

Organizational Commitment of Generation X and Generation Y Employees in the Apparel Industry in Western Province, Sri Lanka

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1. Introduction

Managing human capital has become progressively challenging due to the diversity of workforce. Diversity of workforce has generated with respect to gender, race, religion and most importantly by 'age' which consist of employees in different generations. Kupperschmidt in 2000 (p. 66) defines generation as an *"Identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages"* (Singh and Gupta 2015). Expectations, work values, behaviors and attitudes of employees differ from one generation to another. Due to these differences employees performs in workplace can lead to the differences in employee performance, conflicts, misunderstandings and employee commitment towards the organization by Okoli et al. (2017). With that, many researchers have begun to question that whether these different generations have fundamentally different work attitudes and if so, how will those impact on the overall organizational performances (Atkinson 2011).

Among different work values in the literature, commitment has become one critical factor as it is highly likely to influence employee involvement in achieving organizational desired outcomes such as; employee citizenship behavior, greater job performance, achieve customer satisfaction, enhance employee retention etc. (Singh & Gupta 2015). Acquiring and retaining organizational commitment of workers has been a crucial challenge due to the different perceptions of employees in different generations towards organizational commitment. According to Mohsen (2016), the most accepted definition for organization commitment is *"Psychological state that attract employees to their employer"*. Further Da Silva et al. (2015) demonstrates that employees respond diversely to HR practices and that influence degree to which they are committed and engaged to the organization.

Baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y/ Millennials and Generation Z are the most considered generations in workplace. According to Glazer et al. (2019) current workforce consists of two prominent generations namely; Generation Xers and Millennials. It is essential for HR practitioners to identify differences of workers in distinct generations in order to manage their labor force victoriously. Proving the fact Glazer et al. (2019) shows that *"it is important to understand members of different generational (cultural) groups in order to identify ways of mitigating tensions and achieving high performance in the workplace"*. In this study researcher is adapting the commitment model Meyer and Allan, which consist of three components namely; affective, continuance and normative in order to check the commitment across different generations. Accordingly, this study focuses on investigating the different level of commitment possess by employees in different generations.

One of the crucial issues in the Sri Lankan apparel industry confronted in the present day is excessive turnover and absenteeism. Yamazakia (2015) proves that, organizational commitment indirectly but strongly influences employee turnover through personal development and human resources policy. This shows that organizational commitment is a burning issue which organizations needs to put their attention on, in order to get the maximum from their employees. In the case of apparel industry, it is clearly visible

that all categories of generations involvement are there. Therefore this study is focused on the people in different generations in apparel industry. To address this issue in diversified workforce in apparel industry, researchers focus on whether there is a difference in terms of employee commitment vary across different generations.

In literature there are several studies which has been empirically find the relationship between commitment across different generations which provides mixed findings. However, there are not enough empirical studies done regarding the apparel industry in Sri Lanka relating to the commitment level of employees across different generations. Therefore, the study problem addressed under this study is “*Do organizational commitment of Generation X and Generation Y employees differ from one generation to another in the apparel industry of Western province of Sri Lanka*”.

2. Research Framework

The research framework of the study has two major variables. Generational difference has recognized as the independent variable of the study and organizational commitment has recognized as the dependent variable of the study. By reviewing the previous literature, dimensions of generations have been identified as Generation X and Generation Y. The dependent variable of the study, organizational commitment has been identified as affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment.

As definition given by Mannheim in 1972, generation is as “a group of people in a similar social location experiencing similar social events” (Lub et al. in 2012). Generation X-ers are the individuals who born between 1965 – 1976 and Generation Y individuals are the younger generation who were born between 1977 – 1995.

As dependent variable, organizational commitment is defined by Meyer and Allen (1991) as “a psychological state that characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization”. Organizational commitment will be measured using three dimensions which is affective, continuance and normative commitment.

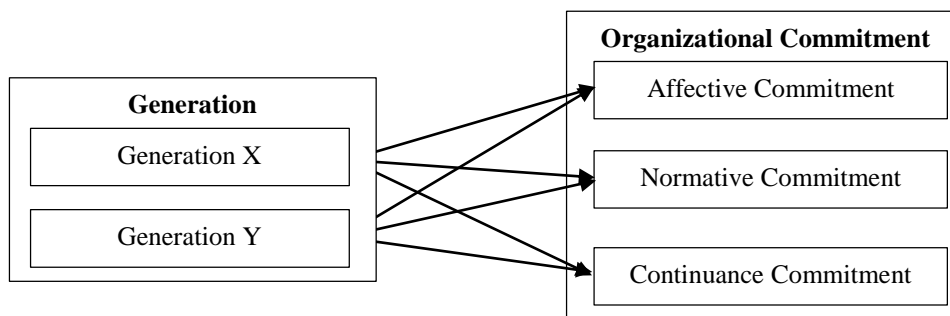
Allen and Meyer in 1996 (p. 252) defined affective commitment as “a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization” (Nelson 2012). As Swiles in (2002), continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen 1991, p. 67). Heizman (2018) defined normative commitment is as the degree in which an employee feels obligated to their organization or the degree to which the employee feels that staying with their organization is the right thing to do.

To address the issue whether the organizational commitment differ across generations of apparel industry in Sri Lanka following hypothesis are developed.

- H₁ : There is a significance difference between Generation X and Y employees in terms of organizational commitment.
- H₂ : There is a significance difference between Generation X and Y employees in terms of affective commitment.
- H₃ : There is a significance difference between Generation X and Y employees in terms of continuance commitment.
- H₄ : There is a significance difference between Generation X and Y employees in terms of normative commitment.

Following Figure 01 present the relationship between independent and dependent variable.

Figure 01: Conceptual Framework



3. Method

Target population of this study is all the workers employed in apparel industry, Western province of Sri Lanka and 100 employees were selected randomly as the sample. Primary data were gathered through the standard questionnaire and Generation X and Y were measured using the respondents' age. Organizational commitment was measured using standard questionnaire which was developed by Allen and Meyer (1990).

The internal reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha. The result of Cronbach's Alpha test is given in Table 01, which implies that the instruments employed in this study are greater than 0.7. It means that internal reliability of each instrument is satisfactory (Kottawatta 2014).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Test

	Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha
01	Affective Commitment	.802
02	Continuance Commitment	.702
03	Normative Commitment	.749

Content validity of the instruments used in this study has been ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization derived from the literature and indirectly by the high internal consistency reliability of the instruments as denoted by Alphas (Kottawatta 2014).

Data collected from primary source were analyzed using the computer based statistical data analysis package, SPSS for validity, reliability and analysis. The data analysis included univariate and independent Sample T test analysis.

4. Results

Questionnaire was distributed randomly among workers who employed in apparel industry in Western province of Sri Lanka. Out of 94 employees, 46 employees are in the age range of 41 – 54 years (Generation X) and 48 employees are in the age range of 24 – 40 years (Generation Y). Then, Generation X represented 49% and Generation Y represent 51% from the total sample of employees. Further cross tabulation results provide greater insights on analysis on demographic factors. Results reveal that out of 46 respondents who listed themselves in Generation X (41 – 54), 14 are executives and 32 are non – executives. Out of 48 respondents in Generation Y (24 – 40), 8 are in executive positions while 40 respondents hold non - executive positions.

According to Table 02, the level of organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment are approximately normally distributed. The mean value of organizational commitment in total sample, Generation X and Generation Y are 4.1906, 4.2074 and 4.1745

respectively. The mean value of all these categories are greater than 3 which indicate that the organizational commitment of respondents is in a higher level.

Mean value of affective commitment of total sample, Generation X and Generation Y are 4.2699, 4.3152 and 4.2266 respectively and all mean value of three categories are greater than 3 which indicate that the affective commitment of the respondents is in a higher level. Mean value of continuance commitment of total sample is 4.0691. Generation X and Generation Y reported the mean value for continuance commitment as 4.0734 and 4.0651 respectively. Mean value of normative commitment of total sample is 4.2327 and Generation X and Y reported the mean value for normative commitment as 4.2337 and 4.2318 respectively. All mean value of continuance and normative commitment of three categories are greater than 3 which indicate that the continuance and normative commitment of the respondents are in a higher level.

Table 2: Univariate Analysis of Apparel Industry Workers

	Organizational Commitment	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Total Sample				
Mean	4.1906	4.2699	4.0691	4.2327
Std. Deviation	.26833	.30470	.35574	.28961
Skewness	.853	.630	.474	.988
Kurtosis	.188	-.351	1.181	.104
Generation X				
Mean	4.2074	4.3152	4.0734	4.2337
Std. Deviation	.26593	.33721	.33601	.25496
Skewness	.654	.252	.262	.332
Kurtosis	-.049	-.561	-.304	-1.163
Generation Y				
Mean	4.1745	4.2266	4.0651	4.2318
Std. Deviation	.27244	.26630	.37720	.32205
Skewness	1.075	1.110	.633	1.298
Kurtosis	.660	.184	2.212	.462

Table 03: Group Statistics

Group Statistics					
	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Organizational Commitment	41-54	46	4.2074	.26593	.03921
	24-40	48	4.1745	.27244	.03932
Affective Commitment	41-54	46	4.3152	.33721	.04972
	24-40	48	4.2266	.26630	.03844
Continuance Commitment	41-54	46	4.0734	.33601	.04954
	24-40	48	4.0651	.37720	.05444
Normative Commitment	41-54	46	4.2337	.25496	.03759
	24-40	48	4.2318	.32205	.04648

Table 04: Independent Sample T test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Organizational Commitment	Equal variances assumed	.410	.523	.593	92	.555
	Equal variances not assumed			.593	91.967	.554
Affective Commitment	Equal variances assumed	3.832	.053	1.418	92	.160
	Equal variances not assumed			1.411	85.592	.162
Continuance Commitment	Equal variances assumed	.162	.688	.112	92	.911
	Equal variances not assumed			.112	91.521	.911
Normative Commitment	Equal variances assumed	2.069	.154	.032	92	.975
	Equal variances not assumed			.032	88.876	.974

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment among the Generation X and Generation Y employees. There was not a significant difference in the Generation X (M=4.2, SD=0.26) and Generation Y (M=4.2, SD=0.27) in the organizational commitment; $t(92) = 0.593$, $p = 0.555$ ($P > 0.05$). These results suggest that organizational commitment does not differ from the Generation X and Generation Y employees in this sample.

There was not a significant difference in the Generation X (M=4.3, SD=0.34) and Generation Y (M=4.2, SD=0.26) in the affective commitment; $t(92) = 1.418$, $p = 0.160$ ($P > 0.05$). These results suggest that affective commitment does not differ from the Generation X and Generation Y employees in this sample.

There was not a significant difference in the Generation X (M=4.1, SD=0.33) and Generation Y (M=4.1, SD=0.38) in the continuance commitment; $t(92) = 0.112$, $p = 0.911$ ($P > 0.05$). These results suggest that continuance commitment does not differ from the Generation X and Generation Y employees in this sample.

There was not a significant difference in the Generation X ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.25$) and Generation Y ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.32$) in the normative commitment; $t(92) = 0.032$, $p = 0.975$ ($P > 0.05$). These results suggest that continuance commitment does not differ from the Generation X and Generation Y employees in this sample.

5. Findings, Discussion and Recommendation

The major findings of the study can be summaries as below.

1. Organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment of the total sample of employees in the apparel industry in Western province recorded as high level.
2. Organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment of the Generation X of employees in the apparel industry in Western province recorded as high level.
3. Organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment of the Generation Y of employees in the apparel industry in Western province recorded as high level.
4. There is not a significant difference of organizational commitment of Generation X and Generation Y of employees in the apparel industry in Western province.
5. There is not a significant difference of affective commitment of Generation X and Generation Y of employees in the apparel industry in Western province.
6. There is not a significant difference of continuance commitment of Generation X and Generation Y of employees in the apparel industry in Western province.
7. There is not a significant difference of normative commitment of Generation X and Generation Y of employees in the apparel industry in Western province.

The major finding of the study is that there are no any differences of organizational commitment between the Generation X and Generation Y employees in this sample. However, Singh and Gupta (2015) mentioned that younger Generations showed lower commitment towards the organization than other Generations. Same idea given by Glazer et al. (2019). As per them, millennials show a lower commitment to the place they work compared to older Generations.

Study results further denotes that there is a no significant difference in terms of affective commitment between Generation X and Generation Y employees in apparel industry of Western Province. Previous literature suggests similar findings with this regard. Nelson (2012) found that there is no significant difference of affective commitment between Generation X and Generation Y employees. Proving the same fact Glazer et al. (2019) also presented that millennials were not committed differently than Generation X'ers in terms of affective organizational commitment.

Also, continuance commitment indicates that there is no any significant difference between Generation X and Generation Y employees. Findings of Mohsen (2016) discloses unmatching findings to the findings of current research. Mohsen (2016) writes that Generation X has strong orientation towards continuance commitment than Generation Ys.

Moreover, it was found that there is no significant difference in terms of normative commitment between Generation X and Generation Y employees in apparel industry of Western province. But previous literature indicates parallel ideas which was suggested by Mohsen (2016) that normative commitment is significant to both Generation X and Generation Y in a similar way.

6. Conclusion

Current workforce mainly consists of three generations namely baby boomers, Generation Xs and Generation Ys. Among these contributions of Generation X and Y employees are being highlighted because larger proportion of workforce is consisting with these two generations. According to Kraus (2016) generations grew up in different time periods and they possess different values, views and expectations. Therefore controlling and managing them effectively, managers must identify their expectations separately. Moreover, when considering the work values organization commitment placed in a higher place about the significance. According to Salami (2008) organization commitment can be identified as a function of different variables such as job satisfaction, participative decision making, motivation, financial rewards, communication and leadership styles.

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