A Comparative Study of International and Chinese New Generation Staff Research from the Perspective of Knowledge Domains Mapping

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Abstract. It has become a common phenomenon that the intergenerational shift occurs all over the world. What do they care most about at work? What happiness and annoyance does work bring to them? These are the hot issues concerned by the practice community in recent years. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the development of China's new generation of employees. This can become a reference for academics and new research topics will be revealed. We collected 416 international articles and 863 Chinese articles which respectively from the Web of Science database and the China National Knowledge Infrastructure database. Bibliometric and mapping knowledge domain analysis methods were used in this study for temporal distribution analysis, cooperation network analysis, and co-word network analysis. The findings from these studies suggest that Chinese academics need strengthen cooperation among different organizations. Regional and economic distribution differences between international and Chinese cooperation networks do exist. Developed countries occupying the leading status in this domain. Chinese academy should attach more significance to figuring out the co-existence problem of different generations.

Keywords: new generation staff · CiteSpace · knowledge domains

1 Introduction

Sociologists theorizing the concept of 'generation' have traditionally looked to birth cohorts sharing major social upheavals such as war or decolonization to explain issues of generational solidarity and identity affiliation. According to human socialization theory, since the younger generation's path of socialization is totally different from the older one, what the effect will be and how could society respond to them when these youngsters enter the labor market? When it comes to China, the one-child policy lasting for decades made the situation more complicated. These only children have more special socialization progress. As a new generation of employees, they soon will come or have come into the workplace, with number increased year by year, being the backbone of the firm.

Meanwhile, the older employees are still on the frontline, and the traditional control and command management seems to be not worked. Under such circumstances, there arise some questions like how to manage those employees who grew up in the different environment and to make different generations of employees work in harmony with each other has turned into a challenge for managers.

The past decade has seen the rapid development of new generation staff research. The new generation of employees has their own distinct personality characteristics. Compared with baby boomers and Generation X, millennials have higher overall company and job satisfaction, job safety recognition satisfaction, career development and promotion satisfaction, but similar levels of satisfaction with pay and benefits, the job itself and turnover intention [1]. In psychological traits, they demonstrate higher self-esteem, narcissism, anxiety, and depression; a lower need for social approval; more external locus of control [2]. Millennial workers also have strong protean career tendencies and a record of frequent job and employer changes [3]. Particularly, because social media has become a critical part of their everyday lives, they perceived a higher person-organization fit for a company with organizational policies supporting employees' social media use [4]. Taken together, the findings from the research on generational gaps demonstrate that today's workforce is different.

To seek a more proper way of management, scholars have made some exploration and discussed several strategies. Organizations can adopt policies and programs such as reverse mentoring [5]. Additionally, changing performance evaluation indicators to include more different measures, providing a more transparent workplace, clearly showing the rewards that employees will receive, and helping new employees adapt to changes in the workplace can make the organization operate more efficiently and benefit all generations of employees [6].

However, some conundrums still need to be dealt with. From the perspective of knowledge domain mapping, scholars are not aware of the difference about the differences that caused between international and Chinese new generation staff research. Moreover, what are the hotspots and trends of new generation staff research? So, we compared international and Chinese studies on new generation staff by reviewing the papers in this field that were come out over the past nearly 20 years from both international and Chinese journals. Then, the knowledge mapping method is used to display the research hot spots, and development trends in this domain. Research conclusions can show the cutting-edge development trends in this field and help to understand and grasp the latest hot spot changes.

2   Methods

2.1   Data Sources

Data were selected from two sources: international and Chinese database. And complete documents should be contained in the database of bibliometric methods [7]. Among all those academic databases, there has be a lot of literature showed that the Web of Science (WoS) is the largest and most comprehensive one, covering peer-reviewed journals with

high impact factors [8–11]. Accordingly, the international data collected for this study were collected from the WoS Core Collection. Editions including Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-E), Science Citation Index Expanded (SSCI), and Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) databases. Chinese data used for this study were collected from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), which is the largest Chinese journal full-text database and one of the most important data sources of bibliometric research in China [12].

2.2 Data Retrieval

What is noteworthy is that the obtaining data by inappropriate literature information retrieval strategies may lead to inaccurately reflection of the content of the research [13]. New generation staff is a common Chinese term that concentrates on a certain group of employees who was born in the 1980s and 1990s. This group is the so-called "new generation" because of their individualities and concepts totally different from traditional ones [14]. However, it was not certified internationally. We learned that a generation can be defined as an "identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages" [15]. Thereby, the generational groups prevalent in today's workforce researches are often called Generation X (born1962–1979), Generation Y (born 1980 onwards), and even Millennials. Based on this situation, the international data retrieval queries were set as TS = (generation* OR millennial*) AND TS = (staff* OR staves OR employee*) AND LANGUAGE: (English) AND DOCUMENT TYPES: (Article) Indexes = SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-SSH. When retrieving Chinese data, "new generation staff" were chosen as the topic words. The search query of WoS and CNKI were run on July 25, 2021. A total of 1926 articles from 1970 to 2021 were retained from WoS, while 1296 articles from 2003 to 2021 were retained from CNKI.

In order to ensure that all of the data were totally correspond to the study objects. we had a discussion and further set some inclusion and exclusion norms to filter all of literature. The inclusion norms were as follows: (1) generational differences; (2) practice and method of HRM especially on new generation staff. The exclusion norms were as follows: (1) retirement, education system problems, or idea generation; (2) Review Articles, Proceedings Papers, Early Access, Meeting Abstracts, Editorial Materials, Letters, Corrections, Notes and so on. Eventually, 416 international papers and 963 Chinese papers were accepted. The international papers were downloaded in plain text" format with a full record and cited references for further analysis. And the Chinese papers were downloaded in the "Refworks" format, containing the list of authors, the title of the article, the abstract, keywords et al. Figure 1 demonstrates the specific search steps we had made.
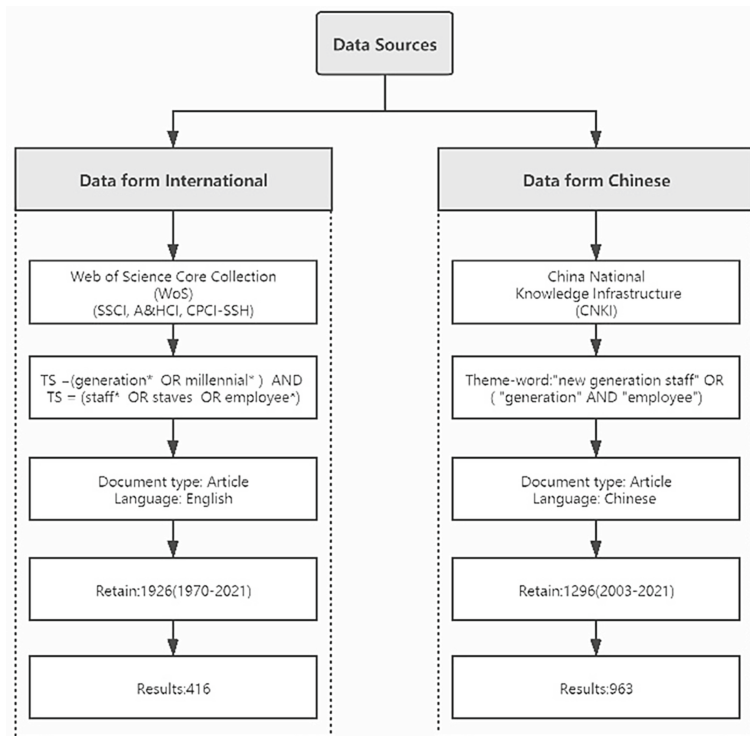
Fig. 1. Retrieval steps of our study data

3   Results

3.1   Temporal Distribution Analysis

The graph shows that the number of international papers fluctuated slowly before 2013. After that, the number began to increase sharply. What stands out in this chart is that the number of papers peaked in 2017, reaching 45. It dropped in the next two years until 2020 in that the number of papers rose to a high point at 62. The study on new generation staff in China started in 2006. During 2010–2014, there was a marked increase in the number of articles. Then, it maintained at a relatively stable level in recent years, was around 100. In contrast, Fig. 2 reveals that the Chinese research on the new generation of employees may started late, but a large number of Chinese scholars participated in the research from the very beginning.

3.2   Cooperation Network Analysis

Figure 3(a), which displays the international co-author network, indicates all of authors and their collaborators who conducted studies on new generation staff. The top-ranked item by citation count was Ying Zhu (YING ZHU in the graph), with a citation count of 6. He was followed by Malcolm Warner (MALCOLM WARNER) and Dogan Gursoy
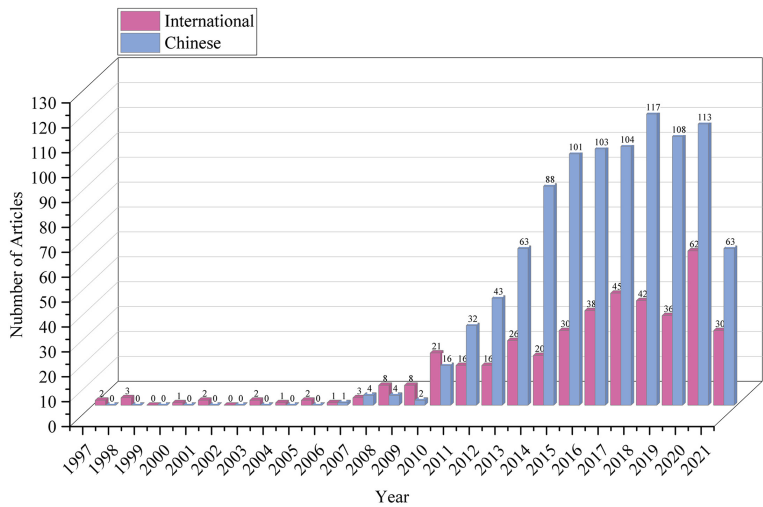
Fig. 2. Temporal distribution and trend of new generation staff study

(a) International database   (b) Chinese database
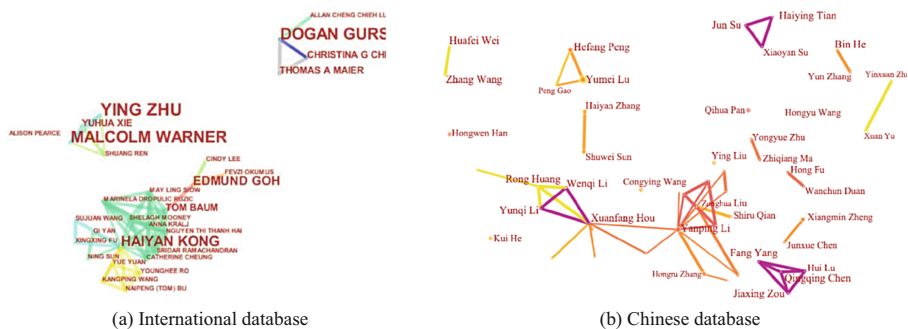
Fig. 3. Co-author network.

(DOGAN GURSOY); both of their citation counts were 5. These were the most influential authors in this field. However, all items' centrality was less than 0.1. We assume that is because this is an emerging domain and most scholars still work independently for now. Also, from the figure, we can see that Haiyan Kong has formed a certain size of co-author network which centered around himself. In Fig. 3(b), the top-ranked Chinese scholars who has most citation count was Xuanfang Hou who has a citation count of 21. He was followed by Fang Yang (17), Huafei Wei (17), Zhang Wang (16), Rong Huang (16), Yunqi Liu (15), Xiaoyan Su (15), Qingqing Chen (15), Jiaxing Zou (15), and Wenqi Li (15).

3.3   Co-institution

In the section that follows, it will be argued that new generation staff have been focusing by many institutions (showed in Fig. 4). The top-ranked institution which has most
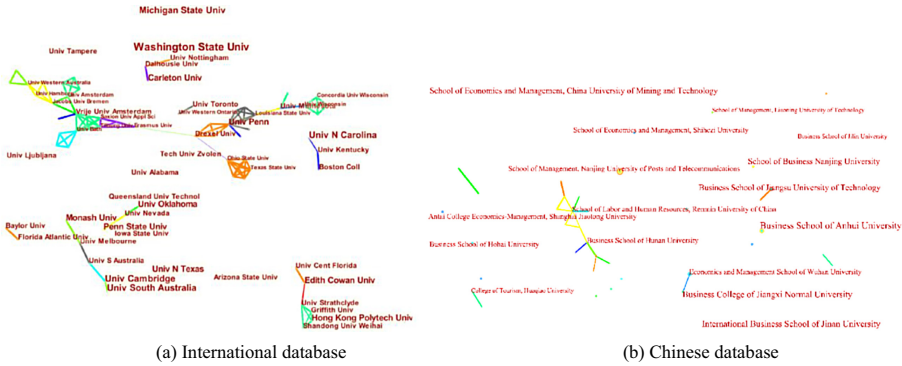
(a) International database   (b) Chinese database

Fig. 4. Co-institution network.

international citation count was Washington State University (Washington State Univ.), with citation counts of 7, which shows its powerful influence in this field. Michigan State University (Michigan State Univ.) was in the second, with citation counts of 5. The University of South Australia (Univ South Australia.), the University of Cambridge (Univ Cambridge.), and so on had the same number of papers pressed. The above. Analysis showed that universities were the leading institutions to study the international new generation staff research. The top-ranked item by citation count in the Chinese database was the School of Business, Anhui University, with a citation count of 25, followed by Business College of Jiangxi Normal University (20), International Business School, Jinan University (15), School of Economics and Management, China University of Mining and Technology (15), School of Business, Nanjing University (14), School of Business, Jiangsu University of Technology (14), School of Management, Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications (13), etc.

3.4 Co-country

We can easily conclude from Table 1 that new generation staff research's development differs among countries, and countries like USA, People's Republic of China, Australia, England, and Germany are taking the lead in this domain. According to statistics conducted by the World Bank [16], these countries were all belong to high-income countries except China. Plus, half of them are centralized in Europe and North America. Among these countries, the USA was far ahead of the rest in its centrality and number of articles. This showed that in the field of new generation staff research, most advanced studies were carried out by the USA. Although China ranks second in the number of published papers, it still has a long way to go to catch up with its European and American counterparts in the centrality. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that Chinese scholars may have an advantage in quantity through publishing some articles in the field; nevertheless, they also need to build up their quality of articles. In addition, what is striking is even the number of papers from Germany (16) and England (28) was much lower than that of the USA, the centrality of articles in both countries was greater than 0.10, which proved that the paper quality was still high.

Table 1. TOP 9 COUNTRIES IN THE COUNT AND CENTRALITY OF INTERNATIONAL DATABASE

Number	Nation	Centrality	Nation
177	USA	0.52	USA
51	PEOPLES R CHINA	0.27	ENGLAND
40	AUSTRALIA	0.24	GERMANY
28	ENGLAND	0.2	BRAZIL
17	CANADA	0.18	PEOPLES R CHINA
16	GERMANY	0.18	AUSTRALIA
12	INDIA	0.1	ITALY
9	SOUTH KOREA	0.1	CZECH REPUBLIC
9	NETHERLANDS	0.05	FRANCE

4   Co-word Network Analysis

4.1   Keywords Co-occurrence Network Analysis

It is known that keywords represent the main contents of each paper, namely, also represent topics of wide concern for researchers and hotspots in this field. Figure 5(a) shows that the top ranked keywords which has most citation count from the international database were generational difference (99), performance (50), work value (47), job satisfaction (43), millennial (40), generation (38), value (34), management (34), attitude (33), and work (32). The top ten centralities were value (0.66), generational difference (0.57), management (0.56), attitude (0.51), metaanalysis (0.43), generation y (0.35), performance (0.28), work (0.27), model (0.27), and personality (0.27). The centrality for all of them was more than 0.10, which meant they occupy a more important position than other keywords. Figure 5(b) shows that the top keywords of Chinese new generation staff study were new generation staff (536), new generation (86), work value (58), new generation of knowledge workers (46), turnover intension (40), mental agreements (35), knowledge-based staffs (34), organization identity (34), innovation behavior (31), and human resource management (30). The top ten centralities were new generation staff (0.86), human resource management (0.79), new generation staff (born in 1990s) (0.54), new generation of knowledge workers (0.44), personality traits (0.36), occupational stigmata (0.32), mental agreements (0.29), amo theory (0.29), science and technology enterprises (0.29), and organization identity (0.28). From the perspective of the distribution of keywords in international and Chinese databases, international studies mainly focus on generational differences in all the ways. By contrast, Chinese studies mainly focus on new generation staff themselves.

4.2   Burst Detection Analysis

Figures 6 and 7 reveal the keywords with the strongest citation burst from international and Chinese databases. 37 burst words were detected from the international database,
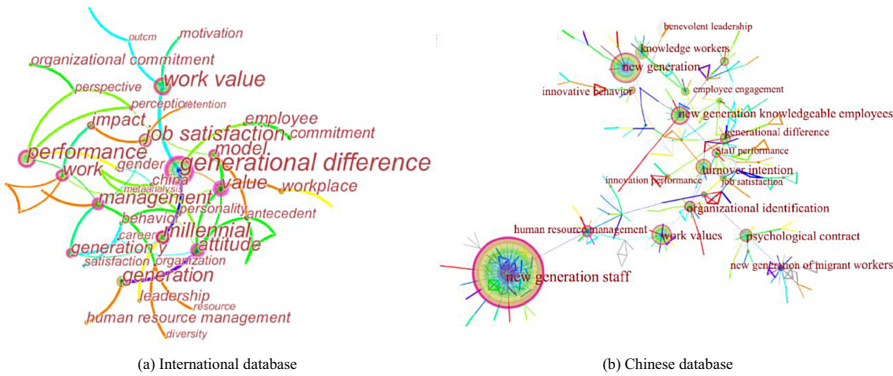
(a) International database   (b) Chinese database

Fig. 5. Keywords co-occurrence network.

while the 34 burst words were detected from Chinese database. The frontier of international new generation staff research included baby boomer, nursing, outcome, generational difference, work value, social exchange organization, and so on. Among these words, job satisfaction (6.46) was the strongest burst keyword during the period between 2018–2021. Then, was the generational difference (5.25, 2016–2017), work value (4.94, 2016–2018), and China (4.84, 2018–2019). And what all these burst words are detected for is to reflect better exemplify subjects of great interest in recent years. From the perspective of the time development sequence, international research on new generation staff start with baby boomers. Then, work value and the generational difference became a new leading research foreland (2016–2018). More recently (2019–2021), the workplace and generation z has become the hot area of research. The hot spot of Chinese new generation staff research included employee-organization value fit, challenging organizational citizenship behavior, organization identity, and so on. During 2006–2013, Chinese research on new generation staff was in its start-up stage. The main research frontiers were person-organization value fit. When it comes to the 2010s, as China's urbanization process accelerating, the new generation of migrant workers became the primary group that has helped to break down dual urban-rural structure and speeding up urbanization in the social transformation in China. So, it is inevitable that this special group became a research hotspot. After 2018, job well-being, organizational support, self-determination theory, work-family conflict, etc. the hotspots in current study. Compared with international study on new generation staff, Chinese research developed to have its own contextualization. For example, researches on the new generation of migrant workers as previously mentioned. What's more, timely social issues like the string of suicides at Foxconn [17] also act as a booster. In addition, thanks to the sustained and rapid development in the past 40 years of reform and opening up, which has made China a major logistics country with global influence and the largest logistics market in the world, new generation employees in logistic enterprises became particularly noteworthy.

To give a further explanation of the above most concerned study topics, the top 5 cited papers are shown in Tables 2 and 3. What can be clearly seen in these two tables are: the top 5 ranked papers which has most citation from international databases appeared in 2008, 2010, and 2011. The article Generational Differences in Work Values,

Top 37 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

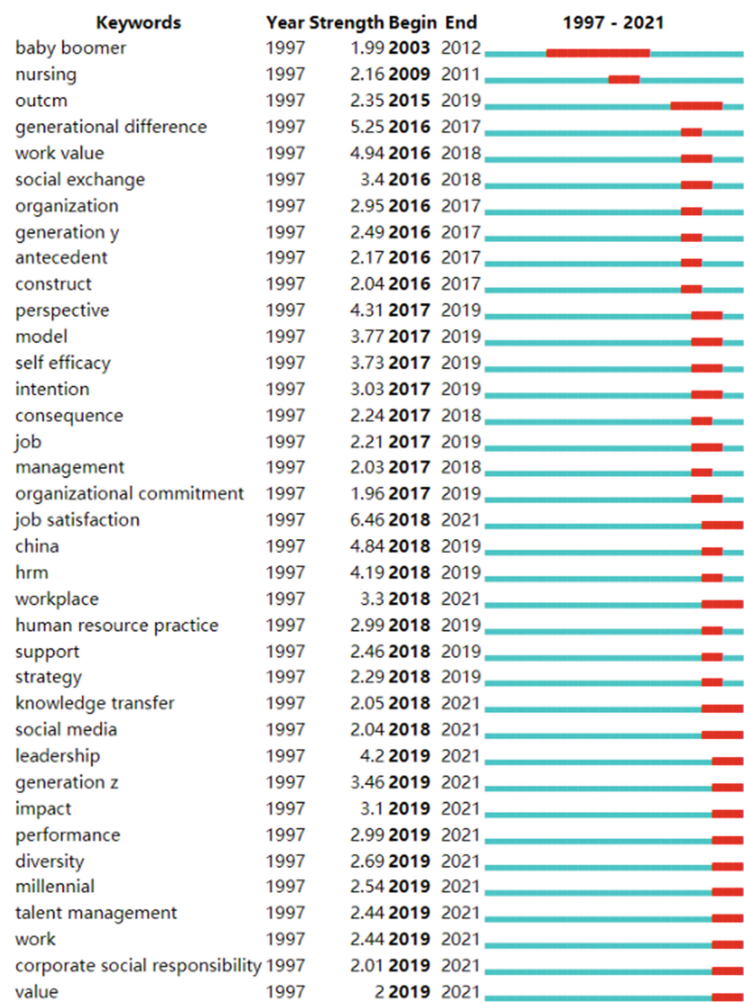| Keywords	Year	Strength	Begin	End	1997 - 2021
baby boomer	1997	1.99	2003	2012	
nursing	1997	2.16	2009	2011	
outcm	1997	2.35	2015	2019	
generational difference	1997	5.25	2016	2017	
work value	1997	4.94	2016	2018	
social exchange	1997	3.4	2016	2018	
organization	1997	2.95	2016	2017	
generation y	1997	2.49	2016	2017	
antecedent	1997	2.17	2016	2017	
construct	1997	2.04	2016	2017	
perspective	1997	4.31	2017	2019	
model	1997	3.77	2017	2019	
self efficacy	1997	3.73	2017	2019	
intention	1997	3.03	2017	2019	
consequence	1997	2.24	2017	2018	
job	1997	2.21	2017	2019	
management	1997	2.03	2017	2018	
organizational commitment	1997	1.96	2017	2019	
job satisfaction	1997	6.46	2018	2021	
china	1997	4.84	2018	2019	
hrm	1997	4.19	2018	2019	
workplace	1997	3.3	2018	2021	
human resource practice	1997	2.99	2018	2019	
support	1997	2.46	2018	2019	
strategy	1997	2.29	2018	2019	
knowledge transfer	1997	2.05	2018	2021	
social media	1997	2.04	2018	2021	
leadership	1997	4.2	2019	2021	
generation z	1997	3.46	2019	2021	
impact	1997	3.1	2019	2021	
performance	1997	2.99	2019	2021	
diversity	1997	2.69	2019	2021	
millennial	1997	2.54	2019	2021	
talent management	1997	2.44	2019	2021	
work	1997	2.44	2019	2021	
corporate social responsibility	1997	2.01	2019	2021	
value	1997	2	2019	2021	

Fig. 6. Keywords with the strongest citation bursts of international database.

Outcomes, and Person-Organisation Values Fit was the most cited (348) international article [18] followed by Generational Differences in Work Values: A Review of Theory and Evidence [19]. The top 5 Chinese cited papers of new generation staff appeared in 2007, 2009, 2012, 2013, and 2014. Table 3 shows us that the most frequently cited paper from Chinese database was Structure of Work Values of Millennial Generation and Mechanism of Its Impact on Work Behavior [20], with a frequency of an dramatic 372. This was followed by Xuanfang Hou's paper Work Values of Chinese Millennial Generation: Structure, Measurement, and Effects on Employee Performance [21].
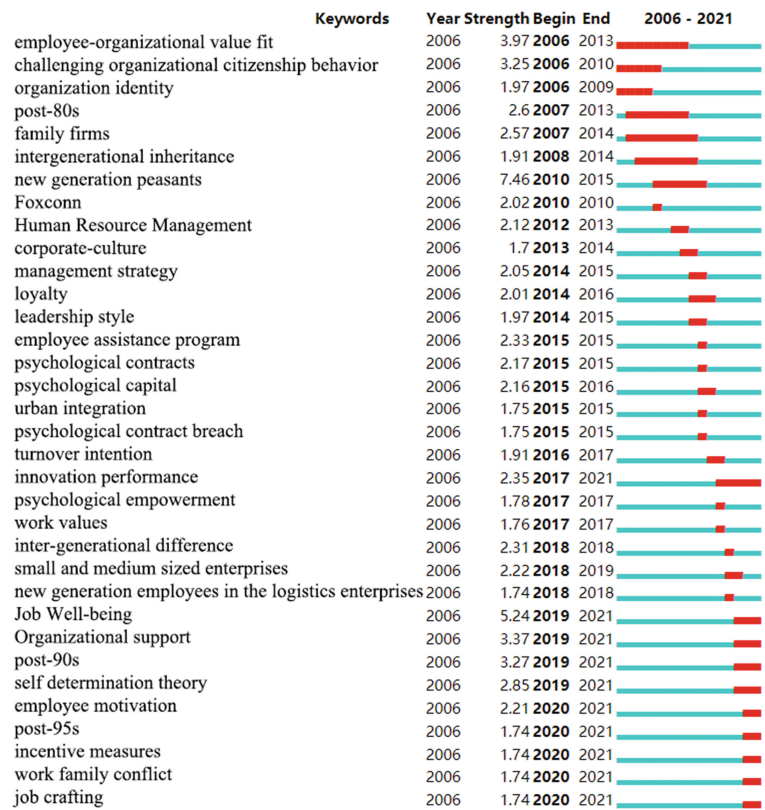
Top 34 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

Keywords	Year	Strength	Begin	End	2006 - 2021
employee-organizational value fit	2006	3.97	2006	2013	
challenging organizational citizenship behavior	2006	3.25	2006	2010	
organization identity	2006	1.97	2006	2009	
post-80s	2006	2.6	2007	2013	
family firms	2006	2.57	2007	2014	
intergenerational inheritance	2006	1.91	2008	2014	
new generation peasants	2006	7.46	2010	2015	
Foxconn	2006	2.02	2010	2010	
Human Resource Management	2006	2.12	2012	2013	
corporate-culture	2006	1.7	2013	2014	
management strategy	2006	2.05	2014	2015	
loyalty	2006	2.01	2014	2016	
leadership style	2006	1.97	2014	2015	
employee assistance program	2006	2.33	2015	2015	
psychological contracts	2006	2.17	2015	2015	
psychological capital	2006	2.16	2015	2016	
urban integration	2006	1.75	2015	2015	
psychological contract breach	2006	1.75	2015	2015	
turnover intention	2006	1.91	2016	2017	
innovation performance	2006	2.35	2017	2021	
psychological empowerment	2006	1.78	2017	2017	
work values	2006	1.76	2017	2017	
inter-generational difference	2006	2.31	2018	2018	
small and medium sized enterprises	2006	2.22	2018	2019	
new generation employees in the logistics enterprises	2006	1.74	2018	2018	
Job Well-being	2006	5.24	2019	2021	
Organizational support	2006	3.37	2019	2021	
post-90s	2006	3.27	2019	2021	
self determination theory	2006	2.85	2019	2021	
employee motivation	2006	2.21	2020	2021	
post-95s	2006	1.74	2020	2021	
incentive measures	2006	1.74	2020	2021	
work family conflict	2006	1.74	2020	2021	
job crafting	2006	1.74	2020	2021	

Fig. 7. Keywords with the strongest citation bursts of Chinese database.

Table 2. TOP 5 CITED ARTICLES OF INTERNATIONAL DATABASE

Number	Author	Title	Journal	Year
348	Cennamo L	Generational differences in work values, outcomes and person-organisation values fit	J MANAGE PSYCHOL	2008
297	Parry E	Generational Differences in Work Values: A Review of Theory and Evidence	J MANAG REV	2011
275	Twenge J	Generational differences in psychological traits and their impact on the workplace	J MANAGE PSYCHOL	2008

(continued)

Table 2. (*continued*)

Number	Author	Title	Journal	Year
250	Gursoy D	Generational differences: An examination of work values and generational gaps in the hospitality workforce	INT J HOSP MANAG	2008
144	Kowske B	Millennials' (Lack of) Attitude Problem: An Empirical Examination of Generational Effects on Work Attitudes	J BUS PSYCHOL	2010

Table 3. TOP 5 CITED ARTICLES OF CHINESE DATABASE

Number	Author	Title	Journal	Year
372	Yanping Li	Structure of Work Values of Millennial Generation and Mechanism of Its Impact on Work Behavior	Business Management Journal	2012
310	Xuanfang Hou	Work Values of Chinese Millennial Generation: Structure, Measurement and Effects on Employee Performance	Acta Psychologica Sinica	2014
293	Xiaoyi Wu	Characteristics and management countermeasures of new Generation employees	Human Resources Development of China	2007
205	Na Huo	Progress and Prospects in Research on Work Value	Advances in Psychological Science	2009
192	Hong Fu	The characteristics and motivation of the New Generation of Employees in China——Reflections on the popular events of the new generation	Social Scientist	2013

5   Discussion

International study on new generation staff occurred much earlier than that of Chinese. In English, a particular title has long been used to refer to people born in a certain era who have many commonalities and overall influences, such as Blundering Generation, GI Generation, Lost Generation, and so on. However, Chinese scholars' research on the generation gap started relatively late, mainly because Chinese society has been relatively traditional and stable, the social and cultural changes are relatively slow, and

the intergenerational conflict is not obvious. Since the 1980s, Chinese academia has begun to pay attention to generation relationships [22]. Another thing to note is some international articles research new generations by interviewing undergraduates. Just as what Lyon P [23] and Goh E [24] did, whereas it is rarely to be seen in Chinese literature.

In terms of cooperative networks, the evidence from this study suggests that there is less cooperation among Chinese authors from different institutions. However, it has commonly been assumed that the cooperation between different research institutions is helpful in promoting more high-level and fruitful research, which can also develop and extend the research field into a more established area [25]. Taken together, these results suggest that Chinese scholars should strengthen cooperation between different institutions. Another significant aspect is the country network analysis, it displays obvious regional and economic development differences. What is interesting in geography is most of these countries are concentrated in Europe and North America, in the meantime the numbers of papers from there and these papers' citations are also markedly higher. Except for BRICS countries like China, India, and Brazil, more active markets and a large enough population base not only make them confront severer generational problems but also provide these countries a real-world environment for further research.

Turning now to Co-word analysis of new generation staff international research. It can demonstrate what scholars in this field are really interested in and concerned. Hot topics of international new generation staff research can be roughly divided into three categories. The first is generational differences in values, personalities, motivation, career, etc. In this discipline, scholars attempt to find out mediating or moderating roles between these differences and outcomes. However, a prominent question is many studies that find the predicted differences in work values often fail to distinguish between 'generation' and 'age' as possible drivers of such observed differences. In addition, in most studies, due to the cross-sectional research design, the empirical literature is full of methodological limitations. Therefore, additional longitudinal research is needed. Another one is focused on talent management problems, especially Gen Yers' retention and performance. Many studies have focused on the impacts of individual and organizational factors like commitment [26, 27], job satisfaction [28], workplace [29, 30], and so on. But due to the lack of cross-industry research, the universality may be limited. In the future, a larger scale of investigation can be carried out to further verify the universality of the research conclusions. And future studies should focus on other possible mediating and moderating variables to further explore the mechanism and boundary conditions that influence individual behavior. The last one is about generational diversity. Because of all kinds of generations' stereotypes and they are prone to have different expectations of their work [31], the co-existence of such many different generations may lead to communication conflicts [32]. In other words, academics should answer what kind of management, leadership, and organization do we need.

The main contents of China's new generation staff research include 4 major orientations. The first is similar to international research's first cluster, concentrating on generational differences, as well as problems like turnover intension and counterproductive work behavior caused by this. The second is focused on the new generation of knowledge workers and looked for factors that infect their innovative behavior and innovation performance. Thirdly, A few studies attended to the new generation of migrant

workers and their urban integration. Through it is a research topic in the context of China, related research still will serve as a reference for other developing countries. Last but not the least is about motivation and other management measures to new generation staffs especially knowledge workers. Comparing with international research, more emphasis is placed on the certain research of this cohort, while the little discussion is made on the intergenerational management and conflict-solving strategy between this group and their parents.

6   Conclusions

Thus far, the thesis chose two large retrieval library documents database to describe exactly new generation staff field and revealed cutting-edge trends in this field. According to the analyses, the following is a brief description of the conclusions.

- Compared with scholars in developed countries, Chinese institutions should strengthen cooperation among different organizations.
- Areas where significant differences have been found include differences in regional and economic distribution between international and Chinese cooperation networks. Developed countries (mostly European and North America countries) have a more international focus.
- We highlight significant gaps in Chinese and international extant studies, also, we point out some potential future research avenues. That is, Chinese academy should attach more significance to figure out the co-existence problem of different generations.

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