

Can You Lead Effectively? An Analysis of the Leadership Styles of Four Generations of American Employees

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to determine the preferred leadership style(s) of the different generations of workers in the U.S. A sample population of 328 respondents in all four generations responded to 8 questions posed in a Survey conducted online using working adults taking a course in a graduate school. Responses indicate that preferred leadership styles differ significantly among the four generations. It is further noted that the greater the difference is in age groups the more significant the difference in leadership behavioral preferences. This is significant for managers in order for them to adapt their leadership styles for the specific generation of employee to be managed to gain the highest level of motivation and job performance.

Key Words: Leadership, Employee Generation, Traditionalists, Boomers, Generation "x", generation "y".

Introduction

In today's workforce, there are now four distinct generations of employees that must partner and work together. The current workforce includes Veterans, referred to as Matures or traditionalists (age 66+), Baby Boomers (age 47-65), Generation X (age 32-46), and Generation Y, also referred to as Millennials (age 18-31). It's important to note that these age groups can vary slightly according to the researcher involved. However, these are the age groups that we are focusing on for this particular study. It is critical that organizations should understand the management preference styles for each of these generations so that it may harness the true potential of its workforce and maintain a competitive edge. The ability to provide good leadership training is key to a healthy organization. But a more productive and forward-thinking company must recognize that being able to understand leadership preferences by generation and then training to match the style as appropriate will provide these organizations with a true competitive advantage. It is important to recognize that generations of employees are molded by the times in which they came of age (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Conger (1997) stated that each generational time period has a "distinct wind or character" (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Beckhard (Eds), 1997). Matures, or Veterans, have a respect for authority and a sense of duty and honor (Hammill, 2005; and Brown, 2003). Baby Boomers are typically described as "workaholics" who derive fulfillment from their jobs (Hammill, 2005; Brown,

2003). Generation X is the first workforce generation to have a comfort level with technology are self-reliant, and skeptical of other generational values (Hammill, 2005; Brown, 2003). Generation Y, or Millennials, are entrepreneurial, able to easily multitask, and prefer immediate feedback and response (Hammill, 2005; Brown, 2003).

Ultimately, different generations in the workforce may have the same basic values; however, they do express these differently from each other. According to Deal (2007), much of the intergenerational struggles seen in the workplace have to do with a struggle for power based on these values Deal (2007). Typically, one generation will have more of the power, and the other will struggle against it using values as a basis. Therefore, it is vital for productive organizations to recognize this and the need to better understand how to effectively utilize leadership styles to effectively engage the different generations in the workforce (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2009). “In any human group, the leader has maximum power to sway everyone’s emotions” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McGee, 2004).

The differences among these generational groups are examined with regard to leadership style preferences. Providing a clearer understanding of these leadership preferences, will help to delineate the types of styles to be utilized with the appropriate generation in the workplace. Such targeted leadership style usage will help to develop more effective communication, provide a more productive workflow, and facilitate intergenerational trust building in the workplace.

Literature Review

Background of This Study

The four generations in the workplace are represented in Figure 1 (Sprague, 2008). Baby Boomers and Generation Y, or Millennials, are the two largest groups. Figure 2 provides a representation of past, current, and future shifts in the labor composition among the different generations (Sprague, 2008).

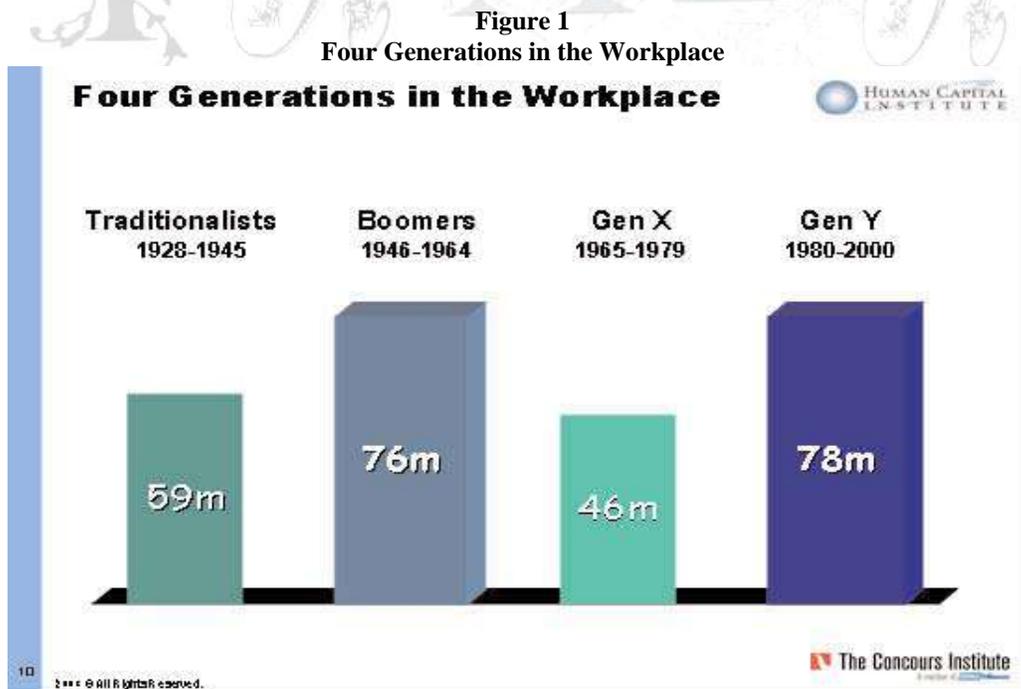
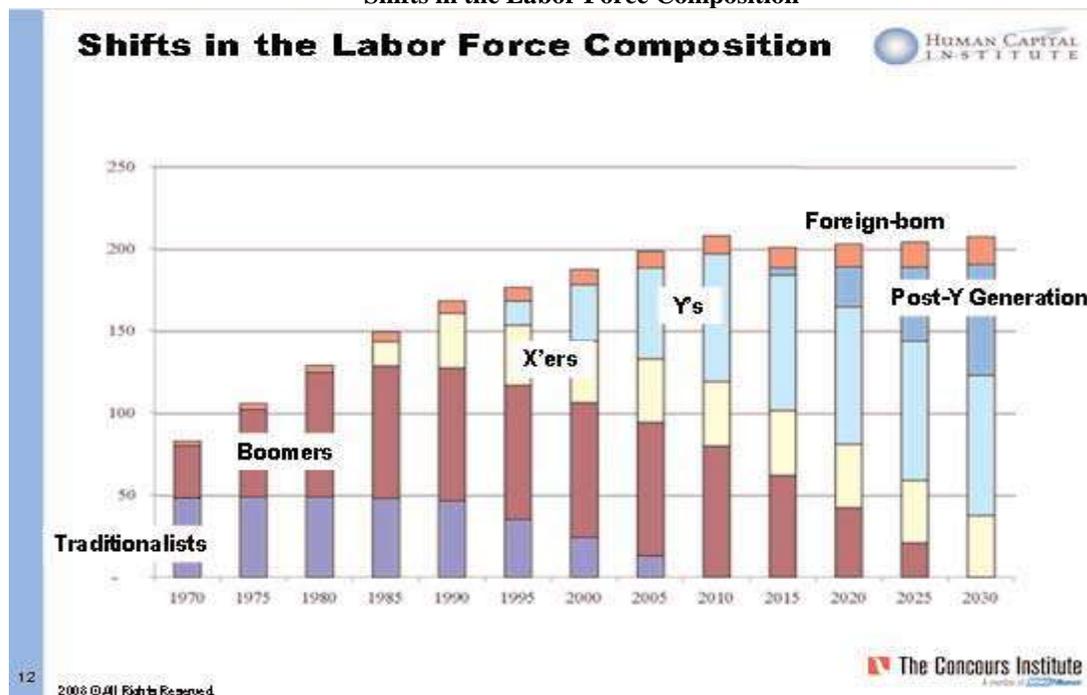


Figure 2
Shifts in the Labor Force Composition



Source: Sprague (2008)

Characteristics of the Four Generation

Veteran Generation

The Veterans, also known as Matures or Traditionalists, are sometimes referred to as the “silent generation”. They were born between 1928 and 1945. Much of this generation grew up during World War II, and was influenced by the calls for sacrifice and duty for their country at the time. The oldest members of this generation came up during the aftermath of the Depression (Scheef & Thielholdt, 2008). This was also a time of sacrifice and struggle. The Veterans are characterized by a respect for authority, an acceptance of conformity, and a reliance on discipline (Hammill, 2005). Many of the Veterans do not possess a formal educational background, and instead, worked to climb the corporate ladder based on experience (Scheef & Thielholdt, 2008).

Veterans view work as an obligation; however, it’s important to note that the term obligation is not a negative for this generation. The perceived leadership style that is preferred is one of command and control, and one that is comprised of specific directives (Hammill, 2005). This reflects the era in which they came up. The post-Depression years and the years during World War II were ones that were filled with directives from the government that citizens felt were a call to duty for honor and country.

Veterans typically have a more individual work style (Hammill, 2005). This represents a preference to be self-reliant. These workers are engaged by challenging work where they feel they are making a difference in the organization. Even though the Veterans typically did not have access to computers and technology at the starting or up until mid-points of their careers, many still have a positive view of technology (Scheef & Thielholdt, 2005).

This generation responds well to more formal communication methods, such as a typed memo distributed to their desk, or to a face-to-face office meeting. They do not require frequent and effusive feedback on their work. They derive a satisfaction from a job that's well done. They are effectively engaged when they feel that their experience is valued (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2009).. And when it comes to jobs and family, in the mind of a Veteran, they are two separate entities (Hammill, 2005).

Baby Boomer Generation

The Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964. This was a time of complex changes. Some of this generation grew up in the post World War II boom years of prosperity. But then there was the advent of the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Then there were the Kennedy and King assassinations, the era of Woodstock and the sexual revolution, and even the Watergate scandal (Wallace, 2006). It was a time of much change and flux. Dittman noted that "every generation is influenced by its period's economic, political and social events" (2005, ¶3). There were great demands put on family providers in these turbulent times; therefore, Baby Boomers typically value work and the fulfillment that it can provide.

Baby Boomers view work as an exciting adventure. The perceived leadership style that is preferred is one that is collegial and seeks a consensus from those involved. There's the feeling that everyone is important and can make a valued contribution. This reflects the era in which they grew up. In the fast-changing era of the Baby Boomers, information and input became valuable commodities. The advent of more availability of televisions in homes and the input of more new programs provided this generation with a value for input and contribution to the knowledge base. As such, Baby Boomers can be utilized as mentors in organizations (Lindenberger & Stoltz-Loike, n.d.).

Baby Boomers usually have an interactive team player style in the workplace (Hammill, 2005). This represents the desire to be providing more input into the whole of the team. The Baby Boomers desire to have more influence on the operations of the workplace. There is an identity that they find in the jobs. They seek to be acknowledged for their hard work and prefer, mostly, that this comes in the form of a monetary acknowledgement (Rau-Foster, 2000). Additionally, many Baby Boomers may not have had access to computers and technology early on in their careers; however, most have had access by mid-level in their careers at the latest. Therefore, there are more comfort levels with technology in this generation.

This generation responds well to a participatory communication style. This includes face-to-face meetings, teleconferences, and virtual meetings. However, the preferred method for communication is usually face-to-face. Baby Boomers appreciate monetary rewards and titles as recognition for their hard work. They do not require frequent feedback on their work. The feedback they do receive should include the message that they are valued in the organization as this is a motivator for them. And when it comes to jobs and family, Baby Boomers do not always seek balance. Instead they work to live (Hammill, 2005).

Generation X

Generation Xers were born between 1965 and 1979. This era was characterized by changes in the various social movements (civil rights, feminism), the advent of more televisions (multiple sets) in more homes, computerized games and access to more technology, as well as great political changes, such as the fall of the Soviet Union and the virtual domination of American economic power (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). This generation is characterized by a focus on self-reliance, but also a need for structure and direction. Generation Xers can be skeptical of the world around them as well. They would often prefer to do things their own way and jettison any rules they feel are unnecessary (Hammill, 2005).

Generation Xers view work as contractual, and a difficult challenge. As managers, they do not view themselves as simply the boss, as Baby Boomers do, but rather as part of the whole team. They are participatory, yet will exercise authority when necessary. The perceived leadership style that is preferred is

one where everyone is treated the same and where everyone is in this together. Generation Xers will often challenge others in order to ask what they view is the important question: Why (Hammill, 2005). As a generation that came up with access to even more available information on a global level, the need to know and understand “Why” is important to them. This is not a need for challenge alone. Instead, it is a way to provide a solid foundation that they feel comfortable to work from.

This generation typically displays a more entrepreneurial work style (Hammill, 2005). This represents their desire to do things their own way and move forward. This generation has had more access to computers and technology than the Veterans and Baby Boomers, so they will more easily acclimate to technological changes. Generation Xers embraced and drove the advent of the dot-com boom; therefore, their work with technology puts them at ease (Gordinier, 2008).

Members of Generation X respond well to straightforward and candid communications (Sheef and Thielholdt, n.d.; Raines, 1997). Since they have a more informal communication style and a need for structure, communications can be face-to-face, telephonic, or virtual. As long as the structure and candor is there, the communication style will be appropriate. Direct and immediate feedback is something that Generation Xers require. Having the freedom to continue in the manner that they see as most productive is the best reward for these employees (Dittman, 2005). And when it comes to jobs and family, this generation prefers a balance for both. They work and family life with equal importance and thus, expect a balance of both (Hammill, 2005).

Generation Y

Generation Yers, also known as Millennials, were born after 1980. This era was characterized by power, wealth, and prosperity. The American economic powered up after the fall of the Soviet Union and continued on into the 1990's when the dot-com boom took over. During this period the economy of the United States became the envy of many other countries (London, 2005). Generation Yers experienced respect and accommodation. They were also guided in this by their parents, and as such, they bring a sense of entitlement to their workplace experiences (Sujansky, 2009). Additionally, their access to a global view of the world provides them with a more socially aware outlook. They are more globally conscious (Salkowitz, 2008). This generation is characterized by looking to what's next, the idea of multitasking, goal orientation, and tolerance (Hammill, 2005).

This generation views work a means to an end. They value a work environment that is fun and provides opportunities for creative communication as well as recognition. They seek access to up-to-date technology, career development opportunities, and workplace flexibility. The perceived leadership style that is preferred is one where there is nurturing and appreciation for their work. Generation Yers will often require more feedback and attention in order for them to feel the fulfillment that they require in their workplace. That is not to say that they don't enjoy challenges. Keeping meaningful challenges available for Generation Yers is important (Sujansky, 2009). Some may characterize this generation as expecting to have a good job experience and feeling entitled to having a manager that can cater to their employment needs. This can often seem the case; however, with effective coaching, members of this generation can be valuable employees that deliver superior service (Tulgan, 2009). Members of Generation Y typically have a more participative work style (Hammill, 2005). This represents their desire to work with other creative and bright people and to be energized by their work. This generation is quite adept at the use of computers and technology as it has grown up with it. In fact, this generation can often seem consumed with technology. They thrive on virtual connections with others via social networking. They are exceptionally comfortable utilizing technology in their everyday lives. They view technology as way to make life easier and to connect with friends and family (Taylor & Keeter, 2010).

Generation Yers respond well to communications via technology (Hammill, 2005). This is due to the interconnectivity of technology in their everyday lives from an early age. Since members of this generation enjoy interactions with others that they view as bright and collaborative, team engagements using virtual

meeting arrangements can be quite beneficial. Additionally, since Generation Yers require a nurturing environment, then communication should be frequent with positive notes touched upon first. In order for them to be prepared to hear anything negative, they must have the right frame of mind by first hearing something positive. Engaging with this generation to make improvements to work performance is best when done in an environment that focuses on nurturing and appreciation. Members of this generation also view work as just a piece of the puzzle of life. Family, friends, home life, recreational activities, and work life are all part of the mix (Chester, 2002). But work is not the first and foremost consideration for this generation. It is just one part of the mix (Tulgan, 2009).

Xxxx (Text in Times New Roman 10 Font, single spacing) In order to retain customer it is important to satisfied them (Jhon 2013). The study of Sesmi (2013) shows that customer satisfaction is one of the most important factors for consumer retention.

Research Question and Hypotheses

Given the characteristics on the different generations of employees in the U.S., the following question is posed for consideration: What is the most desired leadership style for each of the four generations of workers in America today?

Given the above Research Question, the following hypotheses are posited for testing.

- H1: There is no significant differences in desired leadership styles among the different work groups of U.S. employees
- H2: There is no significant difference in desired leadership styles between Generation Y (Millennials) and Gen X’ers.
- H3: There is no significant difference in desired leadership styles between Generation Y (Millennials) and Baby Boomers.
- H4: There is no significant difference in desired leadership styles between Generation X and Baby Boomers.

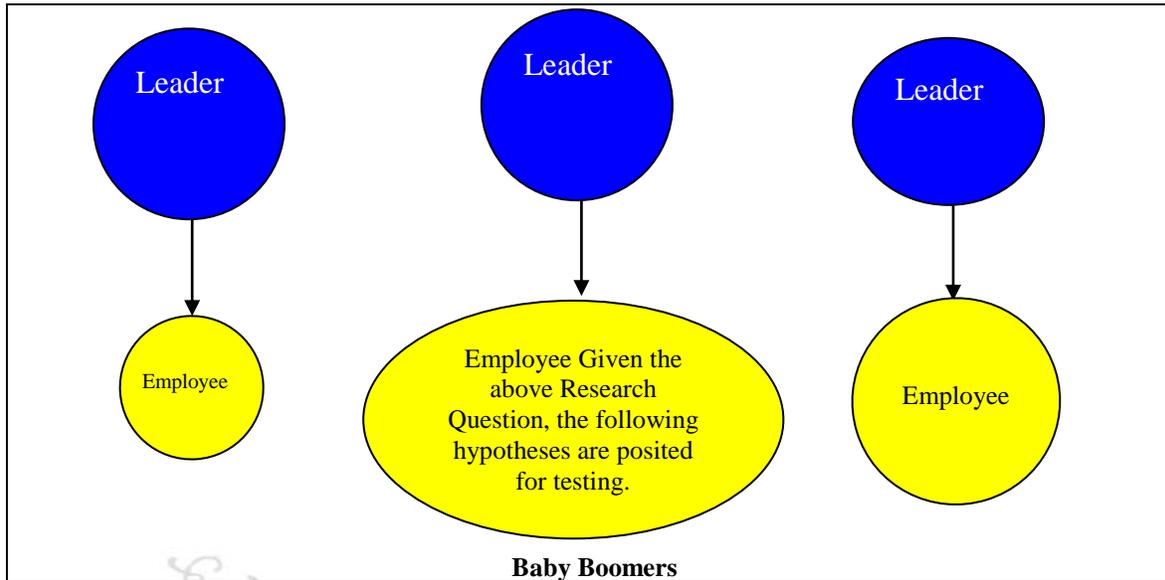
Theoretical Framework

The authors of this study have developed their own model as it appears in Figure 3 below. They have suggested the following:

- 1. Traditionalists will use the autocratic style.
- 2. Baby boomers and generation “X” will use the participative style.
- 3. Generation “Y” will use the “free reign “style

Figure 3
Leadership Style Model for Four Generations of Employees

LEADERSHIP STYLE MODEL FOR FOUR GENERATIONS OF EMPLOYEES		
AUTOCRATIC	PARTICIPATIVE	FREE REIGN
STYLE	STYLE	STYLE
TRADITIONALISTS	GENERATION “X”	GENERATION “Y”



Analysis

Survey Instrument

A survey instrument consisting of eight questions taken from the literature (Allen, Drevs, & Ruhe, 1999; Kleinman, 2004; Robbins, 1998; Spector, 1997; Yukl, 1998). A pilot study was undertaken with 49 subjects to determine the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. A chrombach alpha test was administered to the results of the survey data and a reliability test of 8.87 was determined. Based on the reliability of the results it was determined this survey would be a valid instrument for testing the remainder of the subjects in this study. A copy of the utilized instrument is presented in Appendix 1.

Data Analysis

The respondents were asked to voluntarily complete the survey and were rewarded 2 points on their final grade. Surveys were collected and data extracted, coded, and placed in a data spread sheet for input for statistical analysis.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics: Total Population of Survey Respondents.

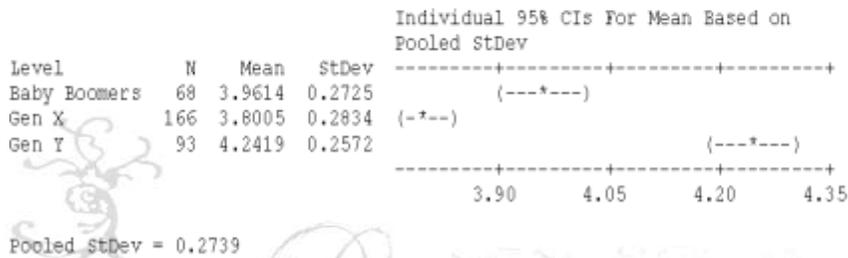
<i>I like a boss who watches my every move.</i>		<i>I like a boss who is there when I need them but allows me freedom to perform my duties independently.</i>		<i>I prefer a boss who allows me to be involved in the decision making process on issues that affect me directly.</i>		<i>I prefer a boss who inspires confidence and is charismatic.</i>	
Mean	1.244	Mean	4.865	Mean	4.710	Mean	4.524
Standard Error	0.030	Standard Error	0.021	Standard Error	0.029	Standard Error	0.035
Median	1	Median	5	Median	5	Median	5
Mode	1	Mode	5	Mode	5	Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.549	Standard Deviation	0.376	Standard Deviation	0.529	Standard Deviation	0.625
Sample Variance	0.301	Sample Variance	0.141	Sample Variance	0.280	Sample Variance	0.391
Kurtosis	10.715	Kurtosis	12.845	Kurtosis	7.426	Kurtosis	0.379
Skewness	2.851	Skewness	-3.171	Skewness	-2.153	Skewness	-1.037
Range	4	Range	3	Range	4	Range	3
Minimum	1	Minimum	2	Minimum	1	Minimum	2
Maximum	5	Maximum	5	Maximum	5	Maximum	5
Sum	408	Sum	1591	Sum	1545	Sum	1484
Count	328	Count	327	Count	328	Count	328
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.060	Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.041	Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.057	Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.068

value of zero. This would indicate that the Null of Hypothesis One cannot be supported and that there is a statistically significant difference between the management styles desired between the various generations.

Table 3
One-Way ANOVA : Leadership Styles for All Generations
One-way ANOVA: Leadership Styles All Generations

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Generation	2	11.6180	5.8090	77.41	0.000
Error	324	24.3138	0.0750		
Total	326	35.9319			

S = 0.2739 R-Sq = 32.33% R-Sq(adj) = 31.92%



In Table 5 a general regression analysis was performed to validate the findings in the ANOVA and the negative T factor with a P of zero for Gen X and Gen Y confirmed the Null Hypothesis. This is supported visually with the Plot of these statistical findings in Table 6. Notable was that while the regression analysis did show that there was a statistical difference in the management style preferences between Gen X and the Baby Boomers, they were closer than that of any other two together. Visually the Value Plot in Table 4 shows very clearly how different the three main generation of workers value different and distinct leadership traits and characteristics.

Table 4
Individual Value Plot of Leadership Styles for all Generations

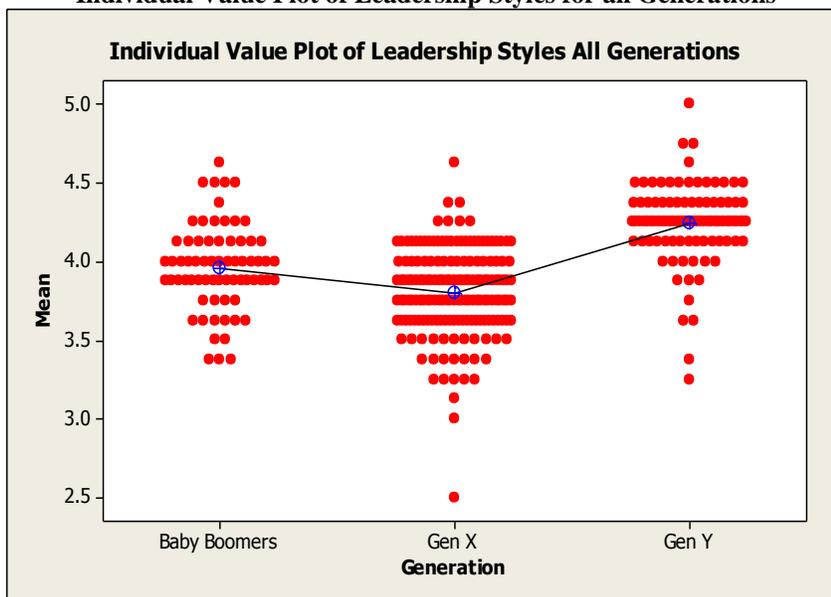


Table 5
General Regression Analysis: Mean vs. Generation
General Regression Analysis: Mean versus Generation

Coefficients

Term	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Gen Y	4.00126	0.0162020	246.961	0.000
Generation				
Baby Boomers	-0.03986	0.0251070	-1.588	0.113
Gen X	-0.20081	0.0203272	-9.879	0.000

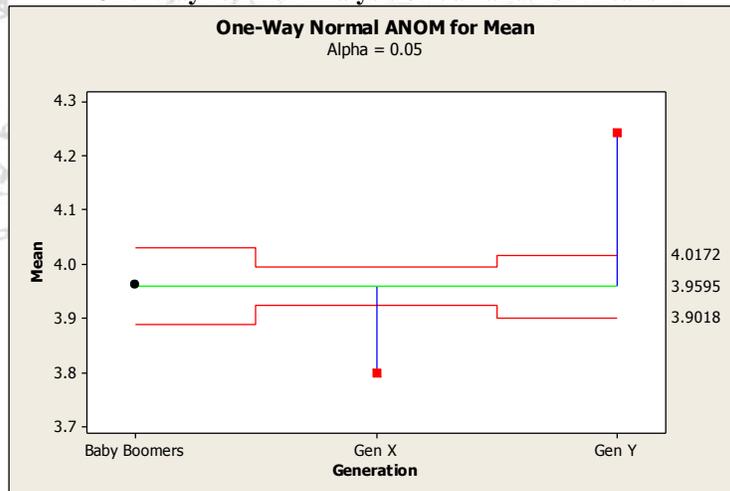
Summary of Model

S = 0.273939 R-Sq = 32.33% R-Sq(adj) = 31.92%
PRESS = 24.7576 R-Sq(pred) = 31.10%

Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Seq SS	Adj SS	Adj MS	F	P
Regression	2	11.6180	11.6180	5.80901	77.4094	0
Generation	2	11.6180	11.6180	5.80901	77.4094	0
Error	324	24.3138	24.3138	0.07504		
Total	326	35.9319				

Table 6
One-Way Normal Analysis of Variance for Means



Hypothesis Two proposes that there is no statistical difference in desired leadership styles between Generation Y (Millennials) and Gen X'ers. In looking at the relationship between these two work groups Generation Y indicates they prefer a boss who has passion for their work but also allows the employee but who is also charismatic and inspires confidence. There is a very relationship that indicates these workers admire a boss that is charismatic but also gives credit for employee performance. There is also strong evidence which indicates leadership styles where leaders who have passion for their work but also give the proper credit for performance are desired as leaders by Generation Y. Generation X indicates they prefer leadership that has passion for their work but also includes the employee in the decision making process.

A Two Tail Sample T Test was run to determine if the two population means were equal to each other as stated in the Null Hypothesis. In Table 7 we find the analysis indicates a t-value of -12.77 and a p-value of 0.00 with a Degrees of Freedom score of 206. Generation Y and Generation X shows a P value of zero and

a high degree of freedom with a negative T value indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in the leadership styles between Generation X and Generation Y thus making this Null Hypothesis one that cannot be supported. Table 8 provides a visual Value Plot that confirms these findings. In Table 9 we confirm the results, a confidence interval and F test were run. The confidence interval showed that the variance among the data did not have any major outliers. See Table 9.

Table 7
Two-Sample Test and CI: Gen Y and Gen X

Two-Sample T-Test and CI: Gen Y and Gen X

Two-sample T for Mean

Generation	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
Gen X	166	3.800	0.283	0.022
Gen Y	93	4.242	0.257	0.027

Difference = mu (Gen X) - mu (Gen Y)
 Estimate for difference: -0.4415
 95% CI for difference: (-0.5096, -0.3733)
 T-Test of difference = 0 (vs not =): **T-Value = -12.77 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 206**

Table 8
Individual Value Plot of Gen Y and Gen X

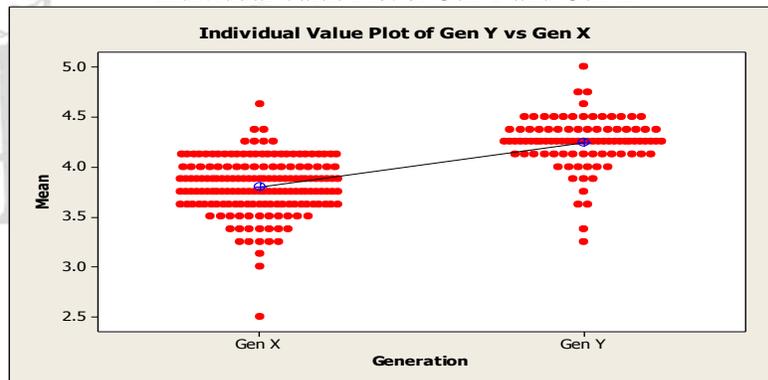


Table 9
Test and Confidence Interval Variances: Gen Y and Gen X

Test and CI for Two Variances: Gen Y vs Gen X

Method
 Null hypothesis Sigma(Gen X) / Sigma(Gen Y) = 1
 Alternative hypothesis Sigma(Gen X) / Sigma(Gen Y) not = 1
 Significance level Alpha = 0.05

Statistics

Generation	N	StDev	Variance
Gen X	166	0.283	0.080
Gen Y	93	0.257	0.066

 Ratio of standard deviations = 1.102
 Ratio of variances = 1.214

95% confidence intervals

Distribution of Data	CI for StDev Ratio	CI for Variance Ratio
Normal	(0.919, 1.314)	(0.837, 1.727)
Continuous	(1.013, 1.685)	(1.026, 2.839)

Tests

Method	DF1	DF2	Statistic	F-Value
F Test (normal)	165	92	1.21	0.307
Levene's Test (any continuous)	1	257	4.27	0.040

Hypothesis Three proposes that there are no differences in leadership style preference between Generation Y and Baby Boomers. The authors propose that the relationship of Generation Y and Leadership Style indicates they prefer a boss who has passion for their work. The boss also allows the employee who is charismatic and inspires confidence. It indicates these workers admire a boss that is charismatic but also gives credit for employee performance which indicates leadership styles that leaders who have passion for their work but also give the proper credit for performance are desired as leaders by Generation Y. Baby Boomers that were surveyed preferred a leader who had passion for their work while allowing the employee to be involved in the decision making process.

A Two Tail Sample T Test was run to determine if the two population means were equal to each other as stated in the Null Hypothesis. In Table 9 we find the analysis indicates a t-value of -6.19 and a p-value of 0.00 with fairly significant degrees of freedom of 134. Generation Y and Baby Boomers shows a negative t-value ; a P value of 0 and a moderate level of degree of freedom indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in the leadership styles between Generation X and Generation Y thus making this

Null Hypothesis one that cannot be supported. See Table 10. In Table 11 it provides a visual Value Plot that confirms these findings. In Table 12 we confirm the results, a confidence interval and F test were run. The confidence interval showed that the variance among the data did not have any major outliers.

Table 10
Two Sample T Test and CI: Gen Y vs. Baby Boomers

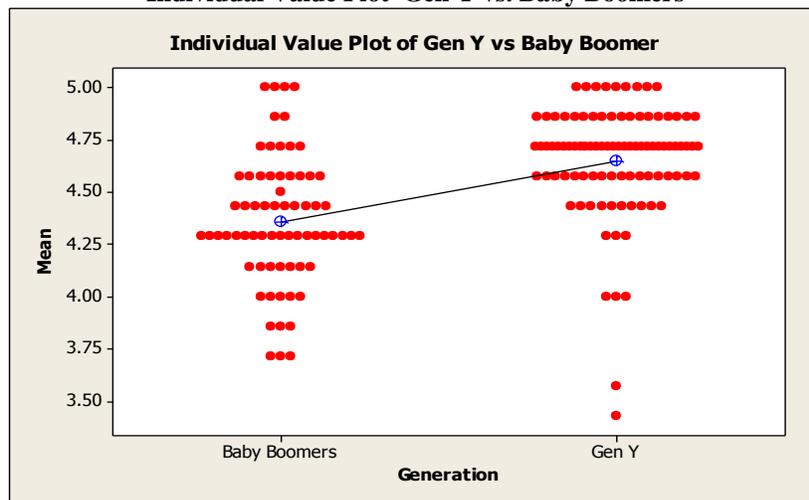
Two-Sample T-Test and CI: Gen Y vs Baby Boomers

Two-sample T for Mean

Generation	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
Baby Boomers	68	4.358	0.307	0.037
Gen Y	93	4.648	0.274	0.028

Difference = mu (Baby Boomers) - mu (Gen Y)
 Estimate for difference: -0.2900
 95% CI for difference: (-0.3827, -0.1973)
 T-Test of difference = 0 (vs not =): **T-Value = -6.19 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 134**

Table 11
Individual Value Plot Gen Y vs. Baby Boomers



Hypothesis Four seeks to determine if there is any difference in desired leadership styles between Generation X and Baby Boomers. We determined they prefer a boss who has passion for their work but also allows the employee to contribute. They desire one who is also charismatic and inspires confidence. These workers admire a boss that is charismatic but also gives credit for employee performance which indicates leadership styles that leaders who have passion for their work but also give the proper credit for performance are desired as leaders. In looking at the preferred leadership styles of the Baby Boomers indicates these older workers do not prefer leaders who are micro managers. They are tolerant of all other leadership styles which may come as a result of their long experiences of many different leadership styles during their careers.

Table 12
Test and CI for Two Variances: Gen y vs. Baby Boomers

Test and CI for Two Variances: Gen Y vs Baby Boomers

Method

Null hypothesis Sigma(Baby Boomers) / Sigma(Gen Y) = 1
 Alternative hypothesis Sigma(Baby Boomers) / Sigma(Gen Y) not = 1
 Significance level Alpha = 0.05

Statistics

Generation	N	StDev	Variance
Baby Boomers	68	0.307	0.094
Gen y	92	0.274	0.075

Ratio of standard deviations = 1.120
 Ratio of variances = 1.254

95% Confidence Intervals

Distribution of Data	CI for StDev Ratio	CI for Variance Ratio
Normal	(0.899, 1.407)	(0.807, 1.980)
Continuous	(0.942, 1.942)	(0.886, 3.772)

Tests

Method	DF1	DF2	Statistic	P-Value
F Test (normal)	67	92	1.25	0.312
Levene's Test (any continuous)	1	159	2.59	0.110

Table 13
Two Sample T-Test and CI: Generation X vs. Baby Boomers

Two-Sample T-Test and CI: Gen X vs Baby Boomers

Two-sample T for Mean

Generation	N	Mean	StDev	SE Mean
Baby Boomers	68	4.358	0.307	0.037
Gen X	166	4.175	0.322	0.025

Difference = mu (Baby Boomers) - mu (Gen X)
 Estimate for difference: 0.1835
 95% CI for difference: (0.0947, 0.2722)
 T-Test of difference = 0 (vs not =): **T-Value = 4.09 P-Value = 0.000 DF = 130**

Table 14
Individual Value Plot' Gen X vs. Baby Boomers

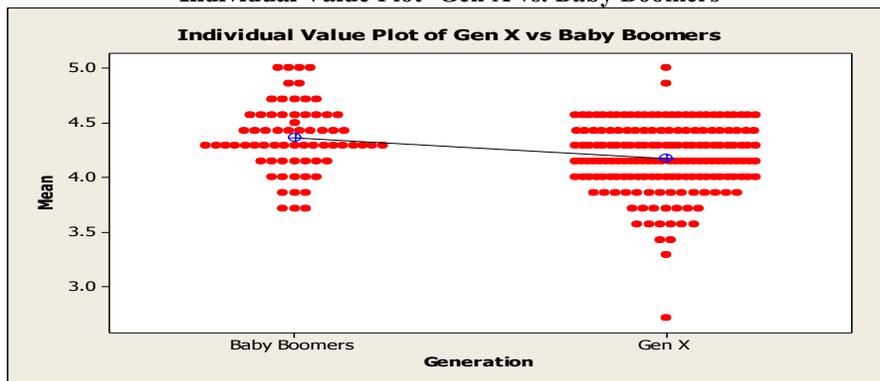


Table 15
Test and CI: Gen X vs. Baby Boomers

Test and CI for Two Variances: Gen X vs Baby Boomers

Method

Null hypothesis Sigma(Baby Boomers) / Sigma(Gen X) = 1
 Alternative hypothesis Sigma(Baby Boomers) / Sigma(Gen X) not = 1
 Significance level Alpha = 0.05

Statistics

Generation	N	StDev	Variance
Baby Boomers	68	0.307	0.094
Gen X	166	0.322	0.104

Ratio of standard deviations = 0.954
 Ratio of variances = 0.909

95% Confidence Intervals

Distribution of Data	CI for StDev Ratio	CI for Variance Ratio
Normal	(0.786, 1.178)	(0.618, 1.387)
Continuous	(0.738, 1.206)	(0.544, 1.453)

Tests

Method	DF1	DF2	Test Statistic	P-Value
F Test (normal)	67	165	0.91	0.667
Levene's Test (any continuous)	1	232	0.31	0.581

Table 13 shows our statistical analysis where Generation X and Baby Boomers showed a P value of zero and a high degree of freedom with a positive T value indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in the leadership styles between Generation X and Baby Boomers. Therefore we cannot support the fourth Null Hypothesis. This is confirmed visually in Table 14. Of all the comparison and statistics comparing the different generations, it should be noted that Generation X and Baby Boomers did come the closest in their management style preferences, while still statistically different. To confirm the results, a confidence interval and F test were run. The confidence interval showed that the variance among the data did not have any major outliers see Table 15.

Limitations of This Study

This research study has been conducted to examine the potential differences in preferred leadership styles utilizing the different age groups of workers in U.S. organizations. The sample population is sufficient to draw conclusions among all of these age groups with the exception of the Traditionalists where only 1 person reported. It should be noted however the random sample is heavily skewed towards young women and this is partly due to the sampling technique of using working college students as a sample population. It is supposed that due to the average demographic of the college population the sample would be older and more diverse in gender. This proved not to be the case. It should be noted the respondents in this study were employed in various jobs throughout the U.S. and demonstrated great demographic diversity. It is suggested that further study be conducted using a variety of working adults including attracting a much larger sample of workers older than 65 to insure representation of all age groups among the samples.

Implications for Management

One leadership style does not fit all. This research study clearly shows that leadership styles that are preferred are different for each age class of working adult in the U.S. Managers need to be aware they cannot have one management style and expect to get great results from all employees based on the results of these findings. Management needs to consider the different age groups and adapt a management style that is preferred by each age group to achieve maximum results in behavior, motivation, and performance from their employees. Ignoring this will result in a disconnect with their employees and likely result in dissatisfaction and high turnover from employees that cannot relate to their managers.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted using working adults from diverse demographic and professional backgrounds. One issue that became evident in this study when the sample was collected is the skewness in the respondents. It is suggested further research be conducted with equal numbers of respondents based on age, ethnic background and gender. This will allow for a reduction in variation of response due to a greater proportion of one demographic group over another. One limitation that needs to be addressed is the lack of

Traditionalists in the sample. Having a representative sampling of these older workers would allow for more rigorous examination of their preferred management style. It is suggested that future studies be conducted in business environments where there are employees of different age groups that can be sampled in the same work environment. This will provide a greater opportunity to compare preferred management styles under the same group of managers.

To determine the preferred leadership style of each working generation of American workers this study was conducted by collecting data from working adults who attended a leading online university and were taking graduate-level business courses. The results of this study conclude that each generation of workers has different and distinct preferences when it comes to leadership styles. In fact, the further the age differences the more pronounced the differences in styles preferred.

The importance of this study provides managers in all capacities with information that will allow them to identify the generation of workers they lead and then to adapt a leadership style that is preferred by that particular generation of worker. By doing so this will allow the employee to be motivated that will translate into higher level of performance and better results for that leader and the organization.

Conclusion

The survey consisted of four generations, eight questions, with 328 samples taken from Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Due to the small sample size of Traditionalists, this data was removed from the analysis. The correlation, regression, F test, ANOVA, and confidence interval testing all showed that each of the three generations analyzed had statistically different management style preferences thus making all four hypotheses null, rejecting them.

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