Comparing Generation X and Generation Y on their Preferred Emotional Leadership Style

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Summary

Research Question:	What are the differences and similarities between employees of Generation X and Generation Y and do these generations prefer different emotional leadership styles?
Methods:	Empirical study across different organizations using an online survey to examine potential differences in the emotional leadership style preferences of Generation X and Y.
Results:	The results of the theoretical part demonstrate an increasing tendency of similarities between Generation X and Y with respect to work factors and work values. Furthermore, the results of the empirical part demonstrate statistically significant differences between these generational cohorts concerning the visionary leadership style, which is preferred by Generation Y.
Structure of the Article:	1. Introduction; 2. Literature Review; 3. Research Methodology; 4. Empirical Results; 5. Conclusion; 6. About the Author; 7. Bibliography

Introduction

The importance of human resources to modern organizations seems to be continuously growing. In times of globalization, organizations are open and active systems that must constantly adapt to the requirements of their environment in order to secure their existence. In 2011, the German Corporation for Human Resource Management (DGFP) published a study emphasizing that a wide range of trends affect organizations, including: demographic development, changes in values, IT-Revolution, globalization, and resource scarcity ((DGFP), 2012).

At present, in Germany, three generations are working together in organizations: the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. These generations grew up in different time periods, and it is no surprise that they therefore have different worldviews, expectations, and values. These differences result in different preferred methods of working and interaction (Glass, 2007). Managing generational differences in the workforce has become a topic of increasing interest for managers and researchers over the last decades. Much of this interest is based on the assumption that generations differ significantly in their goals, expectations, and work values (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Since employees are the focus of organizations, and organizations are characterized by a generationally diverse workforce, the situation for modern leaders seems to have become complex. Organizations have focused their attention on effective leadership and employee satisfaction as potential influences on organizational success (Salahuddin, 2010).

Literature Review

A multigenerational workforce has major effects on organizations, especially for managers and leaders, who must be able to handle the diversity in order to operate productively (Salopek, 2006). The importance of generational differences within the field of organizational behavior has grown over the years. This growth has resulted in the recognition that generational characteristics play a significant role in how employees prefer to be led and managed (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Salahuddin, 2010). Jeffries and Hunte (2004) address the same issue by stating that the unique characteristics of generational groups provide leaders and managers with a starting point from which to achieve greater understanding of their employees and their employees` leadership preferences (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004).

Generational research reaches back to 1952, when the sociologist Karl Mannheim described a generational group, often referred to as cohort, as a collective group of people

born and raised in a similar location, who have experienced similar historical and social events. According to this description of Karl Mannheim, people from different generations share common experiences that influence their thoughts and behavior. Therefore, a discussion of generational differences often considers the characteristics and values of each generation (Mannheim, 1970).

Research on generational differences has grown over the years, but the definition of the term generation and the context it is used in have remained much the same. This consistency is reflected in the work of Smola and Sutton (2002), who describe a generational group as a group of people who are born in the same time span and share the same historical and social life events and life experiences. Therefore, people of the same generation may experience the world in similar ways and share common values and views (Patterson, 2007; Smola & Sutton, 2002). This point of view is shared by Johnson and Johnson, who define a generation as "a group of individuals born and living contemporaneously, who have common knowledge and experiences that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors" (Johnson & Johnson, 2010).

One point of critique is that grouping individuals into generations and describing general characteristics is stereotyping. Every human being is an individual and it cannot be assumed that people of a generation think or act in exactly the same way (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Madera, Kapoor, Kapoor, & Solomon, 2011).

Another common criticism related to generational differences is that there is a lack of empirical research to validate the significance of these differences (Salahuddin, 2010). Additionally, the assumption that individuals are more influenceable in their younger years is supported by research, but the assumption that all individuals of a generation experience the same early events in the same way is not fully supported (Giancola, 2006).

However, the author of this article agrees with Smola and Sutton (2002), who argue that it is unavoidable to recognize that people who are born in the same time span have common influential experiences that lead to similar views and values. As a consequence, such life experiences are what tend to distinguish one generation from another. This view is often referred to as generational cohort theory (Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, & Brown, 2007; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

On the other hand, a few researchers have presented two major arguments against a generational cohort theory: the "cusp effect" and the "crossover effect" (Arsenault, 2004; Schewe & Noble, 2000).

The cusp effect refers to people born at the beginning and end of generations, or "on the cusp". These people are often called "tweeners". Therefore, these "tweeners" might have the same defining and memorable events in their lives as one generation, but are categorized into a different generational cohort according to their birth year (Arsenault, 2004).

The crossover effect, defined by Schewe and Noble (2000), describes the assumption that very significant events (e.g. John F. Kennedy's assassination or the Challenger incident) effect everyone, no matter what generation they belong to (Schewe & Noble, 2000). Although some researchers may say that these two effects lead away from generational differences, the author of this article agrees with Arsenault (2004), who states that these effects can be used positively to demonstrate that there are similarities between different generations.

Before exploring the characteristics of the current generations in the workforce, it is necessary to consider the inconsistency among researchers regarding how to best group and name the generations. The boundaries of generational groups are generally defined by year of birth or age, but current research is inconclusive as to when one generation ends and a new one begins (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000).

The eldest generational group is the Traditionalists, also called Veterans or the Silent Generation. The birth scope for this generation is variously reported as beginning in 1925 and earlier and ending in 1945. The next generational group is the Baby Boomer generation, often called Boomers. There is little agreement on the birth year of the Boomers; it is variously reported as beginning between 1940 and 1946 and ending anywhere between 1960 and 1964. The following generational group is the Generation X or Xers. There is even less agreement on the time span of the birth year of this generation. The birth year begins somewhere in the early 1960s and ends anywhere between 1979 and 1982. The next generational group is Generation Y, also called Millennials or Nexters. The birth year of this generation is variously stated as beginning between 1979 and 1982 and ending in the late 1990s (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Patterson, 2007; Reynolds, 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002). The latest generational group is Generation Z or the Mobile Generation. The birth year of this generation is mostly reported to be after the year 2000 (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015).

The definitions of generational boundaries are inconsistent in the literature. For the purpose of this study, the author of the article defined the boundaries on the basis of the above mentioned literature as follwos: Traditionalist (1925 – 1945), Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964), Generation X (1965 – 1980), Generation Y (1981 – 2000), and Generation Z (born after 2000).

Generation X

The first generation that is examined is Generation X. As summarized by Smola and Sutton (2002), members of Generation X grew up with financial, family, and social insecurity, rapid change, and great diversity, which led to a sense of individualism over collectivism (Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998; Smola & Sutton, 2002). Therefore, they are more skeptical, less loyal, and fiercely independent (Glass, 2007). This point-of-view is supported by the fact

that Generation X's childhood was defined by both parents working fulltime or by only one parent supporting them due to the increased divorce rate. This situation created a generation of children who were forced to take care of themselves (Kupperschmidt, 2000) and have therefore learned to be quite self-reliant and adaptable to change (Patterson, 2007).

The family and social situations of the Xers in their younger age also seems to be responsible for their perception of work. This generation wants to balance their private and professional lives rather than spending all of their time at work (Bennett, Pitt, & Price, 2012; Patterson, 2007; Sessa et al., 2007). This is emphasized in the work of Glass (2007), who writes that Xers are likely to change jobs if a new one offers flexible working hours that allows greater work/life balance (Glass, 2007). However, this does not necessarily mean that they are only 'me' orientated or selfish. In fact, they seek to find balance between doing a good job and at the same time maximizing their own individual goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2010). This is emphasized by a study by Smola and Sutton (2002), which points out that Xers feel strongly that an indication of one's worth is how hard they work (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Nevertheless, they may have more commitment to their own careers than to their organizations and tend to be more loyal to their profession than to their employer (Yu & Miller, 2005). The reason for their loyalty to their profession may be that Xers are very interested in personal satisfaction and look for any opportunity to improve their working skills (Sessa et al., 2007).

Kupperschmidt (2000) describes Generation X in the workplace as technologically competent and very comfortable with diversity, change, and competition (Kupperschmidt, 2000). This is supported by Lester et al. (2012), who states that members of Generation X are experienced with technology that is common today in the workplace. However, they are not experienced with certain aspects of technology that developed after they entered the workforce, like interactive and/or social media (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012).

An important characteristic of the Xers in the workplace is that they are very result-orientated and focus on the outcome above the process of work (Glass, 2007). Additionally, they bring well-honed, practical approaches to problem solving and prefer an autonomous working style (Kupperschmidt, 2000). According to Salahuddin (2010), workers of Generation X can be motivated by a flexible working schedule, an informal work environment, and a balanced amount of supervision (Salahuddin, 2010). The reason for these preferences may tie into the Xers' attitude towards work; they are more likely to feel that one should work hard even when a supervisor is not around (Smola & Sutton, 2002). This is proven in a study by Jurkiewicz (2000), who has found that Xers value "freedom from supervision" more than Baby Boomers (Jurkiewicz, 2000).

Overall, the image of Xers is often negative in the literature, where they are labelled selfish. However, it is important to recognize that what may be viewed as selfish may also be viewed as independent and autonomous (Jurkiewicz, 2000).

Generation Y

Generation Y, often referred to as Millennials, Nexters, or the Net-Generation (Sessa et al., 2007), is the youngest generation in the current workforce. In the literature, the picture of Generation Y is very different from those of previous generational cohorts. Howe and Strauss (2009) describe this generation as affluent, educated, and ethnically diverse. They are the first generation to become a worldwide group due to the availability of technology and the opportunity to move across borders and travel all over the world (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Jeffries & Hunte, 2004).

In particular, seven characteristics describe this generation: team-orientated, special, achieving, pressured to do well, confident, conventional, and sheltered (Howe & Strauss, 2009).

For his study, "The Net Generation: a Strategic Investigation", Tapscott (2008) interviewed 9,442 people (including 7,685 members of Generation Y) from 12 different countries. According to this study, collaboration, freedom, customization, personalization, need for speed, integrity, entertainment and fun, scrutiny, and innovation characterize Generation Y (Tapscott, 2008). Members of this generation are regarded as having a fundamentally different work style and belief system than any other group of young people in the last 50 years (Glass, 2007).

Therefore, it is assumed that they will have a huge impact on organizations and will change the present work environment (Zemke et al., 2000). However, the common opinion that members of Generation Y have different desires and expectations from their work and career goals than previous generational cohorts is viewed by some writers as a myth (Pfau, 2016). Consequently, there are some differences in how Generation Y is regarded by scholars and researchers.

The life experiences that shaped Millennials formed a generation that believes in collective action, optimism about their future, and trust in centralized authority (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004; Salahuddin, 2010). This is emphasized by the nature of their childhood, which was marked by relative peace and prosperity (Patterson, 2007). However, Patterson (2007) states that experiences like 9/11 have lowered their optimism and taught them to be more restrained regarding their expectations for the future.

Members of this generation grew up with a focus on family (Patterson, 2007). They experienced a childhood where their parents tried to arrange a balance between work life and private life. Furthermore, parents of the Millennials believed that the well-being and education of their children were priority issues. Thus, their parents

were more available to them and many members of Generation Y still have a very good relationship with their parents. Even though they are grown up, their parents still tend to help them with words and deeds in every situation, which has led to the term "helicopter parents". Like helicopters, these parents circle over their children, overseeing their work and social activities (Glass, 2007; Mangelsdorf, 2015, p. 19).

Generation Y is the first generation born into a technologically based world (Smola & Sutton, 2002). These so-called "digital natives" have never experienced a world without technology (Patterson, 2007). They have never known a world without e-mail, mobile phones, smartphones, laptop computers, digital cameras, and social media platforms (Mangelsdorf, 2015, p. 19). This is emphasized by Martin (2005), who states that Generation Y is techno-savvy and uses technology in nearly every aspect of their lives, from work to play to simply passing time (Martin, 2005). According to Glass (2007), members of Generation Y are unafraid of new technologies because they grew up with constantly developing technology; they are therefore often called "first adapters" – the first to try, buy, and recommend new gadgets/technologies (Glass, 2007). Accordingly, different researchers in the literature agree on the impact that technology has had on members of Generation Y (Glass, 2007; Patterson, 2007; Smola & Sutton, 2002); it seems to be one of the greatest differences between this generation and other generational cohorts.

Millennials in the workplace are often seen as less independent and requiring structure, supervision, and guidance in their work environment. Yet, these requirements must be combined with the right amount of autonomy and flexibility in order for them to get the job done effectively and efficiently (Bennett et al., 2012; Martin, 2005; Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009).

Another important issue is their need for feedback. Members of Generation Y tend to like and expect constant feedback from their supervisors (Patterson, 2007), which is likely a consequence of the parental direction in their childhood (Glass, 2007). Furthermore, Yers like collective action (Sessa et al., 2007) and working for companies where there is collaborative decision-making (Glass, 2007). All of these characteristics lead to the assumption that this generation needs mentoring programs in order to feel comfortable in their working environment. According to Patterson (2007), members of Generation Y enjoy being mentored and learning from others (Patterson, 2007). Bennett (2012) goes even further and states that Millennials actively look for mentors, seeking advice, feedback, or guidance, which results in more productivity and satisfaction (Bennett et al., 2012). This idea is proven by a study that explores the factors that underlie the loyalty challenge. The findings clearly highlight the positive impact of mentorship with regard to Millennials' loyalty to their employers. Among those who have somebody acting as their mentor, 83% are satisfied with this aspect of their working lives (Deloitte, 2016). Another issue pointed out by Patterson (2007) is that Yers are idealistic and have high expectations (Patterson, 2007), which manifests in their desire for a successful career (Jeffries & Hunte, 2004). For Millennials, a successful career entails a meaningful role in the workplace as well as doing meaningful work in teams of highly committed coworkers. Values guide where Millennials work. Millennials want to contribute to a positive impact that they believe their business has on society. Simultaneously, they wish to stay true to their personal values. As a result, it has been suggested that Yers choose employers whose values reflect their own (Deloitte, 2016).

Nevertheless, meaningful work is not everything. Members of Generation Y also seek meaning in their private lives and place significant importance on a healthy work/life balance (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Consequently, Yers are more willing to change jobs if they are not satisfied with the balance between their personal and professional lives (Helyer & Lee, 2012). Another major reason that Millennials leave a job is not feeling fully engaged. Although they have a strong aspiration for growth and success, they tend to leave jobs when they feel low engagement in the workplace (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009). This is supported by a recent report on the Millennial generation. It has been found that the majority of Millennials (55%) are not engaged in their workplace, leading all other generations in this category (Adkins, 2016).

Differences and similarities

As mentioned above, Generation X and Generation Y embody a wide variety of different characteristics, attitudes, and beliefs. Furthermore, there is a growing view that more similarities between generational cohorts may exist than previously thought (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Lester et al., 2012; Mencl & Lester, 2014).

In a study focused on the three prevalent generations in today's workforce, Mencl and Lester (2014) explored whether there are actually more similarities than differences with respect to what these generations desire in their workplace. In their study, they use 10 characteristics associated with "the best places to work" list, namely: teamwork and collaboration, flexible work arrangements, a challenging job, involvement in decision making, a financially rewarding job, work–life balance, a climate of diversity, continuous learning, career advancement, and immediate feedback and recognition. It was found that generations share more similarities than differences regarding the extent to which they consider work factors important. The only three value differences found relate to career advancement, a climate of diversity, and immediate recognition and feedback. The most significant generational difference lies with career advancement opportunities, which are valued to a greater extent by Generation Y than Generation X. The other seven characteristics do not vary by generation (Mencl & Lester, 2014).

A previous study by Lester et al. (2012) has investigated actual versus perceived generational differences in the perception of workplace factors, based on 15 different

items. They hypothesized that actual generational differences exist regarding the extent to which technology, face-to-face communication, e-mail communication, social media, formal authority, and fun-at-work are valued. Their hypothesis was partly supported, as they found significant differences with respect to three out of the five investigated characteristics. Concerning Generation X and Generation Y, there were just two differences regarding social media and fun-at-work. Additionally, they found a significant difference in the characteristic continuous learning, which was not part of the hypothesis, but was valued to a greater extent by Generation Y than Generation X. Finally, the second hypothesis, that perceived differences would significantly outnumber actual differences among the three generations in terms of what they valued, was strongly supported. In summary it has been demonstrated that the number of actual generational differences is far fewer than the number of perceived differences (Lester et al., 2012).

In a study aimed at determining whether there are differences in work values between the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, Cennamo and Gardner (2008) have found significant generational differences for individual work values concerning status and freedom, but not for extrinsic, intrinsic, social, and altruism-related values. According to the study, Generation Y values freedom-related items more than Generation X and therefore tends to seek work opportunities that supply freedom and autonomy. Nonetheless, Millennials may leave organizations if these needs are not met (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

In contrast, Lyons, Duxbury, and Higgins (2005) found that the Traditionalist, Baby Boomes, Xers, and Yers differ significantly with respect to the set of five work values that they measured, namely intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, social work, and prestige work-related value. The study has revealed that social work values are valued to a greater extent by Generation Y, who place more importance on the social aspect of work compared to any other generation. Therefore, Millennials emphasize the social and fun aspects of work and the working environment. On the one hand, members of Generation Y also place greater importance on prestige in comparison with older generations. On the other hand, Generation X was found to place the most importance on intrinsic work values relative to all other generations, including Generation Y. This finding is consistent with the stereotype that Generation X is addicted to learning and improving their working skills. Altruistic work values were found to have decreased in importance with each generation, with Generation Y placing the least importance on altruism work values compared to the older generations. Finally, little generational differences were found regarding the importance of extrinsic work values, such as salary, benefits, and job security. In summary, in four of the five work values generational differences were found (Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2005).

Researchers have expressed concern about the paucity of empirical research concerning generational stereotypes associated with each cohort (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Sessa et al., 2007). Nevertheless, there is a tendency towards the opinion that more similarities between generational cohorts may exist than previously thought and simultaneously that there is a need for more research in this area (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Lester et al., 2012; Mencl & Lester, 2014). However, the lack of empirical evidence often results in the critique that generational cohort theory is more relevant to popular culture than social science (Giancola, 2006).

Leadership and emotional intelligence

The study of leadership, like the study of generations, has been an important and central part of the literature on management and organizational behavior for several decades. The books, articles, and papers on the subject of leadership number in the several thousands and can be found in several disciplines, including management, psychology, sociology, political science, public administration, and educational administration (Yukl, 1989). Leadership is a complex phenomenon that has inspired many theories and definitions. However, there is no single definition of leadership that is universally applicable. In fact, there has been a wide range of definitions, theories, and models within this field, but little consensus among leadership theorists (Lorsch, 2010).

Emotions play a crucial role in the workplace, especially in the leadership process because leadership is essentially an emotional process wherein leaders display emotion and attempt to evoke emotions in followers. Emotional intelligence has the potential to contribute to effective leadership in multiple ways, both from a leader and a follower perspective (George, 2000; Zineldin & Hytter, 2012).

Research has indicated that a high level of emotional intelligence creates a climate in which information sharing, trust, and learning flourish. On the other hand, a low level of emotional intelligence creates a climate of fear and anxiety (George, 2000). Effective leaders are able to generate positive emotions in their followers and can reduce negative emotions in times of crisis (Bono, Foldes, Vinson, & Muros, 2007).

Emotional intelligence helps leaders to not only recognize their own emotions, but also the emotional needs of their followers (Peterson & Luthans, 2003) as well as to identify the relationships amongst employees and leaders (Goleman, 2004).

Models of emotional intelligence

Among the different models of emotional intelligence that can be found in literature, e.g. the trait model (Cooper, 1997), the ability model (Mayer, 2000), and the mixed model (Boyatzis, 2000), the author of this article has decided to apply the latest mixed model of emotional intelligence from Goleman et al. (2000a) . This model is

holistic and includes cognitive as well as non-cognitive abilities.

Furthermore, this model is used in the context of the workplace and six leadership styles can be derived from it, each springing from different components of emotional intelligence. Each style seems to have a direct and unique effect on the working atmosphere as well as on the climate and makes use of the key components of emotional intelligence in different combinations (Goleman, 2000b). Four of the six leadership styles are known as the resonant styles. The resonant styles are the visionary, the coaching, the affiliative, and the democratic styles and all have a positive effect on the climate and results and create a resonance that boosts performance. The other two styles, the pacesetting and the commanding styles, are known as the dissonant styles and may have a negative effect on the climate and generate dissonance when used incorrectly. The visionary style's primary objective is providing long-term direction and vision for subordinates. A leader defines the overall goal, but gives followers the freedom to choose their own way of achieving it. This style is most effective when changes require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed. It is least effective when the leader is working with experts who are more experienced than he is. The coaching style has the primary objective of the long-term professional development of subordinates. This style works well to help subordinates improve performance by building long-term capabilities, but not when they are resistant to changing their ways. The affiliative style has the primary objective of creating harmony among subordinates and between leaders and subordinates. This style is particularly useful for motivating people during stressful times or for strengthening connections, but it is not useful when negative performance feedback is needed to improve standards and refocus objectives. The democratic style has the primary objective of building commitment and consensus among subordinates. This style is appropriate for building buy-in consensus or for gaining valuable input from subordinates. It is not useful when subordinates have no training in consensus-building and democratic decision-making. The pacesetting style has the primary objective of accomplishing tasks to a high standard of excellence. This style is most effective for obtaining high-quality results from motivated individuals in crises. It is least effective with subordinates who want feedback and development plans to improve their performance. The commanding style has the primary objective of immediate compliance of subordinates. This style is appropriate in turnaround situations, crisis situations, or when working with problem subordinates. However, in most situations, this style inhibits the organization's flexibility and dampens subordinates' performance (Goleman, 2000a; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013, pp. 53-54). Table 1 summarizes the different leadership styles.

Leadership Styles	EI Competencies	Climate Impact	Objective	When Appropriate
Visionary	Self-confidence; empathy; change catalyst	Most positive	Mobilize others to follow a vision	When change requires a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed.
Coaching	Developing others; empathy; emotional self-awareness	Highly positive	Build strengths for the future	To help an employee improve performance or develop long-term strengths.
Affiliative	Empathy, building bonds; conflict management	Highly positive	Create harmony	To heal rifts in a team, or to motivate during stressful times.
Democratic	Collaboration; team leadership; communication	Highly positive	Build commitment through participation	To build buy-in or consensus, or to obtain valuable input from employees.
Pacesetting	Conscientiousness; drive to achieve; initiative	Highly negative	Perform tasks to a high standard	To get quick results from a highly motivated and competent team.
Commanding	Drive to achieve; initiative, emotional self-control	Strongly negative	Immediate compliance	In a crisis, to kick-start a turnaround, or with problem employees.

Table 1:
Summary of the Emotional Leadership Styles

Note. Emotional intelligence framework by Goleman, D. (2000a). An EI-based theory of performance. In Goleman, D. & Cherniss, C. *The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace: How to Select for, Measure, and Improve Emotional Intelligence in Individuals, Groups, and Organizations (pp. 27-44). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.*

In summary, it should be mentioned that many leaders mistakenly assume that leadership style is a function of personality rather than a strategic choice. The more styles a leader has in his repertoire, the better. In particular, being able to switch among the different styles according to the appropriate conditions creates the best organizational climate and therefore boosts business performance (Goleman, 2000b).

This aspect is what differs the emotional leadership theory from any other leadership theory and is what makes it useful for the purpose of this research.

Research Methodology

In the literature review, the author described the six emotional leadership styles from the model of Goleman (Goleman, 2000b) each of which is appropriate for different conditions and the different needs of the employees. Each also has a direct impact on the organization's climate. Thus, it would be particularly interesting if Generations X and Y tend to prefer different emotional leadership styles. According to the characteristics of these generational cohorts, the author expects that they do indeed prefer different emotional leadership styles. Therefore, the following hypothesis is defined by the author:

H1: *Generation X and Generation Y prefer different emotional leadership styles.*

Participants

The study focuses on members of Generation X and Generation Y who are currently employed in different organizations and have a direct superior (e.g. department leader, team leader, project leader, etc.). Therefore, this target group can be defined as the population. One hundred twenty-one employees participated in the online survey. Of these employees, 108 completed the whole survey. However, data from three additional respondents were discarded because they were born before 1965 and therefore in the generational cohort of the baby boomers, which are not the subject of this research. Hence, the final sample consisted of 105 individuals. Of these, 45 were members of Generation X and 60 were members of Generation Y, which is illustrated in Figure 1. Most participants were male with (n = 69), which accounts for nearly two thirds of the participants. About half of the participants (n = 52) had up to 10 years of practical experience in a profession and the other half (n = 53) had more than 10 years of experience.

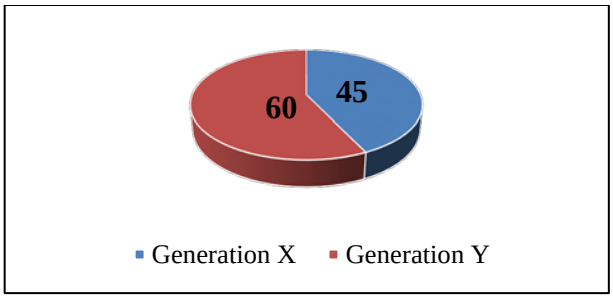

Figure 2:
Frequency Distribution of Generation X and Y

Data collection and questionnaire design

An online survey was established and conducted to gather the quantitative data over the internet using the online survey creation tool from www.umfrage-online.com. The link to the online survey was posted on Facebook with a short description of the purpose as well as the topic of the survey. On the one hand, the author chose this approach to reach a broad range of people with different academic as well as professional backgrounds. On the other hand, this approach was chosen in order to obtain a random sample with approximately equal numbers of participants from Generation X and Generation Y. After four weeks from the beginning of the survey, 121 had taken part. All 121 questionnaires were checked for their usability before the data was used to test the hypotheses.

The online survey was conducted in English and took individuals approximately 10 minutes to complete. It contained a total of 41 questions. The main section of the survey aimed to determine the preferred leadership style of the participants and whether there is a difference between Generations X and Y. Therefore, the participants were asked the extent to which they personally agree with 30 different items that could be representative of their superior's leadership behavior. All items were based on the six emotional leadership styles laid out by Goleman and colleagues. The author has adapted the items from the book "The new Leaders: Transforming the Art of Leadership into the Science of Results" (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Each leadership style contained five items. The participants responded using a 5-point Likert-type scale (Scale values: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither/nor, 4= agree, 5=strongly agree).

Analytic procedure

The descriptive statistic feature SPSS 23.0© (IBM Statistics) was used to analyze the mean, standard deviation,

and range of the data provided by the participants through the questionnaire.

Empirical Results

Hypotheses 1 proposed that there is indeed a difference between Generations X and Y with respect to their preferred emotional leadership style. In order to test this hypothesis, 30 single questions in the questionnaire were analyzed using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to verify whether there was a leadership style preference within the generational cohorts. The dependent variables were the emotional leadership styles and the independent variable was the generation. For this purpose, the 30 statements were grouped into the six leadership styles (five statements per leadership style). Furthermore, a Pearson correlation between the six leadership styles was run to determine whether they correlate.

The results of the MANOVA revealed a significant main effect (F [6.98] = 3.390, p= .004). It was concluded that the preference of emotional leadership styles was significantly dependent on the generational cohort. Table 2 provides the mean and standard deviation for the six different dependent variables (emotional leadership styles), which have been divided according to the independent variable (generation).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	M	SD	df	F	Sig.
Affiliative	X	3.84	.47	1	.507	.478
	Y	3.77	.55			
Democratic	X	3.66	.56	1	.877	.351
	Y	3.75	.45			
Pacesetting	X	3.71	.52	1	.025	.875
	Y	3.72	.55			
Coaching	X	4.01	.42	1	1.498	.224
	Y	4.10	.34			
Visionary	X	3.97	.39	1	16.541	.000**
	Y	4.27	.36			
Commanding	X	3.12	.88	1	3.913	.051
	Y	3.42	.72			

Table 2:
Means, Standard Deviations, Degrees of Freedom, F-ratio, and Significant Level of the Study Variables

As Table 2 indicates, there was a statistically significant difference between Generation X and Generation Y concerning the visionary leadership style (F [1] = 16.541, p < .01). In this case, the value of the mean difference was 0.30 in favor of Generation Y (M_X = 3.97, SD_X = .39; M_Y = 4.27, SD_Y = .36). Concerning the commanding leadership style, there was also a mean difference of 0.30 in favor of Generation Y (M_X = 3.12, SD_X = .88; M_Y = 3.42, SD_Y = .72). This difference can be considered as statistically significant (F [1] = 3.913, p = .051). No statistically significant differences were found for the remaining four emotional leadership styles (F [1] < 3.913, p > .05). According to Table 2, Generation Y valued the visionary leadership style the most (M_Y = 4.27) in contrast to Generation X, which valued the coaching leadership style the most (M_X = 4.01). Both generations valued the commanding leadership style the least (M_Y = 3.42; M_X = 3.12). According to the means and contrary to the expectation, each leadership style was valued to nearly the same extent by Generation X and Generation Y, with the exception of the visionary style. Therefore, the hypothesis was partially supported.

In the course of the analysis, the scale values of the 5-point Likert-type scale for the 30 single questions in the survey were categorized into three sections: (0) “low” preference, which considered the scale values [1-2[; (1) “medium” preference, which considered the scale values from [2-4[; and (2) “high” preference, which considered

the scale values from [4-5]. Section 2 ("high" preference for the relevant leadership style) is the main subject in the following analysis. This enabled us to analyze the findings using cross-tabulation (Table 3) for each leadership style separately with regard to Section 2, "high" preference. The most important findings are presented in the following paragraphs.

The author began with the affiliative leadership style. Forty-five of the 105 participants categorized this leadership style as highly preferred. Of these, 55.6% (n = 25) were from Generation Y and 44.4% (n = 20) were from Generation X. Furthermore, 41.7% of the participants who belonged to Generation Y indicated a "high" preference for the affiliative leadership style. 44.4% (n = 20) of the participants who came from Generation X indicated "high" preference for this style.

Forty of the 105 participants categorized the democratic leadership style as highly preferred. Of these, nearly two-thirds (62.5%, n = 25) came from Generation Y and 37.5% (n = 15) came from Generation X. On the other hand, 41.7% of the participants from Generation Y, which was exactly the same percentage as for the affiliative style, indicated a "high" preference for the democratic leadership style. In comparison, only 33.3% of the participants from Generation X indicated a "high" preference for this style.

Thirty-eight of the 105 participants categorized the pacesetting leadership style as highly preferred. Of these, nearly two-thirds (63.2%, n = 24) belonged to Generation Y and 36.8% (n = 14) to Generation X. Exactly 40% of the participants from Generation Y had a "high" preference for the pacesetting style. In contrast, just 31.1% of the participants from Generation X had a "high" preference for this style.

Seventy-one of the 105 participants categorized the coaching style as highly preferred. Of these, 60.6% (n = 43) were from Generation Y and 39.4% (n = 28) were from Generation X. 71.7% of the participants who belonged to Generation Y had a "high" preference for the coaching style whereas only 62.2% of the participants from Generation X had a "high" preference for this leadership style.

The visionary leadership style was the most preferred style of Generation Y in the previous analysis. In this analysis, 78 of the 105 participants categorized this leadership style as highly preferred. Of these, exactly two-thirds (66.7%, n = 52) came from Generation Y and one-third (33.3%, n = 26) came from Generation X.

86.7% of the participants from Generation Y had a "high" preference for the visionary style. In contrast, only 57.8% of the participants from Generation X had a "high" preference for this style.

The last leadership style was the commanding style. This leadership style was the least preferred in the previous analysis. Yet, 23 of the 105 participants categorized this leadership style as highly preferred. Of these, again, nearly two-thirds (69.6%, n = 16) were from Generation Y and 30.4% (n = 7) were from Generation X. Moreover, 26.7% of the participants from Generation Y had a "high" preference for the pacesetting style compared with 15.6% of the participants from Generation X who indicated "high" preference for this leadership style.

This cross-tabulation emphasized the findings from the previous analysis. The most participants (n = 78) categorized the visionary leadership style as highly preferred, followed by the coaching leadership style (n = 71). The least participants (n = 23) categorized the commanding leadership style as high preferred.

Finally, a Pearson correlation between the six leadership styles was run to determine whether they correlate. As Table 4 indicates, there were positive and significant correlations between the affiliative style and the democratic style (r = .396; p = .000), the affiliative style and the visionary style (r = .194; p = .047), the democratic style and the coaching style (r = .229; p = .019), the democratic style and the visionary style (r = .410; p = .000), the coaching style and the visionary style (r = .357; p = .000), and the pacesetting style and the commanding style (r = .400; p = .000). On the other hand, there were negative and significant correlations between the affiliative style and the pacesetting style (r = -.194; p = .048), and the democratic style and the pacesetting style (r = -.222; p = .023). In summary, the Pearson correlation emphasized the similarities of the four resonant leadership styles (affiliative, democratic, coaching, and visionary) as well as their differences with respect to the two dissonant leadership styles (pacesetting and commanding). It should be mentioned that the Pearson correlation conducted was not directly in relation to the hypotheses. Nevertheless, the result rounded of the picture of the emotional leadership styles in relation to the investigated generations and supported the findings concerning Hypothesis 1.

Leadership Style		Generation		Total
		X	Y	
Affiliative	Count	20	25	45
(“high” Preference)	% within Affiliative	44.4%	55.6%	100%
	% within Generation	44.4%	41.7%	42.9%
	% of Total	19%	23.8%	42.9%
Democratic	Count	15	25	40
(“high” Preference)	% within Democratic	37.5%	62.5%	100%
	% within Generation	33.3%	41.7%	38.1%
	% of Total	14.3%	23.8%	38.1%
Pacesetting	Count	14	24	38
(“high” Preference)	% within Pacesetting	36.8%	63.2%	100%
	% within Generation	31.1%	40%	36.2%
	% of Total	13.3%	22.9%	36.2%
Coaching	Count	28	43	71
(“high” Preference)	% within Coaching	39.4%	60.6%	100%
	% within Generation	62.6%	71.7%	67.6%
	% of Total	26.7%	41%	67.6%
Visionary	Count	26	52	78
(“high” Preference)	% within Visionary	33.3%	66.7%	100%
	% within Generation	57.8%	86.7%	74.3%
	% of Total	24.8%	49.5%	74.3%
Commanding	Count	7	16	23
(“high” Preference)	% within Commanding	30.4%	69.6%	100%
	% within Generation	15.6%	26.7%	21.9%
	% of Total	6.7%	15.2%	21.9%
Total	Count	45	60	105
	% within Leadership Style	42.9%	57.1%	100%
	% within Generation	100%	100%	100%
	% of Total	42.9%	57.1%	100%

Table 3:
Summary Cross-Tabulation Preferred Leadership Style – Generational Cohorts with Regard to Section 2 = “high” Preference for Leadership Style

	M	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Affiliative (1)	3.80	.51	1					
Democratic (2)	3.71	.50	.396**	1				
Pacesetting (3)	3.72	.53	-.194*	-.222*	1			
Coaching (4)	4.06	.38	.153	.229*	.108	1		
Visionary (5)	4.15	.40	.194*	.410**	-.154	.357**	1	
Commanding (6)	3.29	.80	-.113	-.084	.400**	.055	.164	1

Note. N = 105, **correlation significant with p < .01, *correlation significant with p < .05

Table 4:
Pearson Correlation between Leadership Styles

Conclusion

Based on the existing literature it can be stated that there are differences in the characteristics and work values of Generations X and Y. The reason for these perceived differences between Generations X and Y is often stated to be the succession of defining moments in the lives of these generational cohorts. The literature review has strongly indicated that Generation X is seen as independent, self-reliant, skeptical, less loyal, and flexible, among others. These characteristics often result in the perception that Generation X is selfish. However, it is important to recognize that what may be viewed as selfish can also be viewed as autonomous (Jurkiewicz, 2000). Individuals of Generation Y are seen as very different from previous generational cohorts. They are often characterized as being idealistic, optimistic, independent, self-confident, and technologically well-versed (Martin, 2005), among others. Consequently, these characteristics have an effect on the workplace concerning work ethos and the way these generations act with each other as well as with their superiors. Despite many perceptions and assumptions about these generations, the frequency of conflicting results in the literature makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about each generational cohort. A main reason for these conflicting results is that individuals cannot be easily stereotyped according to their birth years (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Sessa et al., 2007). What makes the issue even more complex is the fact that in the current literature, there is a tendency towards the opinion that there are more similarities than differences between generational cohorts concerning work factors and values (Lester et al., 2012; Mencl & Lester, 2014). These findings confirm the need for further research in this area, especially when another generation (Generation Z) will enter the workforce soon.

The empirical part has demonstrated that there is a statistically significant difference between Generations X and Y (in favor of Generation Y) concerning the visionary leadership style. According to the literature, the visionary leadership style can be associated with the resonant styles, which have a positive effect on the organizations` climate and results. This leadership style has the primary objective of providing a long-term direction and vision for subordinates. It works well when change requires a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed (Goleman, 2000a). Therefore, the results suggest that this leadership style is suitable to the characteristics of Generation Y. Furthermore, the results are consistent with previous literature, which states that Generation Y is often perceived to be less independent and requiring structure and guidance in their work environment combined with the right amount of autonomy and flexibility (Bennett et al., 2012; Martin, 2005). On the other hand, this leadership style is least effective if used extensively with experienced employees who know as much as their superior and when trying to promote participative decision-making (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001). This might be the reason why there is a statistical difference between Generations Y and X concerning the visionary leadership style. Previous literature states that Generation X is very results-orientated, focuses on outcome above process (Glass, 2007), prefers an autonomous working style (Glass, 2007), and needs a balanced amount of supervision (Salahuddin, 2010). These characteristics contrast with those of the visionary leadership style. The empirical findings have revealed that Generation X most prefers the coaching leadership style. This style is most effective for employees who are interested in long-range planning to achieve their goals and for employees who need to find their own solution to their work problems (Goleman et al., 2001). This style seems to suit the characteristics of Generation X. With regard to the empirical results, it can be stated that both generations value the commanding leadership style the least. The reason seems to be the characteristics of this leadership style, which is described in the literature as requiring immediate compliance from subordinates and suitable for employees who need clear direction (Goleman et al., 2001). Generations

X and Y both value autonomous work and independence in the workplace, even if not to the same extent, which may explain why both generations value the commanding leadership style the least ($M\_Y = 3.42$; $M\_X = 3.12$).

A clear pattern emerged across all six emotional leadership styles in the empirical study. The most preferred leadership styles are the visionary and coaching styles amongst both generations with just slight differences between Generations X and Y. These differences may be due to the different questions in the survey because each individual, independent of their generation, interprets the questions in his own way. Furthermore, this result indicates that the differences between Generations X and Y may not be as great as imagined and it is possible that there are more similarities between these generations than previously thought. This idea is encouraged due to the finding that the least preferred styles of both generations are the commanding and the pacesetting style. In summary, it is difficult to draw an explicit conclusion regarding which leadership style is preferred by which generation and whether there are explicit differences in the characteristics of the generational cohorts. Nevertheless, the results indicate that both generations prefer the resonant leadership styles over the dissonant leadership styles. This finding is emphasized by the empirical result of the Pearson correlation between the six emotional leadership styles. The Pearson correlation has revealed the similarities between the four resonant styles (visionary, coaching, affiliative, and democratic), which are known for having a positive effect on the climate and results. Additionally, it demonstrates the differences between the resonant styles and the dissonant styles (pacesetting and commanding), which have a negative effect on the climate, and may generate dissonance when not used correctly (Goleman, 2000a).

Today's organizations have to overcome several challenges. One challenge is demographic change and the aging workforce, as recognized in this article. This development has effects on employees as well as managers and leaders. On the one hand, this development can be an opportunity and on the other hand, it may lead to issues for organizations. Therefore, it is particularly important for managers to be aware of the differences and similarities of the generational cohorts currently in the workplace. These differences and similarities have several effects on organizations as well as managers. Managers have to deal with the differences between the generational cohorts by paying attention to their preferred leadership styles in order to minimize friction losses and lead effectively. The ability to recognize and understand generational differences and leadership style preferences provides organizations and managers with an advantage in leading their diverse workforce effectively. Thus, they can achieve more productivity and generate a competitive advantage, which benefits both the organization and the employees.

Even though there were slightly mixed results in the findings of this study, this is simply an indication of the need of further research.

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