

EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS OF EMPLOYEES IN AN ORGANIZATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract

Corporate executives, at present, should manage their work and responsibilities for each position, including benefits and welfare to meet the needs of their employees in each generation; Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. Organizational supports in terms of performance, duties, responsibilities and the environment of the workplace enhance the commitment of the employees, their passion and pride at work. Employees tend to devote themselves to make a good and effective performance without any idea of resignation and applying to other organizations. Therefore, executives should build the commitment in three generations:

1) Generation X employees need organizational support in order to be accepted, respected and honored by the organization.

2) Generation Y employees need organizational support in order to be recognized in the organization and opportunities to develop their skills relating to their corporate responsibilities. In

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addition, flexibility and balance between their working and private life hours, teamwork and beneficiary activities to society and the environment are also needed.

3) Generation Z require an opportunity to share their opinions. Works regarding design and creativity with online support system are needed. They prefer to be considered and assessed by the quality of work than seniority system. Moreover, the atmosphere at workplace and a good environment are necessary for them.

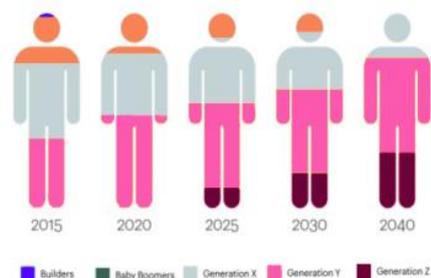
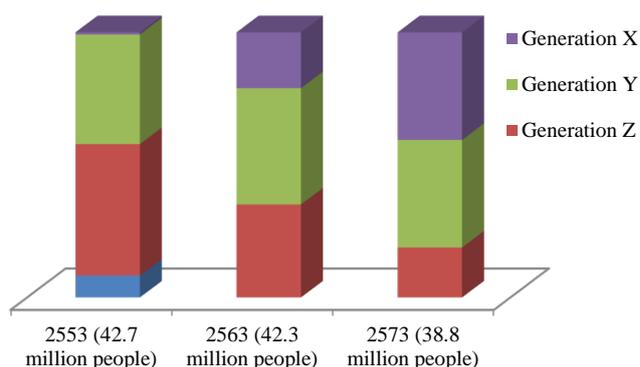
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Introduction

The current situation of the world is the age of rapid social, political, economic and technological change leading to the development, change and public administration. Under the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) which set the guidelines for integrated development in an organization concentrating on people-centered development, since people are the key stakeholders who obtain the benefit and the impact of this issue. Moreover, they are the main factor that helps the organization develop and reach its goal. Therefore, organizations need to develop their employees in every dimension in a balanced way. The strategy for human resource development is to focus on developing people to be excellent in creating knowledge and innovation, which has increased the awareness among academics, thinkers and businessmen. To be effective and productive, organizations must have good and well-educated people. Human resource management has been concentrated in several organizations since the organization's accomplishment is based on its employees, the most important and valuable factor of the organization. (Tantithamrongwut et al., 2016)

In the past several years, the generations of employees in organizations, especially in human resources management, have become in concentration. An interesting issue is that the organization at present are consist of employees from at least three different generations; Generation X, Y and Z, working collaboratively. This is a new phenomenon for human resource management in this era and has expanded to many countries (Macky, Gardner and Forsyth, 2008). However, it is found that misunderstanding due to different visions or perception creates gaps in communication, learning and technology needs, development in career paths, and so on (Herbison, & Boseman, 2009) among employees from different generations.

Thai Workforce (Age 15-59) 2010-2030



Source: Estimation of Thailand Population Projections between 2010-2030 (B.E. 2553-2573), Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, cited in Thai Health Project (2016).

Figure 1 Generation Y will become the majority of the workforce by 2025 (B.E.2568)

Source: Generation matters for Generation Y, 2013

Thai Health Project (2016) raised the indicators of the health of Thais in different generations to present their views in terms of work, income, family building, housing, value, behavior in using technology and online media to enhance understanding and harmony. Generation Theory has gained a lot of attention in workplaces, especially Generation Y. Since Generation Y is a large group and will absolutely influence businesses in the next twenty years. According to the survey, from 2010 to 2030, almost half of the labor force will be the Generation Y population (Figure 1) (Thai Health Project, 2016) which is consistent with the survey from Generation Matters for Generation Y (2013) that in 2025 Generation Y population will be more than half of the world's population and will account for 75 percent of total workers (Figure 1). Several organizations have recognized the importance of understanding the population in this generation in order to attract and retain them as their employees to drive the organization in a long term. In contrast, Generation Z population tends to enter the labor market slower due to the higher and longer education which is beneficial to the labor market and long-term development of the country (Rossarin Gray et al., 2016). The issues between Generation X and Generation Y, both of whom are large population in today's organization in forms of leaders and subordinates, are that Generation X employees began complaining about the unsatisfying behavior of Generation Y at work. (Decharin, 2008) One of the leading management consulting firms noted that Generation Y employees were less serious at work, had less dedication and less patience at work (Dechawatanapaisal, 2009). Disagreements regarding points of views and perception of people in each generation are caused by their learning and life experiences. Due to inter-generation gap, people from each generation normally set themselves as standard and judge others with their own standard. This may lead to conflicts or resignation; therefore, organizations will lose important human resources and waste expenses for human resource management (Dechawatanapaisal et al., 2014)

Working with inter-generation employees in the organization is unavoidable. Experiences in different social, economic, cultural and values at different times lead to diversity in attitude, lifestyles, ways of thinking and personality (Chitsawang, 2017). The differences in working behavior in each generation are personality, attitude, values, behavior, expectations, and dedication to work. Their ideas or beliefs will be reflected in their behavior. Such behavior directly affects the organization and the organization should not ignore because cooperation of all employees is required to help the organization succeed (Yooprot, 2013). Human resource management is a matter that needs more attention because it is a significant factor for the success of the organization. It is a new challenge for organizations to formulate strategies to attract and retain its valuable human resources. Therefore, building employee commitment in an organization is necessary for the organization. (Robbins & Judge, 2017; Atthanit, 2011)

Employee commitment to the organization has been elevated to be one of the most significant factors for the organizations' success. It is believed that if the employees have high commitment to the organization, the efficiency of their work and effective communication will increase. In addition, the commitment is also a tool to predict the behavior of employees, such as absenteeism and employee turnover behavior. This is because employees with high commitment to their organization tend to work

longer and are willing to work more than their counterparts with lower commitment (Yodwisitsak, 2014). According to Gallup Consulting's research on employee commitment, there were only 11 percent of employees who had a sense of belonging to the organization. As a part of the organization, they attempted to create good work for the organization and devoted themselves to the improvement of the organization as if they were the owner. On the other hand, 62 percent of employees were not committed to the organization. They worked if it was their responsibilities. This type of employees would not do anything more useful to the organization but be responsible for the assignment only. However, 27 percent of the employees were found actively disengaged with negative perspective to the organization. This group of employees tend to cause damages to the organization by creating bad attitudes towards the job and share with other employees. The result of this research showed that if there were any employees with no commitment to the organization and they shared their bad feelings to other employees, it would affect the organization severely. Thus, this issue should be in focus and the management must have a plan to deal with those who tend to spread their bad attitude to others. Otherwise, other employees who are not bound to the organization may turn to be a part of the last group instead of being an employee with high commitment to the organization. Moreover, the reason they did not resign was that the organization offered some benefits, such as reward, welfare, convenience at work to them while other organizations did not. The solution is to find the factor that makes the employee feels not engaged and try to gradually move these employees into the 'engaged' level. Employee commitment is not easily created unless the executives pay attention, understand and intend to resolve seriously. The sense of commitment is deeper than the satisfaction as commitment is a matter of dedication, responsibility and desire of creating good work for the organization. Even though employees are satisfied with the company's policies, they may not feel committed to their organization. The employee satisfaction survey may not be adequate to know the level of employee commitment. According to Harter, Schmidt & Hayes' research, which focuses on the organizational commitment and the characteristics of the employees with high commitment. The findings show that the employees who work with dedication constantly have good performance and motivation at work and feel as a part of the organization. A large number of committed employees who have a good attitude towards the organization and to corporate customers affect the profit of the company as they will try to satisfy customers, create a good atmosphere at work, act as a representative of the organization and talk about the organization positively. It is believed that most of the executives want their employees to have a strong commitment to the organization. Unfortunately, it is quite difficult to create an employee commitment as it requires the cooperation of all stakeholders, such as senior management, managers and supervisors. One of the reasons that makes employees have no commitment to the organization is the top management (Puntapalangkul, 2018). Therefore, the employee commitment is the key to retain those who are willing to devote themselves for work in the organization. (Bhatnaga, 2007)

The employees have to perform various tasks within organizations. They are assigned to be in charge of work based on their knowledge, ability and potential under the differentiation of each generation and behaviors including attitudes, opinions, perception, etc. and they have to work together in the same

organization despite the diversity. Such diversity also creates power, unity, love, harmony and care to achieve the organization's mutual goal which is 'Organizational Commitment'. If corporate executives pay close attention to the differences of employees in each generation, such differences can also be opportunities for all the employees to work together happily and efficiently. It will become an excellent organization.

Definition, Concept and Theory of Generations.

Definition of Generations

There are several definitions of generations as follows.

Takatoshi, (2004, p.84) defined the word generation as a group of people who grow up in the same period of time with the same values and life style.

Glass (2007) defined the word generation as people who experience environment or similar events in the society and share their common identity, attitude and behavior with people at the same age.

Generations refer to people born in the same period with common social experience and history together. Strauss and Howe studied the age of American population from 1584 to 2069 and found that each age range is approximately 22 years and the characteristics of each age range depends on parenting which has an impact on attitudes, characteristics, and behaviors (Glass, 2007; Luerat Anuratpanich, 2015)

Generations at work, whether public or private, consist of people from several generations. In this research only Generation X, Y and Z will be studied.

Generation X is born between 1965-1980, after baby boomer generation. At that time, the world was peaceful and there were a lot of changes in the technology, such as changing from a large mainframe computer to a PC, changing from an analog system to a digital one. It was the age of computer and video games. Technology has been involved in their work. Their attitude towards work is different as work is not everything in life. Generation X is ambitious and needs freedom; therefore, they work as it is their responsibility. However, they will change their job if it does not give them any progress. It is clear that they are not so loyal to the organization as previous generations while they tend to focus on their family since they believe that family is the most important. Moreover, they tend to rest and seek happiness for themselves more (Weerapatrunroj, 2016).

Generation Y are those who were born between 1981-1994. People in this modern era need supporting reasons. With technological evolution, Generation Y is well equipped with both IT devices and the internet to access to information easily and fast. Surrounded by technology environment, they can use technology for work and communication. Unfortunately, they tend to pay less attention to actual socialization while concentrate more on cyberspace. The characteristics of this group are impatient, confident, independent, be able to express their opinions, like challenges but dislike to be forced by their parents or seniors. They have different values from previous generations, both in terms of lifestyle and work (Weerapatrunroj, 2016).

Generation Z are those who were born in 1995-2010 (Voraakom, 2014). With new technology, Generation Z is said to be 'Digital Generation'. They desire to make a positive change in the society.

They also accept and learn a variety of cultures in terms of language and race. They share common attitudes, thinking, behaviors, needs and habits. Generation Z, however, tend to have low communication skills because they have more opportunity to learn from the Internet than from communicating with people. Being a part of the online world makes them be up-to-date. They tend to think and do fast, but do not like waiting.

In conclusion, generation refers to a group of people born and raised in the same era. The range of each generation is 22 years. They have the same historical experience which makes the features of each age range different. Parenting differentiates attitudes, values, ideas and behaviors.

Concepts and Principles

It is believed that everyone in an organization has the same goal to drive the organization to success by opening their mind and understanding one another so that they can work cooperatively and happily (Puntapalangkul, 2012).

Despite the differences in opinions and working styles, many organizations have changed their strategic plans in accordance with generations and accepted their diversity. This helps the organization move forward smoothly and effectively.

Theory of generations is used to describe the differences of each generation based on their birth year range for a deeper understanding. Each indicator reflects the difference of people from each generation, i.e. characteristics, personality, childhood environment and experiences, work view, value and behaviors as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Generations at work

Generation	Birth Year	World Events	Characteristics Personality Value
Generation X	1965-1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The world's economy began to prosper. - More women began to work. - Modern culture began to flourish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not like formality. - Prefer the balance of life. - Creative - Late marriage - Desire to work independently - Prefer owning a business to working for a big company - Enjoy challenging jobs and gaining knowledge - Prefer jobs that require a variety of skills - Prefer being a volunteer rather than serving as a citizen

Table 1 Generations at work (Cont.)

Generation	Birth Year	World Events	Characteristics Personality Value
Generation Y	1981-1994	Technology era, especially the Internet.	- Creative - Multitasking - Familiar with technology - Well-intentioned - No patience - Good at team work - Do not like risk - Do not seek the novelty like
Generation Z	2538-2553	- Economic recession - Terrorists - Environmental change - Change in household structure	Generation X - Born and raised with technology - Study more - Self-centered - Love freedom - Low patience - Handle many jobs

Note: Birth years of each generation are different in each study.

Source: Strauss & Howe (2007), Chamnongvej (2013); Voraakom, (2014); Thai Health Project (2016); 12 indicators for Thai Health in different generations, cited in Rossarin Gray et al. (2016)

Definition, Concept and Theory of Organizational Commitment.

Definition of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the feeling of a person who feels that he is a part of an organization with determination to work with his highest capacity and loyalty for the organization without any desire to resign from the organization. (Limweeraphan, 2007: 9)

Organizational commitment means the willingness to devote both physical and mental energy to work for the organization. Employees accept values and goals and want to be a part of the organization. They are willing to cooperate and retain the membership of the organization (Manakit, 2011: 9).

Mongkoldeekakul (2011) stated that organizational commitment means the feeling of the employees. They accept the goals, values of the organization and desire to maintain their part of the organization. There are three components of organizational commitment: Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment.

In conclusion, the meaning of organizational commitment is essential to the organization as it leads to low rates of absence and resignation. It also correlated with job change rather than job satisfaction. It, however, is a powerful incentive for organizational members to work effectively to maximize organizational effectiveness.

Concepts and Theories of Corporate Commitment

Table 2 Summary of Theories

Content Motivation Theory	Process Motivation Theory	Reinforcement Theory
1. Theory of Human Motivation	1. Expectancy Theory	1. Positive Reinforcement
2. E.R.G Theory	2. Goal-Setting Theory	2. Negative Reinforcement
3. Two-Factor Theory	4. Equity Theory	3. Extinction
		4. Punishment

Source: Lussier, & Achua, (2001). Leadership. Ohio: South-western College Publishing: 74-76

Pornrat Sadangharn (2008; cited in Sangsai, 2015) distinguished organizational commitments into three types 1. Attitudinal Commitment 2. Programmatic Commitment and 3. Loyalty based Commitment

1. Attitudinal Commitment is a commitment to the organization in terms of attitudes with a strong commitment to work with full capacity for the organization. Employees with this commitment do not want to resign since they have strong relationships with the organization and it is found that they work harder than those who do not feel attached to the organization.

2. Programmatic Commitment is a commitment to the organization in terms of project. The employees physically work for the organization, but do not work with their full capacity. The employees bound by the project remain working for the organization because they may encounter higher cost or expenses if they change the organization. Moreover, it is found that changing the job reflects unreliability, intolerance and uncertainty.

3. Loyalty Based Commitment is a commitment to the organization in terms of a sense of duty. In order to repay the organization, the employees will work with their full capacity and loyalty. Loyalty inspires and motivates them to reach the ultimate goals of their organization. Being responsible to the organization leads to determination and commitment self-determination.

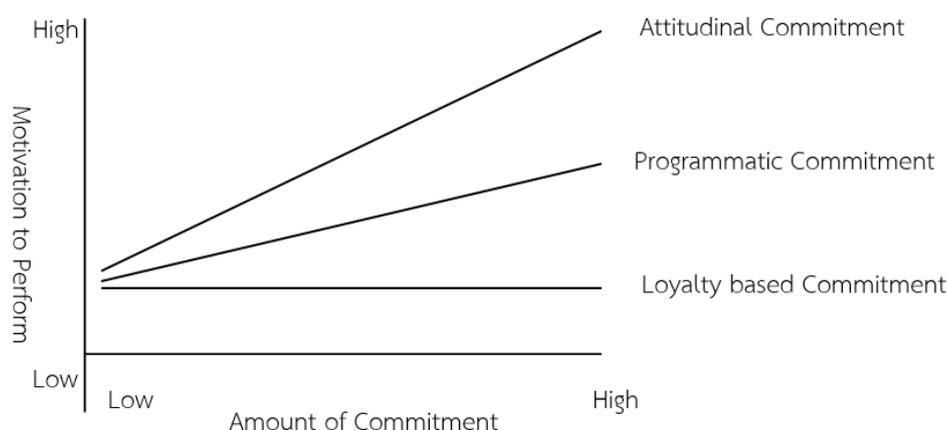


Figure 2 three forms of Commitment Yield Different Performance Level

Source: Chatzkel (2003) Knowledge Capital: How Knowledge-based Enterprises Really Get Built

There are various types of commitments. Each one indicates the relationship between the organization and its employees differently. Commitment of employees to the organization is based on the psychological, emotional or intellectual links between the employee and the organization. It can be implied as an acceptance to goals and the direction of the organization. This indicates a firm desire to be a part of the organization (Maneerat, 2015).

Commitment between Generations and the Organization

Career paths in organizations nowadays have changed dramatically. It is common to see Generation Y become executives and manage Generation X employees. It, however, causes tension between the two groups since Generation X employees may question why they are managed by inexperienced people. On the other hand, Generation Y executive may be concerned whether they do well at work. Jeanne C. Meister, who is a co-founder of Future Workplace, Human Resource Consultant and author of *The 2020 Workplace*, pointed that the tension between people from different generation should be concentrated on as one may be accused of having no respect for each other. Therefore, the management should help each person in the organization understand the diversity of each generation regarding characteristics, skills and expertise.

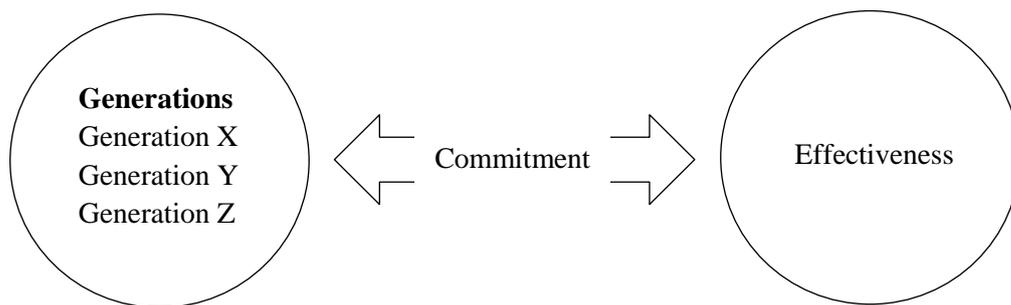


Figure 3 Relationship between the generations and commitment that affects performance in the organization.

Generations is related to organizational commitment. It creates better performance at work and leads the organization to its goal successfully. Those who work effectively are employees who are fully committed to their work with highest capacity to create qualified and satisfied work. They are willing to increase the quality of work and find new methods of working for better results to help reduce time, energy and organizational resource. Organizational commitment plays an important role in this mechanism. It affects work and the efficiency of the organization. The organization can perform various tasks according to the mission of the organization as it helps reduce losses, achieve the objectives and saves time, resources and manpower. Moreover, with the ability to use strategies, techniques, methods, and technology, it creates the right workflow, agility, smooth operation with minimal barriers and conflicts while the employees still have a good morale and enjoy working and being together. This will bring effective results and the organization will become highly efficient and sustainable.

According to Principles of multi-generation workforce management. Uttayarath (2015) suggests methods to make multigenerational employees work happily and effectively together at work. It is admitted that it is not easy unless everyone in the organization cooperates as follows.

1. Share opinion: As a part of a team, every member should understand the team plans and share their opinions. This helps the team work more systematically. Although there are many employees from different generations, there will not be a barrier to work if everyone shares a comment in order to plan a direction.

2. Be responsible: Effective teamwork begins with knowing one's own duties. Having a senior in team does not mean the younger generation will have to work more. Every member must work together with clear responsibility in order to understand the duties of each person and listen to one another's opinions. Senior or mid-level employees should give a comment and also listen to the opinion of the junior or younger generation. This allows everyone to express their opinions equally, fairly and accept the opinions of others. Employees from different generations will be able to work together without any issue.

3. Give fair warning: It is clear that no one wants to be criticized or warned. In case there is a mistake, the one who causes should not resist; otherwise, he will be not only considered as an aggressive person, but it may cause further problems. When the junior or younger generation employees are reasonably warned by their senior employees, they should be open minded. The senior should also give warning based on fairness and reasons, not feelings.

4. Respect the difference: Acceptance of differences helps employees from different generations work together. We should admit that despite different opinions, people still can work together. However, not accepting the diversity of ideas is the main barrier that causes problems at work. Therefore, senior employees should accept their juniors' opinions. On the other hand, the juniors should not have an idea that the seniors' opinions are outdated but should accept them as they have more experience in the workplace.

The Difference between the Generations of Employees and their Organizational Commitment.

The difference between the employees' generations is relevant to the characteristics of each generation. The concept is often conveyed through articles based on the results of studies and researches. It is concluded that each generation has a different organizational commitment (Nguanda, 2013). The factors that affect organizational commitment of employees from different ages are relating to personal information. The average income of Generation X and Generation Y are similarly high. However, generation Y has a higher education level than generation X. Most employees point out that appropriate and fair income as well as welfare affect employee commitment. Moreover, Generation X need a good relationship with colleagues and organization. The factors that generation X and generation Y employees disagree are retention, happiness at work and membership of the organization. It is found that generation Y employees devote themselves more than generation X employees and they have

passion in working for their organization which is consistent with the research results of Sangsai (2015). Moreover, the research also found that the Generation X and Generation Y employees' perception in term of organizational support as well as organizational commitment is high. The fact that their organization provide support in career opportunities, social psychology, performance and opportunities for development in the organization affects the level of Generation Y employees' organizational commitment. Whereas, Generation X employees concentrate on social psychology, i.e. respect and honor the importance and value of the employees when they have successfully worked, encourage employees to participate in the organization, understand and sympathize when employees make decisions or make mistakes, all of which give a great impact on their organizational commitment. The reward can be monetary and non-monetary, such as a salary, other benefits provided by the organization including training to increase knowledge and skills to apply to their tasks as well as being recognized by the organization and their colleagues according to Dechawatanapaisal (2009). Financial factor, responsibility, career opportunities and the recognition of the ability are primary motives. The atmosphere at work, such as location and aesthetics of the workplace, and the interaction among employees, such as bosses, colleagues, are deemed to be non-monetary incentives. Motivations regarding stocks, welfare or honor do not get much attention from Generation Y employees while Generation X employees do not pay attention to the monetary return. In contrast, they pay attention to the welfare, such as medical expenses, being recognized and honored by the organization which are their major motivation based on security and recognition at work. According to Ferincz, Hortovanyi, Szabó, & Taródy (2010), organizational commitment of Generation Y employees is based on work management. This generation needs opportunity and progress in their career; therefore, the job must meet their needs. It is the responsibility of the organization to design the structure of work and provide opportunity for its employees to apply their personal skills. The salary or wages are paid based on their performance or give them a chance to work more than one job, i.e. routine work and project. This helps reduce the risk of the organization. This generation prefer challenging work and like to learn. They also want to improve their skills. Flexible benefit and welfare should be more suitable by giving options. They may not be interested in being able to afford medical expenses but fitness fee, spa, cooking class, flower arrangement, or phone bills. Generation Z employees desire to use technology such as smartphones at work in order to communicate and manage human resource. Flexibility at work is the key for Generation Z employees. They prefer to manage their own time and place to work as they consider that, with technology, they can work anytime and anywhere. Uniforms are neglected by Generation Z employees.

Strategies for building organizational commitment of each generation can be analyzed based on their characteristics, working skill and job satisfaction.

Table 3 Differences in each generation in the organization.

Generation	Characteristics	Working skill	Job Satisfaction
Generation X	- Hip Hop	- Adaptable	- Technology Usage
	- Reason-Based	- Technological skill	- Self Management
	- Universal	- High determination	- Fun Job
	- VDO Games Addicted	- Low Patience	- Relaxing Time
		- Neglect Seniority	- Realistic
Generation Y		- Curious	
	- Accept Changes	- Work for better life	- Challenge
	- Technology-Based	- Individual	- Work that requires multi skills
	- Focus on relationships	- Flexible life	- Work for better life
	- Yippy Lifestyle	- Devote themselves if it is challenging	- Technology Based
	- Job hopper	- Build good relationship	
		- Gain knowledge	
		- Freedom to choose working location and time	
		- desire to know others' visions and ideas	
		- High salary	
Generation Z	- Self confident	- Straightforward	- High salary
	- Multi-tasking	- Flexible	- Opportunity in career
	- Online-Addicted	- Independent	- Dream job
		- Modern Technology	- Technology Based
		- Good Environment	- Security at work
		- Project based work	
		- Planning based work	
		- Freedom	

Source Thanomkaew, Sutataphong, & Leeben (2016) Weerapatrunroj (2016)

Summary of Table 3

Generation X employees are modern, universal, adaptable and have a rather high self-esteem with a powerful performance and determination. Even though they are creative and can use technology, they lack patience and do not feel attached to the organization. In terms of job satisfaction, they can manage themselves, work with pleasure and also be serious at work.

Generation Y employees like taking risk and ready for changes. They concentrate on relationships and yippy lifestyle. They work for better life and need flexibility in life. They work with

dedication if they find it challenging. Their job satisfaction is based on challenges as they can use a variety of skills. Better career path and higher salary while maintaining good relationships and flexibility satisfies them. This group of employees prefer to know others' opinions and visions to sharing theirs.

Generation Z employees are highly self-confident, multi-tasking and up-to-date, so they are able to keep up with the changes of globalization. Even though they are straightforward at work, they are flexible and independent. High technology and good environment at work will satisfy them. Moreover, their job satisfaction is based on high rate salary, career opportunities, security and freedom at work.

It can be concluded that even though the ages and generations of the employees are various, they concentrate on opportunity at work, high reward, independent work, flexibility, challenges and application of modern technology to work effectively. Employees from each generation can apply their skills and potential to work and be together in the same organization effectively, which is an important power for the organization to move forward for the highest benefit and success.

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