CLOSING THE GENERATION GAP: UNDERSTANDING MILLENNIALS

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CAPSTONE ABSTRACT

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Individual generations have been well researched and reported along with their impacts in the work environment. The object of this study was to investigate the differences between generations, specifically the differences that arose as a resolute of the environment in which different generations were raised, both technologically and culturally. The research found that each generation grew up under vastly different circumstances and, as a result of this, their values, motivators and influences are also vastly different. These differences begin as they progressed through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and as they move from one psychosocial crisis to the next. Additionally, this study showed that each generation was at a different developmental stage in their lives, and, as a result, they placed value on different things. Each generation values what they do, this is the commonality that they must focus on. This focus can result in mentorship opportunities between all generations to further develop themselves as a society.

List of Illustrations

1. The ROC Group. (2017). *Working with Different Generations*. Retrieved from Midwest Business Group on Health: https://www.mbgh.org/ctk/newitem2/workingwithdifferentgenerations

2. McLeod, S.A. (2007). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.* Retrieved from www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

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Introduction

"These kids today!" How many times has this been said over the last eighty

years? From one generation to the next this is a common theme. Previous generations

never seem to sing praises of younger generation, instead it always seems to be a

complaint about how easy they have it, or how lazy they have become. To understand

the generation gap each generation must first be defined. In addition to this, some

theories as to what forms these generations will be provided, along with the affects these

theories have with regards to each generation.

Background. In today's society, one area of frustration is the social differences between

older generations and younger generations. It might be as simple as their work ethic,

approaches to problem solving, or even more complex issues such as their individual

behaviors, and the understanding that people act and react in very different ways. This

action, or reaction, tend to cause an adverse feeling in others that leads to a prejudice

between the generations (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Most recently this

has accrued with the Millennials, who have been stereotyped as lazy, defensive, lacking

in initiative and disrespectful toward authoritative figures (Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков,

Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016). This presents a problem as the different generations

find themselves living and working together with a requirement to communicate and

understand one another (Venter, 2016). The vastly dissimilar generational differences

however present a problem with this communication and results in a lack of

communication, or a misunderstanding of that communication (Venter, 2016). This of

course can lead to disruptions in the work environment which could decrease

productivity. In addition to the work place, generational differences can lead to conflict

between parents and children (to include adult children). While this relationship is greatly different that of the relationship between co-workers or employee/employer, it is just as important to maintain.

Purpose statement. The goal of this study is to explain what causes these generation gaps in order to create an environment where older generations can learn to communicate and work with the younger millennials. Additionally younger generations can apply these same lessons in order to better understand the older generations. It is essential that the generations learn to communicate with one another as their paths are often interlinked and the generations can give meaning to each other's lives (Venter, 2016). This will be accomplished by first explaining several different theories that help to shed light as to how each generation is formed. Following that, a brief explanation of each generation will be provided which will include basic information about the social and economic environment in which they were raised. This will allow an explanation of the generational differences, especially when it comes to the use of communication and the use of communication technologies. Additionally the effects of the theories on the formation of the generations will be clarified as they apply to the development of the generations. Finally, an explanation of the major role technology and media have played in the formation of the millennials will be provided along with the pitfalls that technology has created with regard to the communication and understanding between the different generations.

Significance. The understanding of what motivates millennials will enable employers, co-works, and supervisors to understand the generation gap. This understanding will provide them with the tools and knowledge required to create an inclusive work

environment. Creating this inclusive environment will cause a more productive work environment. Additionally this understanding will also allow increased personal relationships with millennials (Venter, 2016).

This understanding will also break the communication barrier between parent and child (including adult children). By understanding one another, parents and children, will learn how the other communicates and what they value. This understanding will allow both sides to build a more harmonious relationship. Additionally both parties would understand the motivational drivers and personality differences between one another. Armed with this information the cohesiveness of the family unit can be strengthened.

Theories

What forms an individual's personality, behaviors, and motives? The complete list is well beyond the scope of this paper, however, in the following section several theories have been identified that play a major role in this formation. Collectively the formation of these personalities, behaviors, and motives ultimately form each generation. Each of the theories will be briefly explained in this section. Further explanation will be given in the body of this paper as they relate to the generations.

Social construction theory. Social construction theory is anything that exists by virtue of social interactions, as opposed to objective reality (Andrews, 2012). Consider for example gold; society has decided that gold has value, never mind the fact that it is just a metal. This metal has value only as long as we, as s society, continue to say that it does. Never the less, it is dependent on us having an objective to use it as a medium. Aside from things of value, social expectations follow the same mindset. If society feels that a certain type of behavior is acceptable, then that behavior becomes acceptable. The

inverse of this is true as well. If society determines that a behavior is unacceptable, then that behavior becomes unacceptable. These determinations are fluid and things that were once considered acceptable (or unacceptable) may, over time, become unacceptable (or acceptable). Additionally, acceptable behaviors are influenced by each generation. Millennials might find something social acceptable that traditionalist do not find social acceptable.

Social Identity Theory. Social identity explains how people feel about themselves as it relates to the group within which they believe they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This theory was originally proposed in 1979. Tajfel and Turner (1979) postulated that the groups which people belonged to were an important source of pride and self-esteem. In order to increase one's self-image, they enhance the status of their group and they discriminate against other groups (McLeod S. A., 2008). By discriminating against other groups they reaffirm the value of their own group.

Cognitive dissonance. The mental conflict that occurs when beliefs or assumptions are contradicted by new information. The concept was introduced by the psychologist Leon Festinger (1919–89) in the late 1950s. He showed that when confronted with challenging new information, most people seek to preserve their current understanding of the world by rejecting, explaining away or avoiding the new information, or by convincing themselves that no conflict really exists. Cognitive dissonance is nonetheless considered an explanation for attitude change. People struggle with the difference between who they are and how they are seen. This struggle continues until these two views align or align as closely as possible.

Disposition Theory. Explains how individuals evaluate and form affiliations with media characters. How enjoyment is impacted by what happens with and to those characters is called Disposition Theory (Raney, 2006). Enjoyment that can be derived from witnessing the success and/or victory of someone or something that you identify as positive. Additionally enjoyment can be derived from witnessing the failure and/or defeat of something you identify as negative (Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000). As media surrounds Millennials, this can impact their views. As media portrays authoritative figures negatively, Millennials affiliate all authoritative figures negatively (Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000).

Social Cognitive Theory. Explains how people use society and the opinions of others, to seek verification of their thoughts, beliefs and opinions (Bandura, 2001). Most of the external influences are interpreted according to the receiver based on what meaning can be conferred from them. In other words they will take what they need in order to match or confirm their thoughts, beliefs and opinions. If no connection can be derived then those external influences will be discarded.

Cultivation Theory. Put simple, cultivation theory is based around the hypothesis that those who spend more time watching television are more likely to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most common and recurring messages they observe on television than those who don't (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). In its adolescence, cultivation theory was focused around violence, however there are now hundreds of studies the have looked at sex roles, aging, political orientations, the family, environmental views, science, and the list goes on and on. Cultivation theory isn't about one message influencing one

choice; it is about the implications of stable, repetitive, pervasive and virtually

inescapable patterns of images (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999).

Age Groups

Figure 1 (The ROC Group, 2017)

Each generation is quite different from the previous as illustrated in the figure

above. What they value, what motivates them, how they react to different situations;

each generation has a vastly different approach. A generational group shares historical

and social life experiences, which affect the way people within that group develop and

distinguish one generation from another (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Each

generation consists of individuals of a society that were born around approximately the

same time (Prasad, 1992). The exact dates of each generation vary slightly depending upon the source, however the following are general agreed upon.

Traditionalist. The oldest living generation is the traditionalists, born between 1922 and 1945. Their life cycle bears the imprint of the threshold moments that catapulted America into its modern superpower era (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They were brought up in a more challenging time with life experiences that included World War II. The economic and political uncertainty that they experienced led them to be hard working, financially conservative, and cautious. Organizational loyalty is of an essence and they have advanced with the premises that the seniority is important to advance in one's career. They do not like the change; they are not very risk tolerant, and have a respect for authority and hard work (Strauss & Howe, 1991). This tends to lead to a command and control style of leadership. This generation set and obeys the rules (Beekman, 2011).

Baby Boomers. The next generation is the Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, and who currently represent the most senior members in the current workforce (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). They were brought up in an abundant, healthy post-war economy, becoming an egocentric generation (Beekman, 2011). They saw the world revolving around them. Nuclear families were the norm. More than anything, work has been a defining part of both their self-worth and their evaluation of others (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Their life style revolves around the fact that they live to work. Balance is a quaint idea but not really a possibility (Strauss & Howe, 1991). As such, they see the workday as at least 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is a significant tension point between them and the newer generations, as they expect others to have the same work ethic and work the same hours.

Generation X. The next generation is Generation X, born between 1965 and 1979. They were the first generation raised on "to do lists" and grew up with a high rate of blended families (Strauss & Howe, 1991). They were also brought up in the shadow of the influential Baby Boomer generation. They witnessed their parent's sacrifice greatly for their companies. As a consequence, they developed behaviors (not values) of independence, resilience and adaptability more strongly than previous generations (Beekman, 2011; Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). In opposition to the hard driving Boomers who live to work, they work to live and view the world with a little cynicism and distrust (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Additionally, Generation X is the best-educated generation in US history based on college and university enrollments (Mitchell, McLean, & Turner, 2005).

Millennial's. This generation was born between 1980 and 1994. They have been portrayed as the next big generation, already having 1.7 billion millennials worldwide, an enormously powerful group that has the sheer numbers to transform every life stage it enters (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков, Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016). They were brought up during the 'empowerment' years where everyone won and everyone got a medal and grew up surrounded by technology, perceiving educations as a commodity to consume (Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков, Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016). Raised by parents who nurtured and structured their lives, they were drawn to their families for safety and security. They were also encouraged to make their own choices and taught to question authority (Beekman, 2011). As previously mentioned, they have grown up with technology and have had access to it for a large part of their life (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Within the work environment they can be driven and

very demanding in addition to displaying a high level of confidence (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Despite being a generation with stereotypes as self-centered, impatient, arrogant and unprepared, the reality is that Millennials have shocked the world with its initiative, approach, and innovative leadership, which is unpredictable for change in a diverse and globalized world (Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков, Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016). Millennials are anything but static, they are constantly on the move and have networked on an international scale and have a drive to change society on all levels (Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков, Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016).

The different generations have been identified, along with some basic facts about each generation. These differences are the foundation of the generation gap. Aside from just the age differences, there is a difference in how each generation was raised. This difference is based on what the parents valued and subsequently what the children of that generation value. As noted above, the previous generations play a role in the formation of generations that follow. To better understand this, one must first understand social identity formation, and part of that will also require an understanding of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Formation of generational identities

Maslow's hierarchy of needs explains how people progress from desiring basic needs such as food and water to the safety needs, and so on (Maslow & Lewis, 1987; Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987). As the generations have come and gone, society, as a whole, has moved along this hierarchy of needs as well. Most people (speaking very generally here) have moved beyond the Physiological needs. The needs for food, water and such are taken for granted because they are readily available.

Figure 2 (McLeod, 2007)

With regards to Safety needs, Adults have little awareness of their security needs except in times of emergency or periods of disorganization in the social structure (such as widespread rioting), children however still require this need to be meet and they are aware of these needs (Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987). With regards to adults, this lack of security hasn't always been the case. Due to this previous generations might have focused on the lower level needs and due to this they believed that they had it "Harder", since they had work to meet these needs. The following examples illustrates this point.

Example 1

One generation, the traditionalists, grew up during the Great Depression.
Due to this turbulent time, the traditionalists view work as an unwavering commitment (Beekman, 2011). People alive during that time had to focus

on the physiological needs; the lack of jobs meant no money, which in turn meant struggles for food. This leads to members of this generation placing value on having a job in order to feed themselves allowing them to move passed this physiological need.

Example 2

The next generation that followed, the Baby Boomers, grew up during a time with a healthy economy. The better financial times mean that Boomers see their job as an expression of their self-interests and a path to fulfillment (Beekman, 2011). While they are hard workers, they view their jobs as an extension of who they are and because of this they are not loyal to a company, instead they are loyal to themselves and will move on if they don't find job satisfaction (Beekman, 2011).

Looking at the two examples given, did one generation have it easier than the other. Traditionalist struggled to get jobs, so they value jobs more. They are working to fill their lower level needs, while Boomers have already had this need met, so their focus is elsewhere. Due to this the traditionalist might have the perception that the Boomers did in fact have it easier. However the truth of the matter is that the Boomers were just focused on a different need.

The next piece of social Identity formation is explained using Erikson's life stages. For the purpose of this section the focus will be specifically at stages five and eight. As it has been pointed out, the ages outlined in figure 3 are generalities, meaning that they are not set in stone. Not every individual will move from one stage to the next

at the same age, so in order to cover Adults (eighteen years of age and older) start with

Ego Identity vs. Role Confusion and Intimacy vs. isolation. (Stage five and six).

Adults in their 20's to early 30's are between stages five & six (Erikson, 1959).

They are focused on becoming independent, and begin looking into the future in terms of

careers, relationships, and building those relationships (McLeod S. A., 2013). This is the

stage that most millennials fall in currently. During this stage young adults are learning

and adapting to the roles that they will fulfill as adults. This identity may develop

through experimentation (Erikson, 1959; McLeod S. A., 2013). Older generations have

already moved beyond this stage which, unfortunately, causes them to view this

experimentation as a waste of time, as they have already navigated their way and fulfilled

their roles as adults.

Figure 3 (McLeod, 2013)

It is important to point out that every generation goes through these different life

stages, just as the Millennials are rebelling and finding their way, Traditionalist did the

same thing. The degree or approach to the rebellion may differ between each generation

based of societal norms or expectations. These differences occur faster and are more easily seen when new significant discrepancies between biological and sociological maturity, and when that gap is raised to the level of social consciousness (Lambert, 1972).

Nonetheless, since they are in different stages, they have different goals and expectations. As a result of these different life stages both generations are focused on two very different goals. With the goals of the generations that have been covered, one can see, these goals contradict one another. One generation wants independence and strives to set their own way in life while the latter aims to lead and direct the other down, what they perceive, to be a correct path. This of course fuels the animosity between generations. This in itself is the generation gap, each generation trying to identify which direction to go with their lives. It is important to note that this is not the only cause of the generation gap.

Many other things have a role in this gap. Social identity formation has displayed how the different level of needs and the different life stages can cause each generation to place value in different things. They are part of a group, and they will enhance the status of their group and they will discriminate against other groups (McLeod S. A., 2008). Each generation was raised differently, and is motivated by different things based on current life stage and what needs are currently being meet. The next wedge in the gap, is caused by social construction.

How they were raised

Different generations apply value to different things, hold different expectations, and different goals. All of these things were presented to the different generations as they

grew up. Back in the twenties and thirties having a job was valued, today they are as well, but now certain jobs are valued more (Beekman, 2011). This difference of assigned value, worth, or norm, is causal of the gaps in the generations.

Traditionalist focused on work, this focus would be carried on by the next generation. They were financially conservative, which will lead to a change in the economy that also plays a role in the next generation (Beekman, 2011). Lastly they were cautious, this would impact the ways that adults and children interacted. Remember, they set and obeyed the rules. Children who stepped out of line were corrected quickly. All of these attributes played a role in how their children, the Baby Boomers, were raised. The parents in this generation focused so much on the rules and work that their children rebelled against the idea of being work focused, and instead would make work an extension of who they are (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008; Beekman, 2011). Just as previous generations have gravitated towards the aspects of the Traditionalist that they liked, and moved away from those that they disliked, the next generation would move away from the idea and life styles that they disliked.

Once again, Generation X parents planned every step of Generation Y's life (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Along with this plan Generation X parents wanted to ensure that little Johnny or little Rebecca understand how much mommy and daddy care for them. This is a direct result of this generations view on their parents and the lack of time they got with them due to work (Beekman, 2011). This lack of attention resulted in Generation X parents becoming hyper involved with their children. To ensure that little Johnny and little Rebecca knew how important they were everyone started to get a medal for everything.

Social construction is not the only thing that drives people to be or act a certain way. An individual's identity also plays a role in this. As explained in the next section, people may have many identities. These identities are a mix of who the person is and how society sees the person.

Multiple Identities

Cultural and social theories of identity both assume that individual and collective identities are multiple rather than singular, that they are dynamic rather than static, and that they are volatile rather than consistent. In addition, they propose that identity is something that "we do", rather than something that "we are" (Van Zoonen, 2013). The difference between what "we do" and what "we are" is call cognitive dissonance. Put more appropriately, cognitive dissonance is the gap between what an individual is and who people think they are. For example, that really nice person that never talks and seems very well mannered versus the sociopath that has three women locked in his basement. That, obliviously, is an extreme example, but the point is there nonetheless. Everyone has some level of cognitive dissonance, and will work to close that gap in order to best align those identities (Van Zoonen, 2013). Worth pointing out is the fact that the greater the difference between the person's identity and the identity that everyone has of that individual, the more likely psychological problems are to occur (Van Zoonen, 2013). This presents a problem for Millennials as they enter the work environment. Millennials exhibit a higher level of entitlement than the Baby Boomers and Generation X (Allen, Allen, Karl, & White, 2015). This higher level of entitlement is who "they are," and how they see themselves. However, this is not how society sees them, so it creates a conflict. As Millennials work to align these two views they earn to stereotype of being whinny.

This however is not what they are striving to accomplish. The goal of the Millennials is to understand why they aren't seen for what they are worth, or put more appropriately what they think they are worth.

Identity and Technology

The generation gaps use to be upward of forty years apart, now they are occurring within a half that time (Lambert, 1972). Eighty years ago most people grew up, lived, and died in the same general geographical location. During the early stages of life people learn from their parents and this learning is the foundation that individuals started their lives with. If a family is a close unit then the child is directly impacted by the parents, and the grandparents, and possible the great grandparents. Because of the top down parenting, major changes will be slow to occur as the parents values are based off those of the grandparents and so on.

However, with the advent of the automobile, trains, aircraft, and now Internet, people are more spread out than ever before. The more a family is spread out, or withdrawn, the faster changes can occur as the learning of values now come from multiple sources. Along with the ability to travel comes the emersion into diverse groups and by doing so they are being exposed to large numbers of different people. As they do this they will likely pick friends who are the most like them (Groeger, 2011). As they begin to hang out with people that they identify with, more of their true identity will come out. Those changes now have a fostered environment in which to emerge, this enable people, groups, or even generations to reinvent themselves.

The ability to travel has also allowed people to either further hide their personality and build new identities, or escape their current identity and allow more of their

personality to be seen. These changes are easier to make happen since individuals can now travel away from the family unit to "find their own way." Recall that young adults in their twenties to early thirties are between Erickson's stages five and six (McLeod S. A., 2013; Erikson, 1959). They are focused on becoming independent, and begin looking into the future in terms of careers, relationships, and building those relationships. During this stage young adults are learning and adapting to the roles that they will fulfill as adults. This identity may develop through experimentation (McLeod S. A., 2013). As these changes are either hidden or exposed, the gap begins, then the offspring quickly further distance themselves from the norms of the grandparents. Aside from distancing themselves, generations are becoming more global than ever before.

Generational Globalization. One generation more than any other has globalized; currently Millennials play an important and critical role (Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков, Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016). As previously mentioned, Millennials are focused on change and the need to change is a motivational factor in their lives (Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков, Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016). Technology, social networks and social movements have enabled Millennials to have an active voice in the global society. As a result of this it is becoming increased common to see young Millennials in key positions, which will bring them closer to transform the world and meet their needs (Риверо Гаска, Ольховиков, Rivero Gas, & Olkhovikov, 2016). Unlike every other generation, Millennials were born into technology, social networks and social movements. They are familiar with its use and navigate the technological waters with ease. The abundant supply of technology however comes with a price and has developed into a need which is outlined below.

Media effects on each generation

Media is everywhere you look, from things as simple as newspapers to the more current e-device, almost impossible to avoid. Drawing on Social Cognitive Theory, it is easy to see how people tend to partner with like-minded individuals. The goal, rather it is conscious or otherwise, is to validate yourself. During this process, if you cannot find a group that shares your thoughts and opinions you will likely move to another group, depending on how strongly you believe in your idea. This can produce either faulty or truthful thinking (Bandura, 2001). The millennials, more so than any other generation, have been exposed to media in all forms. The exposure provides them more opportunities than any other generation to form perceptions about the world that surrounds them.

Perception is a person's primary form of cognitive contact with the world around them (Efron, 1969). As the saying goes, perception is reality. According to Efron (1969), all conceptual knowledge is based upon or derived from this primary form of awareness. Based off our experiences we form assumptions about what things mean, individuals tones, and the world around us. Efron (1969) goes on to explain that the exact nature of perception has never been adequately defined or conceptualized. How could it be, the perception of one person might be very different than that of another. Is the glass half full or half empty? The answer depends on multiple triggers. A person's background, how they were raised, social environment, and even their mood can affect their perception. More importantly, that perception is fluid and can change day by day depending those same triggers. Which, as explained earlier, is a direct result of the environment in which they were raised. This environment today is vastly different than

that of Generation X, the Baby Boomer, and the Traditionalist. As a result of this, the

perceptions that Millennials have are also vastly different than those of Generation X, the

Baby Boomers, and the Traditionalists. These differences further drive a wedge between

the generations as older generations struggle to understand why Millennials behave and

act the way that they do. Part of this understanding includes understanding technology

which has created a felt need among Millennials.

Maslow's Needs Theory and Online Social Use. Maslow's hierarchy of needs explains

how people progress from desiring basic needs, such as food and water, to the safety

needs, and so on (Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987). While Maslow's hierarchy is still a

part of the growth and development of the Millennials, a new hierarchy has also

Figure 4 (Gerstein, 2014)

developed as technology has increased. New needs theories have been presented to

include the use of this technology that for the most part flow the same way and have

approximately the same number of levels as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, they just

incorporate how online social needs are meet (Gerstein, 2014). Much like Maslow's

original needs theory, we start at the bottom and work our way up, coming back down as needed in order to keep the lower level needs met.

As technology has improved the use of online social media has exacerbated the effects of cultivation theory. Millennials are more and more plugged in. It's no longer just television and periodicals delivering messages to people. Devices that use every different medium to deliver messages now almost constantly surround humans. One example of the effects of cultivation theory is "mean world syndrome." This shows that long-term exposure to television (now expanded to include social media), in which violence is virtually inescapable, tends to cultivate the image of a relatively mean and dangerous world (Gerbner, 1998). This one syndrome ties perception and cultivation theory together. As people observe violence through media they form a perception that impacts their reality.

Furthermore, social media now allows people to form a conformation bias where they believe the world is a violent place and can easily find evidence to support their conclusion, which further skews their perception of the real world. At its worse, "mean world syndrome" can cause people to shut themselves off from the outside world, further building this image of a relatively mean and dangerous world (Gerbner, 1998). This can easily be seen with Millennials as they strive for "safe spaces." Unfortunately, previous generations were not raised in an environment flooded so heavily with media. Because of this they lack understanding, older generations resort to making fun of millennials for this behavior. Instead, older generations need to understand that Millennials have been bombarded with images of violence, police corruption, and a country at war for nearly a decade and a half. As a result, the world has in fact been painted as a very violent place,

resulting in this want/need for a "safe space". All of this is a result of lack of education on the topic. Previous generations do not understand this phenomenon because they have not experienced it. Traditionalist for example were aware of World War II. They however were not bombarded with imagery from that war.

Media and the Rewired Self. In addition to painting a picture of the world, media also paints a picture of self. Once again Millennials have been exposed to this far more than any other generation with regards to exposure over life time. However it is important to note that both the impression of the world and of one's self is an experience shared by all generations to some degree. With that said, over time people develop a view of what their body should look like, what things they should like, what's right with the world, and what's wrong with it. There are multiple factors that impact the construction of this image (Borzekowski & Bayer, 2005). Body image is one of these things that can be influenced by media. Each person will develop their own views on what their body should look like. Although media is often portrayed as the sole source of body image issues, studies have shown that family and peers also share the role as a main source of influences (Borzekowski & Bayer, 2005). In addition to our view of the world, media can have a direct influence on its audiences and it can affect audiences indirectly by altering one's perceptions of social norms (Borzekowski & Bayer, 2005). If the media makes you believe that a normal healthy person looks like _____; then there is something wrong with you if you don't look like _____. The formation of body image issues is most prevalient among the youth.

Media hasn't just stopped with body image, it has began to transform societial views on sexuality as well. Sex and sexual orientation has become more prevalent in

mass media and as a result, research has indicated that society is becoming more accepting of sexual diversity (Gauntlett, 2008). While previous generation were forced to hide there sexuality (not withstanding free sexuality of the Baby Boomers during the sixties and seventies), Millennials have grown up in a time were they are free to express their sexuality (Gauntlett, 2008). This openiess of sexuality can be viewed very adversly by older generations familiar with a time when such opoen sexual expression would have been prohibited.

In addition to changing people's lens of the world, media has also changed the way people think or at least the way people believe they think. How many people say they are excellent multi-taskers? The truth of the matter is that the brain is not wired that way. The human brain is not a multi-processor, however that doesn't seem to stop people from believing that they are in fact capable of doing so. However, cognitive load theory emphasizes the capacity limitations of working memory (Gardner, 2008). Does this mean that it is not possible to learn this behavior? Gardner (2008) acknowledges that the research for the impact of media layering is inadequate for determining the cognitive effect, but it does provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the potential consequences of this behavior. What this means is that trying to multi-task might do more harm than good. Current technology allows people to bounce from one thing to the next; watching television while checking Facebook; reading a report while listening to the radio; talking with the wife on the phone while doing anything. What tends to happen is a person attention becomes more focused on one thing and blocks out the other. As shown, media has a very strong impact on each generation. Some generations are more

effected than others, and future generations will be even more impacted than current generations.

Reinvention

It can be complicated to condense a generation into a neat package; generations do not have obvious beginnings and endings, nor do individual cohort members possess universal characteristics. Nevertheless, diverse and distributed as they may be, all generations are bound together by a compelling sense of their generational reference group (Green, 2010). The boomers will be the focus of this section; however, the principals identified in this section can be applied to every generation.

How does one generation go from being pot smoking hippies to business owners, political leaders, and mentors for today's youth? The simple answer is reinvention. Reinvention is not a fast process, it requires time. Reinvention is the process of changing ones identity. To reinvent one's self, the individual must first get in touch with what the individual really wants in his/her life. This creates space for who the individual really is to emerge. One can't possibly know who they are going to become before they start the process. For the purpose of this section, it would be the reinvention from pot smoking hippies to leaders.

Looking at generation reinvention is a little different that looking at individual reinvention. Generational reinvention will focus on the generation as a whole rather than individuals. For example The Baby Boomers, who during their youth in the late sixties into the seventies were noted for their free love movement, pot smoking, and free spiritedness; as noted earlier they saw the world revolving around them. More than anything, work has been a defining part of both, their self-worth and their evaluation of

others. Their life style revolves around the fact that they live to work (Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008; Beekman, 2011).

So what has caused this generation to reinvent itself? To start, look back at the different life stages as presented my McLeod (2013), identified as Figure 3. Focus specifically at stages seven and eight. These stages are the stages that the Baby Boomers are currently in. As the Baby Boomers have aged they have moved from stage to stage. As they have moved from each stage they have had to reinvent their generation.

Consider for a moment if a pot-head walked up and offered advice. Would anyone listen to that advice? Not likely. So in order to advance, the generation as a whole had to change its outward appearance, its values, and its approaches, basically recreating itself in order to progress. Not everything was left behind, the old days of smoking pot are starting to be seen again, and who do you suppose is responsible for passing the laws to make smoking pot legal?

Every generation must make changes. Most of the life stages can be made given some time, however some will require the generation to reinvent itself. What reinvention will be required of Generation X and the Millennials? Moreover, how will this reinvention effect the next generation. Based off the previous cycles, is it possible to predict what the next generation might be like? Well thanks to technological improvements and the demand for instant gratification it is likely to see short attention spans and the integration of technology and media in learning (webinars, social networking sites, Avatars) along with personalized learning through customized environment (Prensky, 2001). With the Millennials growing up in a generation were everyone won a medal, might this have an effect on how they raise their children? Will

this complete lack of discipline cause the next generation to come full circle, time outs going away and physical punishment coming back?

Findings

Each generation is at a different stage in their development. These different stages create different needs which that generation values (Erikson, 1959). As this generation interact with one other they must first understand these differences while finding a commonality under which they can bond. Despite their differences, the generations all find value with regard to what they do (Venter, 2016). The members of each generation must understand that all other generations have their own inherit strengths and weaknesses. Additionally each generation must learn that respect and open-mindedness will allow for meaningful communication and understanding between one another (Venter, 2016).

As the generations continue to work together they can mentor one another to improve communication skills and task completion. Baby Boomers can convey their team-oriented outlook while Generation Xers can demonstrate problem solving skills (Beekman, 2011). Millennials are not to be left out of this mentoring leadership. Millennials bring with them the knowledge of emerging technology along with the knowledge of how to use it efficiently and effectively (Beekman, 2011). Millennials, like every other generation, want to make a difference and they should be encouraged to continue to contribute, they are after all the leaders of the future (Beekman, 2011).

Benefits

The benefits of understanding the information within this paper is far reaching. Managing employees from multiple different ages is nothing new, however the

challenges of doing so effectively with four vastly different generation is new (Beekman, 2011). Utilizing the information with in this paper will enable employers to effectively lead and build teams within their offices. This of course will create a more productive work center capable of tackling tasks assigned to them. Additionally it will build a sense of loyalty which will allow employers to hold onto its employees (Beekman, 2011).

Aside from traditional employment, the military can also benefit from the understanding of generational differences. The military constantly takes on new recruits and the majority of those recruits are between the ages of eight-teen and twenty-two, while the leaders of today's military are between the ages of forty and sixty. Clearly there is an immense difference between what the leaders value and what the new recruits value. Communication between the two is paramount as our national security is at stake. Understanding how to communicate, both up and down the chain, will allow both leader and subordinate to meet our nations goals.

Benefits, however don't end with employers, parents as well can use this information as they communicate with their children (to include adult children). Understanding which life stage the children are at will provide parents with an understanding of which psychosocial crisis they are facing. Inversely children will better understand how to communicate with their parents. In addition to having a better understanding of each other, they will also gain an understanding of the ways in which each other communicate. For example if the parents are Baby Boomers they rely more on face-to-face communication, while millennials rely more on computer-mediated communication (Venter, 2016). As both parties learn to understand this difference they will enhance their communication with one another (Venter, 2016).

Future Research

Currently, each generation is defined by the period of time in which they were born. However one area that might benefit from future research would be the formations of generations based off the generation of the parents. For example if two children were born in the 1985, they would both be considered Millennials. One child's parent is a Baby Boomer and the others parent is a Generation Xer. For this example, would both children truly be Millennials? Would their values be in line with one another or would the two children have vastly different values based off their experiences and on those of their parents. Additionally what are the effects of two children raised by the same parents but born within different generations? For example Baby Boomers have one child in 1975 and a second in 1990. What commonalities would they share and how would they differ? This research would allow a better understanding of how each generation is actually formed and provide a better perspective than simply labeling generations based of the year of their birth.

In addition to further research based on generations based on parental generation, there is currently little information on the generations of underdeveloped nations. Does the lack of development create differences and are these differences a result of lacking technology that today's millennials have access to? What are the effects of this absence of technology on the formation of new generations and the values of those generation? The understanding of this information could provide further insight to the effects of technology on each generation.

Lastly, what will the next generation be like? Is there currently enough information to allow psychologist to accurately predict the behaviors and values of the

next generation? This knowledge would allow existing generations to anticipate the
needs of future generations which would allow proactive changes in education, work
centers, etc.

Conclusion

There are many things that make Millennials different from every other
generation. From the onset each generation has been raised by people with vastly
different life goals and different focus. During the overview of each generation, very
little similarities were observed. The climate of the culture was vastly different from one
generation to the next, which resulted in the values of each generation being different.

As each generation began to form its identities it also began to move through
Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Erikson's life stages. While every generation progress
through both of these, Millennials have the added need to progress through Maslow's
hierarchy of needs as it relates to technology. It is also important to note that each
generation is in a different stage of Erikson's model, which would imply that each
generation is facing its own psychosocial crisis. This psychosocial crisis influences what
things motive each generation based on their current life stage.

Aside from the motivations, each generation also have vastly different values.
These values can be formed by many things, of major importance is the way that each
generation is raised; were their parents always at work, were they disciplinarians
(physical punishment or time outs) and so on. In addition to the way they were raised,
the social-political environment as they grew up will also have an impact on the values
that each generation begins to develop. Please note, that both of these factors are

determined by the adult generations of the time. This would reflect that a portion of the values and motives of each generation is determined partly by previous generations.

Along the way each generations struggles to identify their true "self". Cognitive dissonance was explained as the gap between what an individual is and who people believe they are. This gap causes people to look for individuals that are more like themselves. Previous generations were forced to find these groups of like-minded individuals within the local geographic area. As technology improved people have been able to venture further and further away from home in order to "find themselves."

Millennials, however, can span the country and world, by way of the internet, in ways that no previous generation could. This allows them to align themselves with social norms of other cultures that other generations would find less than agreeable. The Millennials, much like every other generation will look to reinvent itself, however millennials will be able to do this on a global scale. This explains why the millennials are a global generation unlike the generations previously mentioned in this paper. No other generation has been global; China, for example does not have the same generations as America, except that they too have millennials.

In addition to the internet, media has had a profound impact on the millennial generation. As explained previously, people tend to seek out other likeminded individuals with the goal of validating one's self. Media covers the full spectrum, from far right to far left. This creates easy access for all generations to substantiate their view points and beliefs. If you think Millennials are lazy, you can easily find sources to support your claim. If you believe that the world owes you something, that to can easily

be substantiated. These things help each generation form perceptions about each other, furthermore allowing them to confirm their biases about the other generation(s).

After taking into account the differences addressed with regard to the way each generation was raised, the social-political environment, different life stages, excreta…Millennials also face a need to move along a social hierarchy with regards to technology. Unplugging a millennial today would be much like taking a typewriter from a traditionalist in the 1940's. They have been programed to believe that social media, and the internet are a part of who they are because of the media that surrounds them, as explained through cultivation theory. This also explains millennials view of the world. In summation, Millennials are no different than any other generation. Their generation has been shaped by vastly different things than the preceding generations. However, much like all the previous generation, they are struggling to find their place in this world. It is imperative that all generation have an understanding of what factors form other generations in order to understand what motivates them, and what influences them. Additionally, this understanding provides insight into what each generation values and why. Using this knowledge will allow all generations to have a better understanding of why 'we' do what 'we' do.

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