Relationships between Generation, Personality and Work Values

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Welcome

- Thank you for participating in the Generation, Personality and Work Values survey at Linked:HR.
- The following are preliminary results.
Study Rationale

- Understanding personality assists organizations with:
  - team building
  - employee selection
  - job analysis
  - training design
  - customer service
  - management and leadership development
  - coaching and counseling
  - career development
  - conflict management

- Alignment between work values and the nature of one’s work is directly related to satisfaction and performance
The research questions were...

- What is the relationship between generation and personality?
- What is the relationship between generation and work values?
Generations

TRADITIONALS
Ages 69+

BABY BOOMERS
Ages 52-68

GENERATION X
Ages 51-32

MILLENNIALS
Ages 18-31
Personality Traits

The following personality traits were explored in this study:

- **Openness**
  - “the openness factor addresses one’s range of interests”

- **Conscientiousness**
  - refers to the “number of goals on which one focuses”

- **Extraversion**
  - “one’s comfort level with relationships”

- **Agreeableness**
  - “refers to a person’s propensity to defer to others”

- **Neuroticism**
  - “refers to a person’s ability to withstand stress”

Personality Instrument

The following instrument measured personality traits:

- Big Five Inventory
- Developed for the purpose of “distinguishing the behavior of one human being from that of another”
- Based on the work of Allport and Odbert in the 1930s, Cattell in the 1940s and Fiske in late 1940s
- Created by John, Naumann and Soto

Work Values Components

The following values were explored in this study:

- **Total Rewards**
  - Included items such as “a reasonable benefits package” and “a good retirement package”

- **Satisfaction**
  - Included items such as “enjoying the work that I do” and “respecting my colleagues and co-workers”

- **Freedom**
  - Included items such as “freedom to do my tasks or job uninterrupted” and “freedom to do pretty much what I want on my job”

- **Impact**
  - Included items such as “having the results of my work significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people” and “the capability to contribute to decisions made in my organization”
Work Values Components

- **Challenge**
  - Included items such as “a challenging job” and “variety in the tasks that I do”

- **Prestige**
  - Included items such as “a salary that is well above the average person’s salary” and “the prestige or reputation of the organization for which I work”

- **Work/life Balance**
  - Included items such as “working Monday through Friday and having my weekends free” and “flexibility to work at home”

- **Routine**
  - Included items such as “holding an administrative position in my organization” and “performing similar tasks each work day”
The values survey items were developed by researchers at Vanderbilt University for the study entitled “Work Preferences, Life Values and Personal Views of Top Math/Science Graduate Students and the Profoundly Gifted: Developmental Changes and Gender Differences during Emerging Adulthood and Parenthood” (2009). Permission granted by author Kimberley Ferriman Robertson.

The value categories were derived via a factor analysis.

The following factors were identified: total rewards, satisfaction, freedom, impact, challenge, prestige, work/life balance and routine.
Methods

- An online survey was administered to members of Linked:HR, a large group on LinkedIn.
- Additional information available at www.jillianclarey.weebly.com
Population and Sample

Population
- Linked:HR (#1 Human Resources Group)
  - 461,897 members (as of 8.11.2011)

Sample
- 1,470 respondents
- 1,276 useable responses

Generation
- Millennials: 18%
- Generation Xers: 52%
- Baby Boomers: 30%
- Traditionals: 0%
Sample

Generation

- Millennials
- Generation Xers
- Baby Boomers
- Traditionals

52% Millennials
30% Generation Xers
18% Baby Boomers
0% Traditionals
Findings

Generation and Personality
Baby Boomers scored significantly higher than Millennials and Generation Xers.

This suggests that Baby Boomers may be more open than Millennials and Generation Xers.

The effect, however, is very small (about 5% of variability).
Generation and Conscientiousness

- Millennials scored significantly lower than Baby Boomers
  - This suggests that Millennials may be less focused, disciplined and methodical than Baby Boomers
  - The effect, however, is miniscule (only 0.4%) and probably has little practical importance
Generation and Extraversion

- No significant relationship was identified
Millennials and Generation Xers scored lower than Baby Boomers

- This suggests that Millennials and Generation Xers may be more challenging than Baby Boomers
- The effect, however, was very small (about 2% of the variability)
Millennials and Generation Xers scored higher than Baby Boomers

- This suggests that Millennials and Generation Xers may have less tolerance to stress than Baby Boomers
- The effect, however, was very small (about 3% of the variability)
Findings

Generations and Values
Generation and Total Rewards

- Millennials scored higher than Generation Xers and Baby Boomers
  - This suggests Millennials could value total rewards more than Generation Xers and Baby Boomers
- Generation Xers scored higher than Baby Boomers
  - This suggests that Generation Xers value total rewards more than Baby Boomers
- The effect, however, is small (about 3% of the variability)
Generation and Satisfaction

- There was no significant relationship found between these two variables.
- This suggests that generation does not impact the importance attributed to satisfaction at work.
Millennials scored lower than Generation Xers and Baby Boomers

- This suggests Millennials may value Freedom less than Generation Xers and Baby Boomers
- The effect, however, is very small (only about 1% of the variability)
Millennials and Generation Xers scored lower than Baby Boomers

- This suggests Millennials and Generation Xers place less value on completing impactful work than their Baby Boomer counterparts
- The effect, however, is small (only about 2% of the variability)
Generation and Challenge

- Generation Xers and Baby Boomers scored significantly higher than Millennials
  - This suggests Generation Xers and Baby Boomers value challenging work more than Millennials
  - The effect, however, is very small (only about 1% of the variability)
Generation and Prestige

- No significant relationship was found between these two variables.
- This suggests that the three generations value prestige about the same.
Generation and Routine

- Millennials scored higher than Baby Boomers
  - Suggests Millennials may value completing routine work more than Baby Boomers
  - Impacts about 2% of the variability
Millennials and Generation Xers scored higher than Baby Boomers

- This suggests Millennials and Generation Xers value work/life balance more than Baby Boomers
- Impacts about 2% of the variability
Implications

- The study results challenge the notion of “generational differences”
  - The differences in personality and work values are much smaller than expected given the current emphasis on this topic (seminars, books, training programs, etc.)

- Are “Generations at Work” seminars/training valuable?

- Are programmatic initiatives simply based on stereotypes, rather than research?
  - Example: Are HR initiatives specifically designed for the Baby Boomer generation worthwhile?
Limitations of the Study

- Could identified differences be attributed to age, life stage, experience level or generation?
  - For instance, a 20 year old may accept more routine work than a seasoned professional simply because of inexperience. That same person at age 40 might value challenge differently. Longitudinal studies are needed to verify.

- Study delimited to HR professionals who were members of Linkedin:HR
  - There could be differences between this population and the general population

- Cultural influence?
  - People surveyed from 75 different countries
  - Some questions may not have been valid for respondents outside of the US
Thank you for participation and for previewing this presentation!

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