

Interpersonal Communication in Parenting Style Across Generations (X&Y)

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Abstract—The purpose of this study is to find the different pattern of interpersonal communication in parenting style of generation X (known as Baby Boomers) and generation Y nowadays. Passive observation begun on October 2016 to see the phenomenon happened between parents and children's behavior. Three informants (in same categories of generation) have been interviewed and researcher found several similarity of parenting style in previous generation where they were raised as children. The thing that should be considered is the same perspectives of generation Y style of parenting can drive the Millenials less aware of values. Gen Y sees the hardships they went through as something they would not let their children to experience. Gen Y's treatment towards Millenials right now would have its end result in the future of their children's mentality. Whether Millenials would have a shriveling, dependent and sluggish mentality or even ready for combat, facing the global competition waiting ahead of them.

Keywords: *interpersonal communication, parenting style, generation X, generation Y, baby boomers*

INTRODUCTION

The existences of children from Millenials (1981-2000) nowadays attract the attention of researcher. Several times in passive observation, researcher saw a phenomenon of the way parents treat their children like a boss. For example, October 28, 2016 at Sun Plaza, Medan on weekend evening (about 7pm), researcher saw a kid (± 8 years old) asked his mom to buy a toy, and his mom disagreed by saying NO. Then, this kid cried out loud in the middle of huge crowd and attracted mall attendees' attention, include me. His parents seemed embarrassed and solve the problem by directly bought the toy, which made her son stop crying.

Two weeks after that, at the same place, I saw the same phenomenon. This time, another boy (± 6 years old) ask her mother to buy ticket to ride the train. His mommy said NO, and explained reasons. He disagreed, and started cry out loud in the same situation, weekend, super crowd, and

again, he got attendees' attention. But I saw the different response. His mom let him cried and rolls on the floor, being the attention of people and went through her way and left him (even still keep her eyes on him). What happened next was shocking me. That kid stopped crying, ran and followed her.

Two kinds of Phenomenon happened to the same generation of parents (ages 28-38) but these two mothers represent a very significant different way of parenting. By throwing back to the childhood time (198x) I remembered the way my parents (Baby Boomers) respect their parents (Traditional Generation), how they obey every single words said by them and how they imitate the process to raise children.

A previous journal related with this study, written by Ahmad M. Mahasneh¹

¹Mahasneh et al. (2013), The Relationship between parenting style and adult attachment styles from Jordan Univeristy students International Journal of Asian Social Science, Vol.3 No.6: pp. 1431-1441

(Faculty of Educational Science Hashemite University, Jordan) shows the correlation between parenting style and adult attachment styles. The result showed the significant correlations between parenting style and attachment style; it also showed parenting styles explain attachment styles and patterning styles predict two sub-dimensions of attachment styles. This research written on 2012-2013 and had random sample of 564 respondents. According to the attachment theory, people developmental models, which are related to their relationships with other individuals during infancy, childhood, and adulthood. These mental models are the ones, which unify and organize the individual's experiences and beliefs and also comprise other people's personal characteristics (Bowlby, 1982)².

On September 2016, an Austrian teen sues parents over childhood photos on Facebook. She (18 years old) has filed a lawsuit against her parents for posting hundreds of photos of her as a child to Facebook. She said the pictures are embarrassing and have made her life a misery.³

2 years before, 2014, mass media in Indonesia broadcasted the hot news about a young celebrity, Marshanda, sued her mother. She claimed that her mother had thrown her for 8 days from July 26 to August 2, 2014.⁴ Several months after that, October 2014, there was a widow with 8 children sued by her 4th daughter. She was sued for material claims amounting to 1 billion and leaving the place where she lives at in damages caused.⁵

²Bowlby, John. 1982. *Attachment and Loss*. NY : Basic Books.

³www.dw.com/en/austrian-teen-sues-over-childhood-photos-on-facebook/a-19550533 accessed Nov 10, 2016

⁴<http://m.liputan6.com/showbiz/read/2086896/marshanda-sungguh-sungguh-akan-melaporkan-ibu-ke-polisi> accessed Nov 10, 2016

⁵<http://m.merdeka.com/peristiwa/anak-anak-ini-gugat-dan-polisikan-orangtua-kandung-sendiri.html> accessed Nov 10, 2016

This phenomenon has driven the question in researcher's mind. How was the baby boomers' way to raise children (especially the way they used in communication to children) and earned different ways to do parenting to gen-Y.

This percent study is important for:

1. Benefit parents in helping them to understand the importance of choosing interpersonal communication style to do parenting for next generation.
2. It opens the door for researchers to conduct related studies in the field of interpersonal communication, parenting, or another perspective of generation's differences.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Researchers use the Qualitative Research Method with Descriptive Approach. Qualitative researchers emphasize the process and meaning rather than quantity, frequency or intensity (which mathematically can be measured), although researchers do not forbid descriptive statistics in the form of a frequency distribution or percentage to supplement data analysis (Mulyana, 2007:11)⁶

Collecting Data Techniques:

1. Interview

After gaining permission from informant, the researchers arranged time to do interview to 3 informants (separately). The researcher explained to each informant the purpose and the importance of their participation in this study. In addition, the researcher assured the participants of the confidentiality of their response and that their response would be used only for

⁶Mulyana, D. & Solatun. (2007), *Metode Penelitian Komunikasi*, PT. Remaja Rosdakarya: Bandung.

research purposes. Then, the interview script is written on the script.

2. Literature Study

Literature study aimed to earn a critical and in depth evaluation of previous research consist of books, previous journals, and articles written by experts. Then, researcher analyzed the script based on the literature study and describes all the result narratively.

A. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is the communication that takes place between people who are in some way “connected”. Although largely dyadic (two-person) in nature, interpersonal communication is often extended to include small intimate groups such as the family. Even within a family, however, the communication that takes place is often dyadic – (mother to child, father to mother, daughter to son, and so on). (Devito, 2013)⁷

B. Family Communication

Laing (Galvin and Bromel, 2012)⁸ defines family as “a group of people who go through life together in a certain period, which is bound by marriage and have a blood relationship between family members with each other”. In the relations between family members then they will communicate with each other to deliver what their thoughts, desires, their feelings with each other. They communicate to convey messages and respond to messages.

From the existence of family, children learn about love, habit, values, adopting

parent’s behavior and know about responsibility as their consequences of behavior. The first education experienced by children in family influence the growth of children. (Eshleman & Cashion, 1985)⁹.

The relationship between parents and children is the relationship between the generation of the most important in the family, and for most people, is a relationship that is simple to define a family (Segrin & Jeanne, 2008). The process of communication between parents and children has been the subject of numerous studies.

Research on the interaction of parents and children can be classified into three perspectives by Peterson & Hann (Segrin & Jeanne, 2008): one direction (unidirectional approach), two-way (bidirectional approach) and a systems approach (*system approach*).

Characteristic of Generations

An organization that is empowering families to grow together in positive and enriching environment named The West Midland Family Center (WMFC)¹⁰ shows a table of Generational Differences Chart bellows :

⁷Devito, Joseph A. 2005. *Interpersonal Communication*. London: Longman Inc.

⁸ Galvin, K. M. & Brommel, B.J. (2012), *Family Communication : Cohesion and Change, 6th edition*, Scott Foresmen Company, New York, NY.

⁹Eshleman, J. R & Barbara G. C. (1985), *Sociology : An Introduction*, Boston & Company, Boston.

¹⁰<http://www.wmfc.org/uploads/GenerationalDifferencesChart.pdf> (accessed Nov 10, 2016)

(Take a look of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millenials)

Generational Differences Chart

	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Birth Years	1900-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980	(1977-1994) 1981-2000
Current Age	63-86	44-62	28-43	8-27
Core Values	Adhere to rules Conformers/Conformity Contributing to the Collective good is important Dedication/Sacrifice Delayed Reward Discipline Don't question authority Duty before pleasure Family Focus "Giving Back" is important Hard Work Law and Order Loyalty Patriotism Patience Respect for authority Responsibility Savers Stabilizing Trust in Government	Anti war Anti government Anything is possible Equal rights Equal opportunities Extremely loyal to their children Involvement Optimism Personal Gratification Personal Growth Question Everything Spend now, worry later Team Oriented Transformational Trust no one over 30 Youth Work Want to "make a difference"	Balance Diversity Entrepreneurial Fun Highly Educated High job expectations Independent Informality Lack of organizational loyalty Pragmatism Seek life balance Self-reliance Skepticism/Cynical Suspicious of Boomer values ThinkGlobally Techno literacy	Achievement Avid consumers Civic Duty Confidence Diversity Extreme fun Fun! High morals Highly tolerant Hotly competitive Like personal attention Self confident Socialability Members of global community Most educated generation Extremely techno savvy Extremely spiritual Now! Optimism Realism Street smarts
Family Experience	Traditional Nuclear	Disintegrating "Clever Family" Mom stayed home As children were seen as "special"	Latch-key kids Women widely expected to work outside the home The first "day care" generation Dual Income families	Merged families Coddled kids (they got a trophy for coming in 8 th place)
Education	A dream	A birthright	A way to get there	An incredible expense
View on Work/Life Balance	Work hard to maintain job security	Were hesitant of taking too much time off work for fear of losing their place on the corporate team. As a result, there is an imbalance between work and family.	Because of parents who are Boomer workaholics, they focus on dearer balance between work and family. Do not worry about losing their place on the corporate team it they take time off.	Not only balance with work and life, but balance with work, life and community involvement and self development. Flex time, job sharing, and sabbaticals will be requested more by this generation.
Technology is...	Hoover Dam	The microwave	What you can hold in your hand;cell, PDA	Ethereal - intangible
Communications Media	Rotary phones One-on-one Write a memo	Touch-tone phones Call me anytime	Cell phones Call me only at work	Internet Picture phones E-mail
Communication	Discrete Present your story in a formal, logical manner Show respect for their age/experience (address as Mr, Sir, Mrs) Use good grammar and manners (no profanity) Deliver you message based on the history/traditions of the company and how they can fit Use formal language Don't waste their time Use inclusive language (we, us) Focus-words not body language Slow to warm up Memo Like hand-written notes, less email and more personal interaction	Diplomatic In person Speak open – direct style Use body language to communicate Present Options (flexibility) Use E-Comm's/face-to-face Answer questions thoroughly and expect to be pressed for details Avoid Manipulative/controlling language Like the personal touch from Managers Get consensus-include them or they may get offended Establish a friendly rapport OK to use first names Learn what is important to them Emphasize the company's vision and mission and how they can fit in	Blunt/Direct Immediate Use straight talk, present facts Use email as #1 tool Learn their language & speak it Use informalcommunication style Talk in short sound bytes Share info immediately and often Has the potential to bridge the generation gap b/w youngest and oldest workers. Don't micro-manage Use direct, straightforward approach Avoid buzz words and company jargon Tie your message to "results" Emphasize "WIFM" in terms of training and skills to build their resume	Polite Use positive, respectful, motivational, electronic communication style.(Cell phones, email, IM, text)>these are"fun" Communicate in person if the message is very important Use email and voice mail as #1 tools Don't talk down-they will resent it Show respect through language and they will respect you Use action verbs Use language to portray visual pictures Be humorous-show you are human Be careful about the words you use and the way you say it(they are not good at personal communication because of technical ways of communicating) Be positive Determine your goals and aspirations and tie message to them Prefer to learn in networks, teams using multi-media while being entertained and excited
Messages that Motivate	"Your experience is respected"	"You are valued" "You are needed"	Do it your way Forget the rules	You will work with other bright, creative people
Motivated by...	Being respected Security	Being valued, needed Money	Freedom and removal of rules Time Off	Working with other bright people Time Off
Money is...	Livelihood	Status Symbol	Means to an end	Today's payoff
Work and Family Life Balance	"Ne'er the two shall meet" Keep them separate At this point in their lives they are interested in flexible hrs and are looking to create balance in their lives after working most of it.	No balance "Live to work" At this point in their lives they are interested in flexible hrs and are looking to create balance in their lives. They have pushed hard, all work and no play and they are beginning to wonder if it was worth it.	"Work to live" "Live to work" Balance is important. They will sacrifice balance, but only occasionally. They work to live, not live to work.	"Work to live" Balance is important. They will sacrifice balance, but only occasionally. They value their lifestyle over upward mobility. If presented with a work promotion that will throw their life out of balance, they will choose their lifestyle.

Parenting Style

Parenting style is studied extensively for human development. It can be said that the way parents take care of their child impact the child's personality development, social interaction and from close relationships with significant other.

Psychologist, Baumrind (1971)¹¹ identified four patterns of parenting styles based upon two aspects of parenting behavior: control and warmth. Four primary parenting styles emerge: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, Uninvolved Parents.

1. **Authoritative Parents** are warm but firm. They encourage their adolescent to be independent while maintaining limits and controls on their actions. Authoritative parents do not invoke the "because I said" rule. Instead, they are willing to entertain, listen to, and take into account their teen's viewpoint. Authoritative parents engage in discussions and debates with their adolescent, although ultimate responsibility resides with the parent.
2. **Authoritarian Parents** display little warmth and are highly controlling. They are strict disciplinarians, use a restrictive, punitive style, and insist that their adolescent follow parental directions. Authoritarian parents invoke phrases such as, "you will do this because I said," and "because I'm the parent and you are not." Authoritarian parents do not engage in discussions with their teen and family rules and standards are not debated. Authoritarian parents believe the adolescent should accept, without question, the rules and practices that they establish.
3. **Permissive Parents** are very warm,

but undemanding. They are indulgent and passive in their parenting, and believe that the way to demonstrate their love is to give in to their adolescent's wishes. Permissive parents invoke such phrases as, "sure, you can stay up late if you want to," and "you do not need to do any chores if you don't feel like it." Permissive parents do not like to say no or disappoint their children. As a result, teens are allowed to make many important decisions without parental input. Parents do not view themselves as active participants in shaping their teen's actions; instead they view themselves as a resource, should the adolescent choose to seek their advice.

4. **Uninvolved Parents** are not warm and do not place any demands on their teen. They minimize their interaction time, and, in some cases, are uninvolved to the point of being neglectful. Uninvolved parents are indifferent to their adolescent's needs, whereabouts, or experiences at school or with peers. Uninvolved parents invoke such phrases as, "I don't care where you go," or "why should I care what you do?" Uninvolved parents rarely consider their teen's input in decisions and they generally do not want to be bothered by their teen. These parents may be overwhelmed by their circumstances or they may be self-centered. Parents might also engage in this style if they are tired, frustrated, or have simply "given up" in trying to maintain parental authority.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

When we threw back the previous experiences they had before, the interpersonal communication pattern of

¹¹Baumrind, D. (1971), *Current Patters of Parental Authority*, Warner Books, New York.

parenting style they developed as children based on relationship with parents or early caretaker doesn't have to define their ways of relating to their style of parenting in their adult life.

These three informants have same character of family:

1. All mothers stayed at home, took care of everything needed for the solidity of family, especially for children.
2. Fathers were hesitant of taking too much time off work for fear of losing their place on the corporate team. As a result, there is an imbalance between work and family.

Their perspective of interpersonal communication in parenting they experienced as children of Baby Boomers:

1. Parents were highly controlling.
2. Children did things because "my parents said so"
3. Do not engage with discussion with adolescent.
4. Gen-Y has high level of awareness about non-verbal message from Baby Boomers.
5. Obedience is a must, no compromise
6. Pattern of communication flow:

Children → Mom → Dad → Mom

7. Face - to - face communication is the only way to communicate with parents.
8. Parenting style of Baby Boomers in this research is authoritarian style.

Gen-Y has a significant different perspective from Baby Boomers in the practice of parenting. Some factors are such the easy access to information (digitalization) and better education urge generation Y to become what they consider as better parents for the next generation (Millenials).

The "Family comes first" trend has been boisterously campaigned in the last half decade. However, there has always been a counter attack. While this family trend is strengthening, the anomaly of family that loses their substance would follow. The wealth that has been achieved by the previous generation (Baby Boomers) inarguably the result of hard work, work ethics, and strong mentality due to the majority of the impoverished background. They (with the economic inconvenience at that time) managed to educate their children about values, manners, and respect.

The intervention by Baby Boomers as parents is also backlashing with the freedom given by Millenials towards their ambition as a child. If Baby Boomers pushed their children to pursue what the parents considered as the best major, Gen Y does not want their children to go through what they have previously experienced as a child, having no say in what they are going to pursue. Gen Y tries to figure out their kids' talents and interest as soon as possible so that can be a guidance for them as parents to facilitate their kids to develop themselves according to their own interest.

The firm upbringing Baby boomers applied on Gen Y causes the latter one to adopt a different perspective. Gen Y sees the hardships they went through as something they would not let their children to experience. Whenever Millenials ask for something, the parents would try to fulfill it. Moreover when Gen Y works to the point that they only have limited time with their children, everything their children ask for is easily granted as a form of payment for their guilt of not spending enough time at home.

It is also not a rare occasion for us to see the phenomenon when babies cry to the point that they practically roll on the floor because they have something they want that they have not gotten yet. Some parents feel embarrassed that they instantly give up to the children's request. Unconsciously, this becomes a weapon for the child to get what they want. This causes producers compete to

make children as their targeted consumers. Gen Y's fear towards the future of Gen Z has become the market field that is being massively exploited at the moment. Without realizing, they are trapping their children into the comfort zone and somehow diminishing their work ethics and also the strong mentality, which was the key to the success of their parents and themselves.

However, for some parents, they overcome their embarrassment with leaving their children (as they keep an eye on them) and not giving in to their requests with the intention to maintain assertiveness, to educate, and to not let their children depreciate the parents' position.

CONCLUSION

The difference in communication pattern, whether within a generation or cross-generations has unwittingly become an important thing to be highlighted in today's family trend. Gen Y's treatment towards Millennials right now would have its end result in the future of their children's mentality. Whether Gen Z would have a shriveling, dependent and sluggish mentality or even ready for combat, facing the global competition waiting ahead of them.

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