory factor analysis, composite reliability, average variance extracted, and Cronbach's alpha.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) helps to determine how much each item correlates with or explains a specific construct. One of the primary reasons for conducting a CFA in the study was to rigorously assess the unidimensionality of our measure. Ensuring that the items indeed reflect a single underlying construct is crucial for the validity of the findings. CFA allowed the researchers to statistically test the assumption that all items load significantly on one factor, thereby supporting the measure's unidimensionality.

Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are used to determine the level of reliability and consistency of the items in each construct in the data set, while average variance extracted is used to examine the level of variation accounted for by the items on the construct, which provides the validity of the items. The study's objectives were addressed using an independent samples test and a one-way ANOVA analysis.

Results

The descriptive statistics result is provided in Table 1, which summarizes the demographics of the respondents. Results show that 24 people (44.4%) are Generation X, 16 people (29.6%) are Millennials, 12 people (22.2%) are Baby Boomers and two people (3.7%) are Generation Z. Regarding gender, 42 people (77.8%) are Females, 11 people (20.4%) are Males and just one person identifies as non-binary. For the distribution of Marital status, descriptive statistics show that 40 respondents are married, seven are divorced, and another seven are single. Regarding the employment industry, 15 people are in education, six are in engineering, finance, healthcare, and management, four are in hospitality, three are in marketing, non-profit, and trades, and two are in information technology.

In terms of years of work experience, 20 people have 21 to 30 years of experience, 15 people have 11 to 20 years, 13 people have 31 or more years of experience, five people have 6 to 10 years of experience, and one person has 0 to 5 years of experience. In terms of length of service with current employer, the results revealed that 23 people have worked for 0 to 5 years with their current employer, 16 have worked for 11 to 20 years, 13 people have worked for 21 to 30 years, and 12 people have worked for 6 to 10 years. For work location, 22 people (40.7%) work fully remote, 18 work fully in person, and 14 are hybrid workers (remote and in-person). In terms of educational level completed, results have shown that 18 people have a bachelor's degree, 17 people have a master's degree, eight have a doctoral degree, nine have some college education, and two have completed a high school diploma or equivalent. The nationality distribution results

Table 1

Summary of Demographics

	Variable	N	%
Generational class	Baby Boomer (born 1946 - 1964)	12	22.2%
	Generation X (1965 - 1980)	24	44.4%
	Generation Z (born 1997 - 2012)	2	3.7%
	Millennial (born 1981 - 1996)	16	29.6%
Gender	Female	42	77.8%
	Male	11	20.4%
	Nonbinary	1	1.9%
Marital	Divorced	7	13.0%
	Married	40	74.1%
	Single	7	13.0%
Industry of Employment	Education	15	27.8%
	Engineering	6	11.1%
	Finance	6	11.1%
	Healthcare	6	11.1%
	Hospitality	4	7.4%
	Information Technology	2	3.7%
	Management	6	11.1%
	Marketing	3	5.6%
	Non-Profit	3	5.6%
	Trades	3	5.6%
Years of Work Experience	0-5 years	1	1.9%
	6-10 years	5	9.3%
	11-20 years	15	27.8%
	21-30 years	20	37.0%
	31+ years	13	24.1%
Length of Service with Current Employer	0-5 years	23	42.60%
	6-10 years	12	22.20%
	11-20 years	16	29.60%
	21-30 years	3	5.60%
Work Location	Fully in-person	18	33.3%
	Fully remote	22	40.7%
	Hybrid (combo of both remote and in-person)	14	25.9%
Educational Level completed	High school diploma or equivalent	2	3.7%
	Some college	9	16.7%
	Bachelor's degree	18	33.3%
	Master's degree	17	31.5%
	Doctoral degree	8	14.8%

reveal that most people (98.1%) are from the US, and one is from the UK. In terms of country of residence, all the respondents in the survey are based in the US.

Indexing is the process of combining two or more measures or Likert scales to create an index, sometimes referred to as a construct. An index can also be considered a measurement of a single broad notion or dimension comprising several items. In other words, an index is a measure created by adding two or more other measurements. The items or measures of the factor mentioned or described in the study were indexed collectively to create the performance appraisal process construct.

The study included preliminary analyses to evaluate the data's reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to calculate factor loadings, and Cronbach's alpha was computed. Cronbach alpha and composite reliability are the most widely used methods for gauging internal consistency. Higher levels indicate greater reliability, with values ranging from 0 to 1. Values between 0.60 and 0.70 are acceptable for exploratory research but values greater than 0.70 are required for more advanced research phases. The value of Cronbach's alpha for the measures or items of the performance appraisal process is 0.623, as seen in Table 2. It is important to acknowledge that Cronbach's alpha of 0.62, while below the commonly accepted threshold for good reliability (typically 0.70 or higher), still falls within a range that some researchers consider acceptable for exploratory research. This study, being of an exploratory nature in an under-researched area, might justify the acceptance of a lower alpha in the context of developing new measures or when dealing with complex constructs.

Factor loadings must be greater than 0.50 to be accepted. Hulland (1999) recommends that indicators with a factor loading of less than 0.40 always be eliminated from the data. According to the confirmatory factor analysis

Table 2

Reliability and Validity

Performance Appraisal Process	Factor Loading	Alpha Value
PAP1	0.897	0.623
PAP2	0.474	
PAP3	0.426	
PAP4	0.288	
PAP5	0.397	
PAP6	0.046	
PAP7	0.348	
PAP8	0.261	
PAP9	-0.145	
PAP10	-0.012	
PAP11	0.320	
PAP12	0.791	
PAP13	0.038	
PAP14	0.144	

result shown in Table 2, most of the factor loadings of each of the constructs are substantially lower than 0.4. High factor loadings suggest that the measures or item significantly correlates with or measures the construct (performance appraisal process) in the survey. However, due to the nature of this study, which only includes one factor/construct (performance appraisal process), the measures or items were included and left unchanged despite having factor loadings less than 0.4.

Addressing the Hypothesis

To examine the hypothesis of this study, results were evaluated to determine any statistical significance between generational class and perceived conflict in the performance appraisal process. The distribution of the average or mean level of performance appraisal process by each demographic category is provided in the descriptive statistics section of the summary, as seen in Table 3.

For generational class, results of the one-way ANOVA revealed that there is no significant difference in the performance appraisal process between generational classes $(F(3, 50) = 0.937, p > 0.001)$. This result implies that there is no association between generational class and the performance appraisal process, meaning that the alternative hypothesis is supported and there is no statistically significant difference between generational classes and their perception of conflict in the performance appraisal process.

Based on the available data, the researchers elected to perform additional analysis to determine if other demographic characteristics, apart from generational class, reflected a difference in perception of conflict in the performance appraisal process. Regarding gender, the results showed that male respondents have a greater anticipated level of conflict in the performance appraisal process than females. In terms of significance, it was observed that there is no statistically significant difference in the performance appraisal process by gender distribution $(F(2, 51) = 0.761, p > 0.001)$. The results have also shown that the

level of the performance appraisal process does not significantly differ by marital status of respondents; thus, there is no significant association between marital status and the performance appraisal process $(p > 0.001)$. The results have also shown no significant difference in the performance appraisal process among the different educational levels of respondents $(p > 0.001)$. In terms of the length of service with current employer, years of work experience, and work location, results from the one-ANOVA revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the performance appraisal process by length of service with current employer, years of work experience and work location $(p > 0.001)$. Thus, the performance appraisal process level does not differ or is affected by these factors either.

Limitations

Limitations of the study are acknowledged based on sample size and composition. In an expanded future version of the study, the intent would be to conduct a power analysis to increase sample size and ensure more balanced demographic representation, particularly with regard to gender and generational cohort.

Expanding the Hypothesis Framework

Based on the exploratory nature of the study, to further expand this research, there is a need to develop a more comprehensive set of hypotheses to enrich the study and provide a broader understanding of the dynamics at play. To this end, the following additional hypotheses for either a revised version of this study or for future research directions could be considered:

H2: The mediation effect of [insert potential mediating variable, e.g., communication style, organizational culture] on the relationship between generational class and perception of conflict in the performance appraisal process.

H3: The moderating role of [insert potential moderating variable, e.g., job level, tenure] on the impact of generational class on perceptions of performance appraisal conflict.

H4: Differences in the outcomes of performance appraisal conflicts across generational classes, such as job satisfaction, turnover intentions, or engagement levels.

These additional hypotheses are intended to build on the exploratory findings of the current study, integrating more complex relationships and variables to provide a richer, theory-informed exploration of the topic.

Implications

In exploring the implications of a study that found no statistically significant difference between generational classes and their perception of conflict in the performance appraisal process, it is essential to consider the broader implications for organizational practices and workplace dynamics. While statistical significance was not established, the absence of a significant relationship between generational class and perceived conflict offers insights into optimizing human resource practices, conflict resolution strategies, and future-proofing workplaces.

Table 3

Summary of One-Way ANOVA Tests

Variable		N	Mean	Std Dev	Lower	Upper	Df	F	p-value
					Descriptive Statistics			One-Way ANOVA	
Genera-tional Class	Baby Boomer (born 1946 - 1964)	12	3.3988	0.4429	3.1174	3.6802	3	0.937	0.43
	Generation X (1965 - 1980)	24	3.3929	0.4615	3.198	3.5877	50		
	Generation Z (born 1997 - 2012)	2	3.5	0.101	2.5924	4.4076			
	Millennial (born 1981 - 1996)	16	3.1696	0.5143	2.8956	3.4437			
Gender	Female	42	3.342	0.466	3.197	3.487	2	0.221	0.803
	Male	11	3.273	0.516	3.619	3.619	51		
	Non-binary	1	3.571	.	.	.			
Marital Status	Divorced	7	3.531	0.426	3.136	3.925	2	0.756	0.475
	Married	40	3.311	0.496	3.152	3.469	51		
	Single	7	3.255	0.322	2.958	3.553			
Educational Level Completed	High school diploma or equivalent	2	3.893	0.455	-15.56	22.56	4	1.316	0.277
	Some college	9	3.286	0.525	2.15	4.29	49		
	Bachelor's degree	18	3.433	0.425	2.5	3.61			
	Master's degree	17	3.202	0.452	1.67	2.8			
	Doctoral degree	8	3.295	0.504	2	4			
Length of Service with current employer	0-5 years	.	3.3509	0.49389	3.1374	3.5645	3	0.129	0.942
	6-10 years	12	3.2857	0.50874	2.9625	3.6089	50		
	11-20 years	16	3.3616	0.44528	3.1243	3.5989			
	21-30 years	3	3.2143	0.43448	2.135	4.2936			
Years of work experience	0-5 years	1	3.3571				4	0.338	0.851
	6-10 years	5	3.1	0.34479	2.6719	3.5281	49		
	11-20 years	15	3.3286	0.32932	3.1462	3.5109			
	21-30 years	20	3.3643	0.6109	3.0784	3.6502			
	31+ years	13	3.3736	0.43365	3.1116	3.6357			
Work Location	Fully in-person	18	3.2619	0.48383	3.0213	3.5025	2	0.305	0.738
	Fully remote	22	3.3766	0.44262	3.1804	3.5729	51		

Optimizing HR Practices

The results of this study suggest that organizations may not need to tailor their performance appraisal procedures specifically based on generational differences. Instead, they could focus on more universal strategies for enhancing performance appraisal systems, employee satisfaction, and talent retention (Meyer, 2023). By shifting the focus from generational differences to overarching principles of effective performance management, organizations can streamline HR practices to meet the needs of all employ-

ees, regardless of generational affiliation (Lowe et al., 2020). This approach fosters a sense of inclusivity and equity within the organization, promoting a culture where all employees feel valued and respected (Meyer, 2023).

Conflict Resolution

Recognizing potential generational differences in perceptions of conflict remains valuable for proactive conflict resolution. While specific conflict resolution strategies may not need to be tailored based on generational factors, organizations can develop more general approaches that consider diverse perspectives and communication styles (Lowe et al., 2020; Strawser, 2021). By promoting open dialogue and encouraging employees to express their concerns openly, organizations can create a supportive environment where conflicts are addressed constructively, regardless of generational differences (Teng, 2020). This proactive approach to conflict resolution fosters trust and collaboration among employees, contributing to a more harmonious workplace culture.

Future-Proofing Workplaces

Understanding the evolving dynamics between generational classes remains crucial for future workplace planning. By acknowledging the diversity of perspectives and experiences brought by different generations, albeit unique individuals, organizations can adapt their practices to remain inclusive and adaptable in the face of demographic shifts (Lowe et al., 2020). Ongoing research and monitoring of generational trends can inform organizational strategies for attracting, retaining, and developing talent across diverse age groups (Rudolph et al., 2021). By embracing generational diversity as a source of strength and innovation, organizations can future-proof their workplaces and remain competitive in an ever-changing business landscape.

By focusing on universal principles of effective management and fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect, organizations can create a supportive environment where employees of all generations can thrive and contribute to organizational success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study's findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of generational conflict in the performance appraisal process within organizational settings. While performance appraisals are essential for evaluating employee performance and providing feedback, conflicts can undermine their intended benefits. The study explored how generational differences, including communication styles, feedback preferences, and technological proficiency might exacerbate conflicts during performance appraisals.

The research revealed that despite the widespread perception of generational conflicts in the workplace, there was no statistically significant difference between generational cohorts regarding their perception of conflict in the performance appraisal process. This suggests that conflicts during performance appraisals may not be predominantly driven by generational differences alone. Instead, factors such as rating disagreements, biases, and unrealis-

tic expectations appear to play a more significant role in shaping employees' perceptions of conflict in this context.

These findings highlight the complexity of conflicts in performance appraisals and suggest that a multifaceted approach is needed to address them effectively. By understanding the various factors contributing to conflicts and their interplay, organizations can develop universal interventions to mitigate conflicts and enhance the effectiveness of performance appraisals for all employees, regardless of generational cohort or other distinctive views.

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Appendix

Survey: Influence of generation on the performance appraisal process

Instructions: The purpose of this pilot survey is to explore the connection between generational identity and the performance appraisal process. All information collected in this survey is confidential and will only be used in an aggregated form by the researchers to draw generalizations about this topic, with the aim of designing future research studies. No specific identifying information is collected as part of the survey process. You should be at least 18 years old to participate in this pilot.

Questions:

1. Through what medium do you prefer to receive performance appraisal feedback? (Select all that apply.)

    a. In a virtual meeting

    b. In a face-to-face meeting

    c. Via telephone

    d. Via email or other written medium

2. Do you view the performance appraisal process as collaborative or adversarial?

    a. 1 - very collaborative

    b. 2 - somewhat collaborative

    c. 3 - neither collaborative nor adversarial

    d. 4 - somewhat adversarial

e.5 - very adversarial

3. Have you experienced a situation where a performance appraisal led to conflict between employee and manager?

   a.yes

   b.no

   c.unsure

4. Is it more difficult to receive feedback from someone in your same generational class or someone in a different one? (Select all that apply.)

   a.From someone in the same generation as myself

   b.From someone in a younger generation than myself

   c.From someone in an older generation than myself

   d.It doesn't make a difference to me

5. If you are a manager, do you feel pressure to compromise standards when conducting performance appraisals?

   a.yes

   b.no

   c.N/A - I am not a manager

6. If you are a manager, have you ever experienced retaliation after providing an employee a less than optimal evaluation? ("Retaliation" may include negative consequences from a strained relationship to severing of the employment contract.)

   a.yes

   b.no

   c.N/A - I am not a manager

7. As an employee, do you feel performance appraisals are conducted fairly and equitably across your organization?

   a.yes

   b.no

   c.unsure

8. As an employee, have you ever initiated retaliatory action after receiving a less than optimal evaluation? ("Retaliation" may include negative consequences from a strained relationship to severing of the employment contract.)

   a.yes

   b.no

   c.unsure

Please share how much you agree or disagree with the following statements based on the following response scale:

   1 - strongly disagree

   2 - somewhat disagree

   3 - neither agree nor disagree

   4 - somewhat agree

   5 - strongly disagree

9. Conflict experienced during performance appraisals is attributed to differences in employee-manager generational differences.

10. Conflict experienced during performance appraisals is attributed to differences in employee-manager gender differences.

11. Conflict experienced during performance appraisals is attributed to differences in employee-manager communication styles.

12. Conflict experienced during performance appraisals is attributed to differences in employee-manager values and beliefs.

13. Conflict experienced during performance appraisals is attributed to differences in employee-manager level of experience.

14. Conflict experienced during performance appraisals is attributed to differences in employee-manager work styles.

15. Conflict experienced during performance appraisals is attributed to differences in employee-manager expectations.

16. I feel my input is valued by my manager during the performance appraisal process.

17. The traditional annual performance appraisal process does not align with today's need for flexibility and immediate feedback.

18. Merit increases should be tied to a manager's evaluation as part of the performance appraisal process.

19. The performance appraisal process provides me with clear feedback that helps me understand areas of strength and weakness.

20. A manager's age plays a part in how skilled they will be in giving meaningful feedback during a performance appraisal.

21. I feel very stressed during the performance appraisal process.

22. The performance appraisal process creates a power imbalance between manager and employer.

Demographic Information

Why do we ask these questions? Our hypothesis is that generation impacts the performance appraisal process. However, we also need to consider if other demographic factors also play a role. By looking at each of the below characteristics, we can gain insight into what other demographic factors might also have an impact.

23. Generational class

   a.Silent Generation (born 1928 - 1945)

   b.Baby Boomer (born 1946 - 1964)

   c.Generation X (1965 - 1980)

   d.Millennial (born 1981 - 1996)

   e.Generation Z (born 1997 - 2012)

24. Gender

   a.Male

   b.Female

c.Other

25. Marital status

a.Single

b.Married

c.Divorced

d.Widowed

26. Industry of Employment (open response)

27. Years of work experience

a.0-5 years

b.6-10 years

c.11-20 years

d.21-30 years

e.31+ years

28. Length of Service with CURRENT Employer

a.0-5 years

b.6-10 years

c.11-20 years

d.21-30 years

e.31+ years

29. Work location

a.fully remote

b.fully in-person

c.hybrid (combo of both remote and in person)

30. Educational level completed

a.some high school

b.high school diploma or equivalent

c.some college

d.bachelor's degree

e.master's degree

f.doctoral degree

31. Nationality (open response)

32. Country of residence (open response)

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