
Generation Gap In Workplace: Pros And Cons

Generation gap is not just a difference in age between old people and youngsters. It is defined as a wall that separates the philosophies of different generations. Each generation has different opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and skills (Whitman, 2018). These days, generation gap has become an issue in workplaces. This is due to the fact that our diverse workforce which involves employees of different generations are creating conflicts and problems in organizations. According to an article by Asad Ur Rehman, this workplace issue will affect the development of the organization and the employees. There are 5 different generations that exist in this era. However, this critical response will only emphasize on two different generations and the conflicts between generation X and generation Y or easily known as the millennials and two ways that are compulsory in order to diminish generational issue.

Employees who belong to generation X are born during 1965-1980 and also known as the 'middle child' of generations. Generation X experienced the most difficult formative years of any generation. They witnessed their parents working hard to survive during the particular period of time. Hence, this explains why they are working hard for better work-life balance. They also tend to have trust issues with organizations that makes them more willing to do job hopping rather than staying in one organization for years. These people of generation X are most probably not familiar with technology compared to other generations. This is because most of them spent their childhood without technology. Nevertheless, they surely can adapt to the rapid changes of technology easily due to their high determination to become better in every aspect of their life (Kane, 2019). Compared to generation Y, born during 1980-1994, they are very familiar with technology as they belong to an era of technology. In my opinion, adapting to new technological advances is not a big deal for this generation as they live through the development of technology era. These millennials are flexible enough that they are known for their optimism, open mindedness, and collaborative skills. Their characteristics in workplace causes them to get so much attention in the workforce. They also truly appreciate education that it leads them to take longer time to find stable careers and relationships because they are prone to obtain academic degrees for their self-satisfaction (Spiro, 2006).

Generational diversity in an organization is compulsory for a better development of organization but, handling different generations in a workplace can be a hassle to the employers. This is due to the fact that each generation has different ways to contribute to the organization. Hence, it will create conflicts between the younger and older generations. Generation X and generation Y surely have different work ethics as they were born in different generations. For instance, the employees of generation Y assume the employees of generation X are unproductive as they value work life balance more than advancement. In contrary, employees of generation X assume employees of generation Y are immature and less visionary as they want flexibility to be implemented in workplace such as flexible hours and places of working (Tolbize, 2018). According to a Deloitte study, almost 75 percent of millennials believe that a freedom to choose where to work is important. Another conflict that occurs between these generations is seniority. The older generation tend to feel superior among the younger generation because they are more experienced than them in terms of length of employment. Moreover, promotions are more likely based on seniority. This will lead to frustration among millennials who are more qualified than generation X. Hence, promotions should not be based on the length of service. It should be

based on performance of the employees instead.

In order to build a multigenerational organization, there are two steps that can be taken in order to avoid and diminish generational gap issues in workplace. Firstly, human resource department should organize a team building session among the employees of different generations. This will create a stronger bond between them as they will try to understand each others opinions and behaviors. Although, it may not be cost-effective and time-effective to organize the session but surely it will improve the relationship among the employees which will automatically benefits the organization in many aspects. In my point of view, it is worth it to spend some budget on the team building session for the sake of future well-being of the organization. Secondly, promotion policy of an organization should be enhanced. Promotion policy may bring benefits to both employees and organization if it is done in the right way.

Hence, in my opinion, promotions should be done based on merits of the employees or their performance as it will be fair for every employees of the organization. This will also diminish discrimination among employees.

In conclusion, even though generation gap between employees in an organization leads to conflicts and problems between the generations, it will also bring benefits to the organization and the employees themselves if there is no generational issue happening in the organization. At the end of day, what matters the most is, regardless of generation or gender or religion, understanding each other as individuals is the key to diversity in workplace. Hence, I hope generational issue can be diminished in order to create a healthy workplace environment.