SWAPEN 4.0

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**Mengintegrasikan Teknologi Kecerdasan Buatan
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Sebagai Solusi Pendidikan**

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**UNIT PENERBITAN DAN PENYELIDIKAN
KOLEJ POLY-TECH MARA ALOR SETAR**

RAKAN
STRATEGIK

SWAPEN 4.0

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KANDUNGAN

Organizational Values and Generational Values Gaps in MalaysianWorkplaces

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ABSTRACT

This study explores generational differences in workplace and highlighting notable contrasts between individual and organizational values across age groups. It investigates how well these values are communicated and aligned among employees from various generations, providing insights into each group's unique expectations and priorities. Organizations face the challenge of balancing strategic objectives with the need to address generational value gaps, which influence team dynamics and organizational culture. The findings reveal substantial generational differences in how employees perceive respect and acknowledgment of personal values within the organization. For instance, younger employees may prioritize flexibility and innovation, while older generations might value loyalty and stability. The study found little evidence to support the idea that aligning organizational values, fostering seamless intergenerational communication, or achieving value congruence directly increases job satisfaction. This suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach may not effectively enhance satisfaction across different age groups. Instead, the research highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing generational value differences to strengthen communication, teamwork, and cohesion within the organization. By understanding and bridging these gaps, organizations can foster a unified, collaborative, and inclusive workplace that respects the diversity of generational perspectives and enhances overall workplace harmony.

KEYWORDS: Generational Differences, Organizational Values, Value Alignment, Workplace

1   INTRODUCTION

A generation is define as a group of people born within a specific time frame who share similar experiences, values, and attitudes shaped by the events and circumstances of their era (Harper, 2023). According to the Pew Research Center, generations are typically divided into 15-to 20-year spans, providing insight into how our worldviews are influenced by the defining events of our lifetime (USA Today, 2022).

Currently, the workforce includes Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964), who are approaching retirement, Generation X (born 1965–1980), Millennials (born 1981–1995), and Generation Z (born 1996–2012), the newest entrants into the workforce. The presence of multiple generations in the workplace has created human resource management challenges (Singh, 2014; Culpin et al., 2015; Holian, 2015; Guerin-Marion et al., 2018), as organizations now contend with four generations working side by side, each with distinct values and expectations. Generational diversity refers to these differences among employees from various age groups.

With five generations working together today, it's crucial for organizations to understand these generational differences. Each group brings unique expectations and experiences, posing a challenge for managers leading multigenerational teams. The goal is not only to maximize productivity but also to ensure a satisfying work experience for everyone (Knowledge City Newsletter, 2022; Rathi & Kumar, 2023). Why is it essential for management to address a multigenerational workforce effectively? Recognizing each generation's unique characteristics and expectations provides a foundation for addressing the needs and challenges of generational diversity in the workplace.

2   GENERATIONAL VALUES IN A WORKPLACE

Generational value differences are a recognized reality in today's workplace. Modern workplaces are made up of individuals from various generations, each bringing distinct values, attitudes, and experiences that influence their behaviors. These generational differences, while potentially challenging, can also foster strength and innovation when understood and effectively managed (Guerin-Marion et al., 2018). As Picagli (2024) explains, generational differences encompass variations in lifestyles, preferences, habits, and values shaped by the time periods in which individuals were raised. These ideologies can be influenced by factors such as changing international relations, technological advancements, socio-political movements, shared tragedies, prevailing religious beliefs, and more. Although these ideological differences can lead to varied workplace behaviors, a deeper understanding of each generation's perspectives helps managers meet employees' needs more effectively and manage teams more productively. Furthermore, the generational composition of the workplace itself contributes to these value mismatches. With multiple generations - such as Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and now Generation Z - working together, each group's unique values and expectations add to the complexity of management.

Generational differences in the workplace can create challenges in communication, work styles, and expectations, but also offer opportunities for innovation, diverse perspectives, and a variety of skills (Guerin-Marion et al., 2018). When managed well, these differences can promote growth and productivity. Rozen (2023) highlights that multiple generations in a team bring unique experiences that improve problem-solving and innovation. Older employees offer industry knowledge, while younger ones bring fresh ideas and tech may lead to misunderstandings if not managed properly.

3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Demographic shifts are among the least understood but most critical challenges facing organizations today. In the U.S., the "working-age population," defined as those aged 16 to 64, is shrinking at a rate unseen since World War II. Unlike that era, there is no anticipated "baby boom" to replenish this age group. Generation Z is already three million people smaller than the Millennial generation, and Generation Alpha, following Gen Z, is expected to be even smaller (Hennelly and Schurman, 2023). As generations evolve, so too will the characteristics and preferences of workers in the workplace. Data from the Department of Statistics reveals that Gen Z accounted for 26% of Malaysia's 32.6 million population in 2019, totalling approximately 8.476 million Gen Z individuals in Malaysia alone.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to significant layoffs and downsizing, prompting many older employees to leave the workforce. This wave of departures was also driven by early retirements, age discrimination, and cost-cutting measures. As these experienced workers left, they took with them a wealth of institutional knowledge, skills, and commitment. Many organizations overlooked the potential future challenge: a shortage of younger, experienced replacements post-pandemic.

Employers focusing only on today's working-age population may struggle to build a stable workforce capable of maintaining operational efficiency, as fewer young people will enter the labor market for at least the next generation (Hennelly and Schurman, 2023). Generational differences in the workplace can sometimes lead to conflicts, but employers can mitigate this by focusing on common goals and shared values. Creating an inclusive culture where all generations feel valued is essential (Miroslavov, 2024). Below is an overview of the five generations currently in the workforce, covering their values, work habits, contributions, and typical management approaches (Herrity, 2022; Purdue Global, 2024). While a multigenerational team offers significant benefits, these differences can, if not properly managed, cause tension within the company culture (Young Entrepreneurial Council, 2019).

According to Appelbaum et al. (2022), Baby Boomers typically respect authority and thrive with clear direction and structure. Generation X, known as "latchkey kids," often grew up in households where they had to be self-reliant due to their parents' long work hours, leading them to value independence (Taylor, 2018 as cited in Xiong, 2019). Millennials (Gen Y) are known for questioning authority and advocating for fairness, rejecting traditional approaches simply for tradition's sake (Lyon et al., 2005/2006 as cited in Appelbaum, 2022). Gen Z, native to the internet age, is accustomed to fast-paced, always-available information and often navigates both "real-life" and online identities, making them one of the most open-minded and non-conforming generations (Seemiller & Grace, 2019; Janssen & Carradini, 2021). These generational value differences can lead to workplace conflicts. As Gostauta (2010) and Dylag et al. (2013) note, a mismatch between personal and organizational values is a significant factor in occupational burnout. Picagli (2024) suggests that generational value mismatches today stem from varied communication preferences, work styles, and expectations, presenting both challenges and opportunities in managing a multigenerational workforce.

Research on value alignment highlights the importance of bridging gaps in communication preferences, work attitudes, career aspirations, and workplace dynamics, as each generation has distinct preferences, attitudes, and goals. While there are notable similarities in values across generations, some differences remain that require attention (Tourky, Osman & Harvey, 2023). Misalignment in values can negatively impact employee morale, increase turnover, reduce productivity, and even lead to ethical issues (Carucci, 2017; Biriema, 2024).

Alferjany and Rosima (2020) note that five generations coexist in today's workforce, yet there is limited theoretical research on generational differences, particularly concerning

Generations Y and Z. Traditionalists and Baby Boomers tend to share more similarities in values. Rathi and Kumar (2023) further observe that studies often struggle to identify distinct generational differences in work values and frequently do not clarify whether these differences arise from generational identity or age. This study seeks to examine generational differences and organizational values in the workplace, specifically focusing on strategies for resolving valuegaps across generations in Malaysian organizations.

4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE (RO) AND RESEARCH QUESTION (RQ)

RO: The objective of this study is to determine the existence of generational differences at theworkplace and propose strategies to solve these problems.

RQ: Do generational differences exist at the workplace and what are the strategies to solve theseproblems?

5 LITERATURE REVIEW

Generational Disparities at Workplace

Generational differences have become a central topic in organizational studies, as researchers explore how varying values, work habits, and expectations across generations shape the work environment. Savdharia (2022) highlights that these differences can lead to both conflicts and benefits in the workplace. Each generation, from Baby Boomers and Generation X to Millennials and Generation Z, brings unique perspectives and expectations that affect organizational dynamics and success. For instance, Baby Boomers often value stability and loyalty, while Millennials and Gen Z are seen as prioritizing flexibility and work-life balance (Picagli, 2024).

Value Alignment and Organizational Harmony

Research underscores the importance of aligning employee and organizational values to maintain workplace harmony. Kinias and Schloderer (2021) note that when personal and organizational values clash, employees may feel dissatisfied and disconnected. This study reveals distinct generational differences in how employees perceive the compatibility of their personal values with organizational values. Clear communication and effective management of these differences are essential for fostering a harmonious work environment.

Communication Across Generations

Research shows that effective communication is essential for managing generational differences in the workplace. Touky, Osman, and Harvey (2023) suggest that organizations can enhance effectiveness by adapting communication methods to meet the preferences of each generation. Recent findings reveal differences in how organizational values are communicated across generations, underscoring the need for tailored communication strategies to bridge generational gaps and strengthen workplace cohesion.

Organizational Respect and Acknowledgment

Respect for individual values is essential for employee satisfaction and organizational success. Savdharia (2022) and Picagli (2024) emphasize that organizations acknowledging diverse employee values tend to create positive work environments and boost job satisfaction. This study confirms that when organizations respect the personal values of different generations, employee satisfaction and commitment increase.

Implications for Organizational Practice and respect for individual perspectives. Organizations that manage these areas well can enhance workplace harmony, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness.

There are several related theories involve in this study such as Generational Theory, Communication Accommodation Theory, Social Exchange Theory and Organizational Culture Theory. Generational theory explores how people born in different eras are shaped by their times. This understanding is essential for recognizing the unique values, attitudes, and work preferences of each generation. The framework helps identify the distinct traits of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

Through generational theory, researchers can examine workplace behavior differences— such as work- life balance, communication styles, and job expectations—and how these differences affect workplacedynamics (Seemiller & Grace, 2019; Picagli, 2024).

Theories discussed include communication accommodation theory, social exchange theory, and organizational culture theory. Communication accommodation theory suggests adapting communication to bridge generational gaps. Social exchange theory emphasizes fairness and reciprocity in professional relationships, helping address value differences. Organizational culture theory underscores integrating diverse values into an organization's culture to foster inclusivity. Together, these theories guide strategies for managing value differences, such as using effective communication, promoting equitable relationships, and creating a culture that respects values across all age groups (Savdharia, 2022; Tourky, Osman, & Harvey, 2023).

6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative study where questionnaires were randomly distributed to employees ofpublic and private sectors in Kuala Lumpur. Respondents are all workers in the workplace and where questionnaires are distributed via online method. The questionnaires consist of four parts, which are demographics, organization values, values misalignment and strategies to resolve misalignment. Since the study covered a bigger research scope, this paper will only focus on the organization values and misalignment. Data were analysed using SPSS version 25.0.

7   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROACHES TO CLOSING THE GAPS

Addressing generational differences and align values at work, companies should implement strategic approaches. First, improving communication between age groups can be achieved by developing multi- generational communication strategies and providing communication training (Touky, Osman, & Harvey, 2023; Savdharia, 2022). Additionally, recognizing and celebrating individual contributions through value recognition programs and conducting surveys to align values can help honor and appreciate personal beliefs (Kinias & Schloderer,

2021; Picagli, 2024). Creating a culture of respect in an organization is a key, which can be done by promoting inclusivity and encouraging open discussions about values (Guadalupe et al., 2021; Vlachoutsicos, 2013). It's important to align organizational values with personal values by updating them to reflect current standards and integrating personal values into organizational goals. This helps build stronger unity within the organization (Kinias & Schloderer, 2021; Savdharia, 2022).

Offering flexible work arrangements and supporting professional growth for employees of all ages can improve job satisfaction and reduce conflicts (Touky, Osman, & Harvey, 2023; Guadalupe et al., 2021). Bridging generational gaps can be achieved through workshops and mentoring programs that encourage mutual understanding and knowledge sharing (Savdharia, 2022; Kinias & Schloderer, 2021). Providing opportunities for employees to give feedback and acting on it helps improve communication and ensure alignment on values. Regularly reviewing and updating organizational policies based on feedback keeps them inclusive and relevant (Guadalupe et al., 2021; Touky, Osman, & Harvey, 2023).

8   CONCLUSION

This study offers important insights into the influence of organizational values and generational values alignment on workplace dynamics. The results confirm that personal values vary across generations, affecting how employees view and engage with organizational values (Savdharia, 2022; Picagli, 2024). Organizations that recognize and respect these personal values tend to create a more harmonious and satisfying work environment, supporting research that highlights the importance of valuing diverse perspectives for a positive workplace (Kinias & Schloderer, 2021). Additionally, this respect improves communication between generations, reinforcing the idea that tailored communication strategies can help bridge gaps and enhance workplace cohesion (Touky, Osman, & Harvey, 2023). The study also shows that when personal values are acknowledged, employees are more likely to align with organizational goals, reducing concerns about organizational values (Guadalupe et al., 2021). This alignment leads to less conflict, higher productivity, and a more inclusive work culture (Vlachoutsicos, 2013). Therefore, organizations should focus on strategies that promote understanding, recognition, and respect for diverse values, including implementing inclusive policies, enhancing communication, and fostering a respectful culture. Future studies could examine how different industries and contexts influence generational dynamics and their long-term impact on performance and employee well-being. Ultimately, addressing organizational values and generational values alignment is crucial for improving employee satisfaction, reducing turnover, and boosting organizational success.

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