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The Millennials – Comparative Analysis of Factors Affecting Working Behavior of Generations Y and X in Malaysia

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Abstract

The purpose for this study is to examine factors influencing working behaviour of Generation Y in Malaysia. A mixed approach of casual and descriptive research designs were adopted in this study. An effective sample of 202 respondents from generation Y was recruited to participate in this research. To confirm the working behaviour of generation Y, 205 respondents from generation X was also recruited. Paired Sample t test shows that there is a positive and significant difference in terms of mindset and beliefs, values, motivation and technology uses among generation Y and X workers. The result of multiple regression analysis shows that values, motivation and technology have a positive and significant influence on generation Y's working behaviour except the mindset and beliefs. For future studies, it is important to include larger sample for Kuala Lumpur demographic area or other states of Malaysia or even across whole of Malaysia.

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1. Introduction

This research is about examining factors affecting the working behaviour of generation Y (Gen Y). There is a growing numbers of research in examining various aspects of current generation Y, especially their mindset and exposure (Gillaspie, 2015). This research mainly focused on four factors that were examined in previous studies such as mindset & beliefs, values, motivation and technology uses. For this study, generation X (Gen X) was included and used as a comparison to provide a clearer picture and to determine the factors affecting Gen Y working behaviour. Scholars have endeavored to draw a clear line between the Gen Y and other generations to distinguish Gen Y from other generations especially Gen X behaviour. In here Harber (2011) and Arsenault (2004) argument on this is considered.

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Gen X is the generation born in the year from 1965 to 1980 (Harber, 2011; Arsenault, 2004). Gen X is an important generation to discuss when studying Gen Y as this is the generation taking over leadership and management position that are previously held by the Baby Boomers generation (Marzara, 2016). With more individuals of Gen Y starting to join the workforce in recent years; Gen X individuals are in the positions of the workforce compared to Gen Y (Jerome et al., 2014). In addition to that, Gen X is viewed to have higher technical skills and educational experience as the most qualified candidates with right work skills (Schramm, 2013). Besides that, Gen X is the first generation to experience the emerging technology and they are technologically educated using internet, email, computer or fax machine with ease (Jerome et al., 2014).

According to Islam et al. (2011) Gen Y are mainly the children of Baby Boomers with their exposure to latest technology advancement such as sources of fast information from internet, vast communication technologies, availability of education and ever changing world globalization; that changes the perspective, approach, thinking of the Gen Y (Tapscott, 2008). Generation Y is also viewed to have slightly better technology edge over generation X with their strong relationship needing constant digitally connection to technology (Simons, 2010).

These outcomes moulds the Gen Y attitudes, lifestyles, beliefs to their working behaviour. Such outcomes tend to influence Gen Y behaviour and their approach on handling issues that would encounter in daily life. By year 2020, PwC (2011) predicts that 50% (percent) of worldwide workforce would be Gen Y employees. Since Gen Y have grown up with fast information access such as smartphone, laptop, internet broadband and social media as part of their daily life as compared to the other generation (PwC, 2011), one could expect that technology accessibility and availability could significantly affects their working behaviour.

Therefore, Gen Y is different when compared with older generation such as Baby Boomers or Gen X. Gen Y have wider exposure and use of technology that clearly set the distance apart. Gen Y are born in the rapidly changing technology era and growing up with the use of laptop, computer, tablets, smartphone, high speed internet and broadband (Simons, 2010; PwC, 2011). This view suggest that they are the very first generation entering the workforce with advance knowledge on technology than older generation and could improve the organizational performance (Kilber et al., 2014). However, it was believed that Gen Y have a poor work ethic which can make them as the unfavorable employees in the organization (Kilber et al., 2014).

Organizations are constantly revolving the social norms and moulding ever changing world events but it also creates a new generation to another generation during such changes in this particular times (Milliron, 2008). Each different generation appears to display different values, mindset, ideas, attitudes and views (Arsenault, 2004). This is known as generation gap (Tolbize, 2008). With every successful business whether it is big organization or even a small medium enterprise companies, their successes depend very much on their employee engagement (Xu & Thomas, 2011; Takawira et al., 2014; Johnson, 2014). There is a growing concern by the organization on managing young workforce and remain competitive in the market by engaging workforce, especially Gen Y. This becomes more prevalent as today managers are facing much

difficulties building relationship with Gen Y workforce and to understand what motivates Gen Y to be effective workers as well (Meola, 2016).

Many researches carried out to examine various aspects of Gen Y and how it influences organizational performance. However, the studies done on Malaysia are very limited or handful of studies were done on Malaysian context. Such as, there is one study that examined the job facets on career enhancement, coaching and communication, salary benefits and rewards, technology, work life balance and autonomy, relationship & company policy to determine Gen Y behaviors at work place (Islam et al., 2011). **Another study examined the Gen Y's turnover intentions, satisfaction, pay and benefits,** perceived availability of work life balance, perceived status work value fit, normative commitment, perceived availability of alternative job and job hopping to determine Gen Y characteristic behaviour and their values (Queiri et al., 2015). Also one study done to examine Gen Y individual characteristics and their job performance at SMEs in Malaysia. A similar study conducted to examine the impact of physical activities, smoking behaviour, alcohol drinking behaviour and computer usage to determine the effects on Gen Y job performance (Jalil et al., 2015).

None of these studies examine or clearly establish the dominant attributes of Gen Y and how it affects the working behaviour of Gen Y. Therefore this study will examine the most cited attributes of Gen Y and whether such behaviour affects working behaviour of Gen Y in Malaysia.

To achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives are formulated: 1) To examine the impact of mindset and beliefs on Gen Y working behaviour. 2) To examine the impact of values on Gen Y working behaviour. 3) To examine the impact of motivation on Gen Y working behaviour. 4) To examine the impact of technology on Gen Y working behaviour.

2. Methods

This research is done in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, the target population for this study is based on Gen Y individuals who are born from the year 1981 to 2000 and Gen X individual who are born from the year 1965 to 1980 and are currently working in any industries, corporation or organization, any job functions or specialist. Gen X was added in the study is to provide as a comparison; to identify the differences between 2 generations.

Convenience sampling is chosen as it is not easy to collect data based on probability sampling. Also due to the limited time available to complete this research coupled with small range of workforce justify the convenient sampling method to be used to gather data (Etikan et al., 2016). This sampling method allowed the researchers to gather respondents easily (Palinkas et al., 2015). Also with the availability of limited resources for this research study, convenience sampling method further being justified as it seems the cheapest to be executed in comparison with other alternative sampling methods (Leiner, 2016).

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 436 questionnaires were returned (response rate 87.2%). However, some of these returned questionnaires were excluded from the sample; as some respondents failed to complete or missed out

significant number of essential questions when they fill the questionnaire. This means the study only used 407 completed questionnaires.

Questionnaire was designed to gather the data. It consists of two (2) parts: 1) deals with personal details such as gender, education, age, etc. 2) consists of twenty five (25) statements to measure the factors affecting working behaviour of Gen Y. Five (5) items to measure working behaviour. By including variables, questionnaire is prepared with five points likert scaling system. The analysis is made with appropriate SPSS statistical tools, in order to prove the objectives of the study and to test the hypotheses. The following model was generated:

WB = Working Behaviour

MAB = Mindset and Beliefs

VAL = Values

MOT = Motivation

TECH = Technology

$$WB = \beta_0 + \beta_1(MAB) + \beta_2(VAL) + \beta_3(MOT) + \beta_4(TECH)$$

3. Results and Discussion

The following result were obtained about the reliability of the research instrument. To **determine the data set reliability, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient is used** to test the two (2) data sets: 1) on overall Gen Y and X data set and another on Gen Y only data set. The **overall Gen Y and X data set having Cronbach's Alpha of 0.891** and Gen Y only data set having 0.895. This indicates that both data sets are reliable and having a good internal consistency which the Cronbach's Alpha value falls between 0.7–0.9 (Bhatnagar et al., 2014). Also it was argued that any values that are higher than 0.6 is accepted (Bhatnagar et al., 2014).

Table 1 The Reliability of the Research Instrument

Variables	Number of Items	Overall (Gen Y and X) Cronbach's Alpha (N = 407)	Gen Y Cronbach's Alpha (N = 202)
Mindset and Beliefs	10	0.664	0.636
Values	5	0.679	0.674
Motivation	5	0.811	0.849
Technology	5	0.809	0.790
Working Behaviour	5	0.647	0.671
Whole Scale	30	0.891	0.895

The normality test was conducted to satisfy the assumptions of t-test a. The result from Shapiro Wilk-test of normality shows that the significant value is more than 0.05 for all the dependent variable working behaviour in relation with all the independent variable. For data set to be considered normal, the p-value have to be greater than 0.05 (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Hence the data set used for this research is normally distributed.

One of the method used to assess the validity of the construct is examining the correlation between the variables in the construct. Since all the correlation coefficient values are lower than 0.7 (Table 2) the items used in this construct to measure the factors affecting working behavior are accepted for further analysis.

Table 2 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of Gen Y Working Behaviour

Gen Y Factors	Mindset and Beliefs	Values	Motivation	Technology	Working Behaviour
Mindset and Beliefs	1	.491**	.485**	.423**	.481**
		.000	.000	.000	.000
		202	202	202	202
Values		1	.620**	.329**	.582**
			.000	.000	.000
			202	202	202
Motivation			1	.482**	.695**
				.000	.000
				202	202
Technology				1	.538**
					.000
					202
Working Behaviour					1

Out of the total 407 respondents collected, Gen Y is represented by total 202 respondents where 44.1% or 88 respondents are male and 55.9% or 113 respondents are female. Gen Y respondent's ethnic are represented by Malay at 31.7% (68 respondents), Chinese at 46.5% (94 respondents), Indian at 16.8% (34 respondents) and others at 3.0% (6 respondents). Gen Y respondents age group is split to two (2) group with 42.6% (86 respondents) at age 21–28 years old and 57.4% (116 respondents) are at age 29–36 years old. While education, majority of Gen Y have Bachelor Degree at 64.4% (130 respondents) followed by Diploma at 16.3% (33 respondents) while the rest are below 10.0% representation in secondary school, Master's Degree and PhD. Gen Y respondents are being employed at 87.1% (176 respondents) followed by self-employment at 7.9% (16 respondents). While Gen Y working experience is split between 1–5 years of work experience at 48% (97 respondents) and 6–10 years of work experience at 40.1% (81 respondents) while 24 respondents or 11.9% have 11–15 years of work experience. Majority of the Gen Y respondents falls under Junior staff position and Senior staff position at 30.7% and 45.5% respectively.

Therefore, from Table 3 findings it is suggesting that Gen Y would have better education level in comparison with Gen X. As for working experience, it indicates that Gen Y are starting to move into workforce and predicted to grow significantly in the coming years. While for Gen X, they are at the prime stage with an average work experience of 11 years.

Table 3 Demographic Profile of Gen Y and Gen X Respondents

	Profile	Generation X	Percentage	Generation Y	Percentage
Gender	Male	110	53.7	89	44.1
	Female	95	46.3	113	55.9
Ethnic		205	100	202	100
	Malay	39	19	68	33.7
	Chinese	133	64.9	94	46.5
	Indian	26	12.7	34	16.8
	Others	7	3.4	6	3
Age		205	100	202	100
	21–28			86	42.6
	29–36			116	57.4
	37–44	129	62.9		
	45–52	76	37.1		
Marital Status		205	100	202	100
	Single	45	22	121	59.9
	Married	154	75.1	81	40.1
	Divorced	2	1		
	Others	4	2		
Education		205	100	202	100
	Secondary School	16	7.8	18	8.9
	Diploma	80	39	33	16.3
	Bachelor Degree	86	42	130	64.4
	Master's Degree	22	10.7	20	9.9
	PhD	1	0.5	1	0.5
		205	100	202	100
Current Employment	Student			6	3
	Employed	175	85.4	176	87.1
	Self Employed	25	12.2	16	7.9
	Unemployed	5	2.4	4	2
		205	100	202	100
Work Experience	1–5 years			97	48
	6–10 years	10	4.9	81	40.1
	11–15 years	77	37.6	24	11.9
	16 years and above	118	57.6		
		205	100	202	100
Job Position	Part Time	2	1	8	4
	Junior Staff	3	1.5	62	30.7
	Senior Staff	64	31.2	92	45.5
	Managerial	90	43.9	34	16.8
	Upper Management	46	22.4	6	3
		205	100	202	100

It is being discussed earlier, in order to have better research understanding on Gen Y's working behaviour; Gen X is taken into consideration to provide a clearer picture to determine the **factors affecting the Gen Y's** working behaviour. In mindset and beliefs, Gen Y have higher mean values of 3.9515 compare to Gen X at 3.6515. While in values, Gen Y also have a higher mean value of 4.0703 compare to 3.8743 for Gen X. Whereas on motivation, Gen Y have a higher mean value of 4.4000 compare to 4.1594 for Gen X. In technology, Gen Y have higher mean value of 4.1881 compare to 3.6871 for Gen X.

Lastly on working behaviour, Gen Y have higher mean value of 4.1416 compare to 3.9347 for Gen X.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics Test – Comparison

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Mindset and Belief Y	3.9515	202	.34673	.02440
	Mindset and Beliefs X	3.6515	202	.42791	.03011
Pair 2	Value Y	4.0703	202	.42133	.02964
	Value X	3.8743	202	.47904	.03371
Pair 3	Motivation Y	4.4000	202	.49716	.03498
	Motivation X	4.1594	202	.45025	.03168
Pair 4	Technology Y	4.1881	202	.53556	.03768
	Technology X	3.6871	202	.58703	.04130
Pair 5	Working Behaviour Y	4.1416	202	.47248	.03324
	Working Behaviour X	3.9347	202	.42659	.03001

In the Table 4 indicates that the four (4) factors chosen for this study favours Gen Y where statistically confirming that these factors are more relevant to Gen Y. Therefore, **among the four (4) factors effecting Gen Y's working behaviour**, motivation has the highest influence with the mean value of 4.4000. Followed by technology at 4.1881 mean value. Coming in third place, is values at 4.0703 mean value and lastly mindset and beliefs have a mean value of 3.9515 which means mindset and beliefs has the least influence among the 4 factors in Gen Y working behaviour.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics between Gen Y and Gen X

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Mindset and Beliefs Y – Mindset and Belief X	.30000	.55896	.03933	.22245	.37755	7.628	201	.000
Value Y – Value X	.19604	.65074	.04579	.10576	.28632	4.282	201	.000
Motivation Y – Motivation X	.24059	.67251	.04732	.14729	.33390	5.085	201	.000
Technology Y – Technology X	.50099	.81631	0.5744	.38774	.61424	8.723	201	.000
Working Behaviour Y – Working Behaviour X	.20693	.64596	0.4545	.11731	.29655	4.553	201	.000

The Table 6 supports the evidence provided by Table 5 where it indicated that all **factors discussed are significant at 0.000 and have positive influence on Gen Y's working behaviour**. In mindset and beliefs, Gen Y has higher mean value of 0.3000 than Gen X. Whereas in values, Gen Y also has higher mean value of 0.19604 than Gen X. For motivation, Gen Y has as well higher mean value of 0.24059 than Gen X. While technology, Gen Y has higher mean value of 0.50099 than Gen X and in working behaviour, Gen Y also has higher mean value of 0.20693 than Gen X.

Table 6 Model GY (Gen Y) Summary and Coefficient

	Beta Coefficient	t- values	Sig. (p- value)	Adj. R Square	Sig F- Change	Durbin- Watson	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	.168	.603	.547	.565	.000	2.019		
Mindset and Beliefs	.077	1.348	.179				.664	1.507
Values	.209	3.390	.001				.568	1.761
Motivation	.413	6.365	.000				.514	1.945
Technology	.237	4.317	.000				.720	1.389

Dependent Variable: Working Behaviour

Model GY (Gen Y) has a value of 0.565 for adjusted R square which represent 56.5% (Table 6) explaining the working behaviour aspect that can be predicted the changes by mindset and beliefs, values, motivation and technology. Model GY shows no autocorrelation present in the variables at value of 2.019 and is significant with F value of 0.000. Besides that, the factors are significantly and positively influencing the working behaviour; values (0.209, $p = 0.001$), motivation (0.413, $p = 0.000$) and technology (0.209, $p = 0.000$) except mindset and beliefs (0.77, $p = 0.179$) (Folarin & Hassan, 2015). While the tolerance value are higher than 0.20 with variables. There is no collinearity and having VIF value below 10.

To determine the influence of the factors affecting the dependent variable, beta coefficient will be used. While p-values will determine, the data is significant; if the p-value is 0.05 or below (Folarin & Hassan, 2015). The above table show the factors are significantly and positively influencing the working behaviour for model GY where values (0.209, $p = 0.001$), motivation (0.413, $p = 0.000$) and technology (0.290, $p = 0.000$) except mindset and beliefs factor. The constant for model GY is not significant but positive.

This explain that motivation has a strong significant and positive impact on Gen Y working behaviour. This findings is similar to previous findings (Meola, 2016). Similarly technology uses and availability was also found to have a significant and positive impact on working behaviour of Gen Y (Rai et al., 2002). And values also has the positive and **significant impact on Gen Y's** working behaviour (Anderson et al., 2016).

Since the mindset and values do not have significant impact on the working behaviour, the model was corrected by eliminating the mindset and beliefs. The final and corrected statistical model is as follows based on the assumption:

WB = Working Behaviour

VAL = Values

MOT = Motivation

TECH = Technology

$$WB = 0.209(VAL) + 0.413(MOT) + 0.237(TECH)$$

This model GY illustrate that changing or increasing one (1) unit of either factor VAL or MOT or TECH, it will positively affect WB by 0.209 for VAL or 0.413 for MOT or 0.237 for TECH while others remain constants. While those nonsignificant component/s are

excluded in the model; the mindset and beliefs was excluded as it have no significant influence or effect on working behaviour. Likewise, the constant value of the model is removed as well which has no significant value too. Therefore, three (3) hypotheses are accepted and one (1) is rejected as indicated in the Table 7.

Table 7 Summary of Hypothesis Decisions

Hypotheses	Beta Coefficient	Significant p-Value	Accepted/ Rejected
H1: Gen Y mindset and belief have a significant positive influence in Gen Y working behaviour.	0.77	.179 Not Significant	Rejected
H2: Gen Y values have a significant and positive influence on Gen Y working behaviour.	0.209	.001 Significant	Accepted
H3: Motivation on Gen Y has a significant and positive influence on Gen Y working behaviour.	0.413	.000 Significant	Accepted
H4: Technology has a positive and significant influence on Gen Y working behaviour.	0.237	.000 Significant	Accepted

This research aimed to examine the Gen Y's behaviour influence or impact on their working behaviour. In this research, we found that **Gen Y's** mindset and beliefs have **positive but no significant impact on Gen Y's** working behaviour. This is contradictory to the finding of pas researches (Miller et al., 2013; Tolbize, 2008). This can indicate Gen Y's mindset and beliefs that having flexible working hours is part of their entitlement and not necessary to be seen as their privileged, which would suggest that mindset and beliefs does not influence Gen Y's working behaviour.

This research also found that Gen Y's values has a positive and significant influence on **Gen Y's** working behaviour. This finding is similar to the past researches done by (Miller et al., 2013). The Gen Y tends to have characteristic that causes clashes with two (2) generation namely the Baby Boomer and Gen X. Also Gen Y tends to communicates and socialize differently where they uses social media and other technology. However, Gen Y cannot totally be blamed on this as they grew up in fast technology era. The positive side of Gen Y is that they tend to value highly of their family and friend.

From the findings of this research, it is important to note motivation has positive and significant influence on **Gen Y's** working behaviour. The finding is similar to past research carried by Gibson et al. (2009). What motivates Gen Y in workplace are sense of belonging in the organization they work. This happen when the organization **appreciates and accepts Gen Y's input for organizational improvement, providing constant positive feedback to them and even when the organization place their interest on Gen Y's work development and growth. Therefore, if there is an increase on Gen Y motivation would have a positive impact on Gen Y's** working behaviour.

Similarly, the finding of this research also indicated that technology uses and availability **have a significant and positive influence on Gen Y's** working behaviour. This is similar to Hershatter & Epstein (2010). It is important to note that technology does play a major part in the current social and working life (Hartikayanti et al., 2018). Having technology is part of growing life for Gen Y since they uses technology to communicate with family, relatives and friends by sharing their thoughts and opinions through social

media, accessing fast information Therefore, if there is an increase in technology, there is positive impact of Gen Y's Working Behaviour.

4. Conclusion

From this research analysis findings, it is concluded that there are three (3) factors **having influences on Gen Y's** working behaviour. The factors are values, motivation and technology. While mindset and **beliefs do not have significant influence on Gen Y's** working behaviour. This mean mindset and beliefs do affect the Gen Y working behaviour to be more successful compared to Gen X. Therefore organization must consider the Gen Y to work with them and to make them more productive, especially in Malaysia, to focus on sustaining the values, energizing the Gen Y through effective motivational strategies, and providing them latest technology to improve work behaviour.

In year 2020, it is estimated that Gen Y will represent 50% of the global workforce and to date there are still many Corporate Managers or organizations indicating their frustration on Gen Y workforce work commitment, attitudes and others. This suggests that there is a large generation gap or understanding in the workforces. As such, this **research findings on Gen Y's** values, motivation and technology are the factors found to **have influence on Gen Y's** working behaviour. Therefore, it would bring benefit to the organization, communities and other researchers by narrowing down the generation gap to better understand Gen Y and other generation to enable them to work as a team.

This study suggests that it can help the organization gearing to achieve a "Zero Sum Game" win with the Gen Y workforce before new generation workforce cycles takes place again; that is Gen Z joining the workforce. Gen Y would be taking certain leading roles in the organization and would have some generation understanding experience and be able to overcome the generation gap if any.

There is limitation in this research as it only conducted in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, while the majority respondents are from Chinese ethnic with more than 55%. This might not represent overall of Malaysia Gen Y working behaviour where Malaysia is represented with 4 ethnic group with the estimation majority from the Malay (65%) ethic followed by Chinese (22%), Indian (10%) and others (3%).

As this research is conducted only in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, further research can be done on other states of Malaysia or across Malaysia as a whole is recommended. For **further study on Gen Y's behaviour, other factors can be studied which could influence Gen Y' behaviour such as Gen Y's level of education exposure or influence of parenting teaching or even studies on individual Industry such as banking sector, heavy industry sector or retail sector in Malaysia.**

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