

Psychological well-being and workplace relations gaps on generational differences

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ABSTRACT: This research is done to gain a picture of relationships and communications between staffs and higher-ups, problems that arise in workplace, the problem-solving connected with the generational differences and effects on psychological well-being. Gaps in work relation due to generational differences if not managed well, will indirectly affect the workplace condition and how each individuals do the work. The questions for this research are (1) How does the psychological well-being of each working individuals can be connected with generational differences in workplace? (2) Why do gaps exist in relationships between staffs and higher-ups with or without generational difference (3) How is the ability to manage our own psychological well-being can handle gaps in relationships between staffs and higher-ups who has generational difference? The findings from this research are (1) Individuals can overcome differences between generations if they are able to manage their psychological well-being (2) Gap can occur in the relationship between staffs and higher-ups caused by individual differences in mindset, the value of work embraced, and the way individuals do work, which is affected by differences in the character of each generation (3) The ability to manage psychological well-being can overcome the differences in generations between staffs and higher-ups, namely each must have empathy to be able to understand each other's thoughts, and have the same goal, which is to advance and develop the organization through thinking, ideas and innovations.

Keywords: generational differences, psychological well-being, gaps in work relation

1 INTRODUCTION

In the world of work today, employees who work in organizations consist of various generations. The labor market says that the generation currently working is mostly generation X, and generation Y, while the baby boomers are starting to retire. Generation X was individuals born from 1965 to 1981, while generation Y were individuals born from 1982 to 2000 (Wong *et al*, 2008). Generation is defined as a group of individuals born within a certain period of time that grows in the historical and socio-cultural context, world events, natural disasters, economic conditions, and the same technology that causes the development of core values that differ from one generation to another (Waal *et al*, 2017).

The generation currently working consists of generation X and generation Y, each of which has different characteristics in working. Quoted from the article written by (Ryback, 2016) states that in the

world of work the baby boomers work according to the rules and prioritize work life. While generation X is a generation that values the balance between life working with personal life. Furthermore, it was written that the Y generation or millennial is in conflict with the baby boomers generation, who want to have a lot of vacation time, dress casually, be flexible in their work, and adhere to the principle of working smarter rather than working harder. Quinn (in Broek *et al*, 2017) states that each generation has a unique uniqueness compared to the previous generation. Quoted from a study conducted by Birkman (in Broek *et al*, 2017), the results show that generation X has a high level of resilience, independence and ability to adapt. While in the Y generation the characteristics possessed are more self-confidence.

Smith (in Jiri, 2016) suggests that various differences that exist within the organization if not managed properly, will affect productivity and the

emergence of conflict in the organization. This means that generational differences are one of the things that need to be considered to be managed properly by the organization, because it affects the conditions that exist within an organization. One that is related to the different characteristics of each generation is the value of the work embraced. Sarraf *et al* (2017) define the value of work as something that is believed to be true or false in the work environment. Smola & Sutton (in Sarraf, 2017) argues that the leadership's response to different values of employees can influence organizational values, which then have an impact on organizational problems such as ethics and culture.

The work environment and the harmonious relationship between employees can affect the psychological well-being of the individual. Kapoor & Solomon (2011) wrote that one result of conflict between generations in the workplace is that it can reduce employee morale within an organization. Cartwright & Cooper (in Robertson, 2012) suggests that individuals who have a higher level of psychological well-being at work, have good mental and physical health and have a longer and happier life.

In this study there are research questions that will be studied and answered using various data collection and analysis techniques, including; (1) How does the psychological well-being of each working individuals can be connected with generational differences in workplace? (2) Why do gaps exist in relationships between staffs and higher-ups with or without generational difference (3) How is the ability to manage our own psychological well-being can handle gaps in relationships between staffs and higher-ups who has generational difference?

2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research that uses a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach describes the general meaning of a number of individuals on life experiences that have to do with concepts or phenomena. This paradigm was chosen because researchers want to interpret generational differences and their relation to psychological well-being that individuals have.

The technique used to determine the subject of the study was using a purposeful sampling approach. Creswell (2018) defines this approach to mean that researchers choose individuals and places to study because they can provide an understanding of research problems and phenomena in specific research. Researchers need to decide who, what, how, and how many participants or places need to be sampled (Creswell, 2018).

Data analysis is done by: (1) Organizing and converting existing files into appropriate text units such as; a complete word, sentence or story. (2) the researcher reads the transcript as a whole then writes an important idea or concept to do a breakdown. (3) describe and classify data into detailed codes and themes. (4) coding process. (5) developing code, forming themes, then organizing themes more broadly to interpret data. (6) present and visualize data into narratives, tables, and charts (Creswell, 2018).

The type of triangulation in this study was use source triangulation. Source triangulation means checking the validity of information obtained through different data sources, such as comparing the results of observations with interviews, comparing various existing information with those delivered by person to person, comparing the results of interviews with existing documents (Bachri, 2010).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Generational differences in the workplace provide various effects and influences on individuals in doing work. In the participant manager of generation X stated that differences in generations in the workplace influence the differences in work methods, values and mindset of individuals. As a manager who leads staff from generation Y states that employees of generation Y have a mindset that tends to be instant to complete a job. This difference in mindset makes a difference in doing work. This resulted in the X generation manager giving freedom for staff to develop and innovate, but still set the same final results and according to the demands given. The following is a quote from the participant's statement:

"The older generation are still old-fashioned, so it's still stiff too idealistic. Whereas for the younger generation thinks most of it instantaneously, to achieve something the result of the work remains the same but the way of thinking is different. If the older generation they will think that the term is too prolonged but the final goal is actually the same".

The staff members from generation Y who have managers from generation X also feel that the existence of differences in generations creates differences in mindset, values and ways of working. Living in the era of sophisticated technology causes staff members from generation Y to tend to use technology in their work. While the managers from generation X still use manual methods in matters that are administrative in nature. These differences in habits sometimes lead to conflicts between managers and staff.

"For my manager, it's all the characters using hardcopy. Hardcopy. Nothing like hardcopy the most. For me, I like playing softfile. That's just a bit different. Because the written administration is really written paper. Well, I don't like it in the form of written paper. Yes, I applied it in the form of soft copy, I emailed, I made monitoring and so on".

In the participant manager of generation Y who led the generation X staff also felt the same. Generational differences lead to differences in ways and mindsets in doing work that also causes conflict. This can affect the performance of the individual if the conflict that occurs is not immediately resolved. But as a manager, participants continue to apply that responsibilities in the work must still be carried out despite obstacles or problems at work.

Staff participants from Generation X led by managers from Generation Y stated that the weaknesses possessed by their managers are in decision making. Staff from X generation experienced problems with fellow staff several times because managers were judged to be less decisive in decisions, which then disadvantaged staff participants from generation X. The wise attitude of managers who considered various opinions was partially viewed

negatively by staff members of Generation X because sometimes less objective. This has caused the performance of staff participants from Generation X to be less than optimal because the motivation has decreased.

In the participants of the leadership of the baby boomers, the difference between generations in the work environment is something that is dynamic and challenging. The occurrence of conflict because of differences is a natural thing, but as a leader must be able to bridge the various differences that exist between the different employees of that generation. Participants from the leadership of the baby boomers try to be neutral and manage the various differences so as not to have an impact that will harm the organization. The following is a quote from the participant's statement:

"In my opinion, it's dynamic. So the difference in generation does carry its own obstacles. Only if I consider it a challenge. How to bridge the millennial generation with the generation considered senior".

Participants as leaders of the baby boomers also realize that in making a decision it is impossible to be pleasant and accepted by all parties. Therefore, awareness of each individual is needed to be able to put aside the ego that is owned, and focus more on the goals to be achieved by the organization. Mangkunegara (2005) suggested that the occurrence of work conflict can be caused by differences in perceptions, differences in work orientation, and differences in understanding organizational goals. For participants, the goals and success of the organization remain a priority at work.

Conflicts that occur can affect relations between superiors and subordinates, as well as fellow employees. Harmonious relations between employees will have an impact on individual performance in person and in the team. This is related to the completion of tasks and responsibilities in work that will be hampered due to lack of communication between employees. Conflict that is allowed to happen protractedly will also have an impact on one aspect of the psychological well-being of an individual related to positive relations with others. In addition, the existence of gaps also causes the work

environment to be less conducive. This will trigger a decrease in individual motivation in work, which then affects employee performance. The work environment is a very important factor to consider. To support employee performance, a comfortable and conducive work environment is needed (Bintoro & Daryanto, 2017).

For the participants in the study, the conflicts that occurred were not very meaningful. The participants took the principle that the purpose of working was to meet needs and make a living. This can be attributed to one aspect of the psychological well-being, which is purpose in life, which was shown by the participants that they work to meet the needs of life. In addition, they also make maximum efforts to continue completing work tasks and responsibilities without seeing conflicts or gaps that occur as obstacles. Various methods are carried out by participants as coping strategies to maintain maximum performance at work. Participants also consider the problems faced by the different generations in the workplace to be interpreted as learning processes to improve the personal growth aspects of addressing various existing problems.

4 CONCLUSION

The findings from this research are (1) Individuals can overcome differences between generations if they are able to manage their psychological well-being (2) Gap can occur in the relationship between staffs and higher-ups caused by individual differences in mindset, the value of work embraced, and the way individuals do work, which is affected by differences in the character of each generation (3) The ability to manage psychological well-being can overcome the differences in generations between staffs and higher-ups, namely each must have empathy to be able to understand each other's thoughts, and have the same goal, which is to advance and develop the organization through thinking, ideas and innovations.

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