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A B S T R A C T

The study aims to determine the effect of work ethics on work engagement as mediated by generational differences. To support the theory of the study, literature was reviewed and the study used a descriptive correlational research design. Research questionnaires were used to gather the data and the study found that work ethics and work engagement of employees across the generation are high. The correlational analysis found a significant correlation between work ethics and work engagement along with the three dimensions of work engagement. It is also found that there is no correlation between generational differences and work ethics and work engagement of employees. Therefore, the hypothesis on the correlation between work ethics and work engagement is accepted, however, the hypothesis on the correlation between generational differences and work ethics and work engagement is rejected. Further study is needed to measure the influence of age differences and work ethics, instead of generational differences.

Introduction

Organizational performance is a critical concern for management, encompassing various aspects of organizational management. It's essential to identify, monitor, and promptly address factors affecting performance. These factors go beyond financial capital and clear directions, including human resources (Becker & Gerhart, 1996). Effective human resources necessitate not only knowledge and skills but also appropriate work values. Thus, human resource assessment is crucial for training and development, ensuring employees possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for their roles (Becker & Gerhart, 1996).

Training and development often prioritize knowledge and skills over attitude due to a narrow perception of their impact on employee and organizational performance, contrary to management principles. Management involves working through people, and employees' behavior is shaped not only by knowledge and skills but also by values and attitudes (Maria & Piedrahita, 2007). A holistic approach to human development should encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Attitudes are influenced by various factors, including the social-cultural environment (Chwialkowska, et al., 2020),where cultural practices play a role in shaping attitudes, which, in turn, influence behavior (Khan, et al., 2014; Shahab & Nisa, 2014; Ogilo, et al., 2020).

Employees who come from different socio-demographical backgrounds compose the workforce in any organization today. According to Purdue Global University (n.d), currently, there are five generations in the workplace namely the traditionalist (2%), baby boomers (25%), Gen X (33%), Millennials (35%) and Gen Z (5%). The workforce comes not only from one generation or one socio-cultural environment but different generations or different socio-cultural environments. The traditionalists were born during the great depression and war and therefore are called veterans. The baby boomers, who are in their retiring age, were born during the baby boom time in the United State (1955-1964), the Gen X (1965-1980), who is now at the climax of their careers born and grew up with a personal computer to some extent and thus becoming tech-savvy, the millennials (1981-1996) were born during the internet and social media era (McKenna, 2022) and finally, the gen Z (Dimock, 2019) was also born during the internet era, social media and diverse value. These generations are born in different eras with different social environments which can affect their attitude toward work and work behaviors (Githinji & Wekesa, 2017, Quinn, 2010) and such situation poses certain challenges to the workplace (Quinn, 2010). Those who are born within the internet era are called digital natives and Google generation, growing up in a world dominated by the internet (Rowlands, et al, 2008), while those who were born before the internet era are called digital immigrants (Wang, et al, 2013), a group who are not internet-savvy. These two eras or generations bring their uniqueness and consequently, their challenges to the workplace as pointed out by Quinn (2010). The different generations have their own needs and wants; therefore, generalizing employees' needs and wants would be a great mistake (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). The assumption is that people who were born in the same period possess similarities in terms of their values and they differ from other people who were born at a different time (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020).

The contemporary workforce is diverse in terms of socio-demographic backgrounds and generational cohorts. Purdue Global University (n.d.) identifies five generations in the workplace: traditionalists (2%), baby boomers (25%), Gen X (33%), Millennials (35%), and Gen Z (5%). These generations were shaped by distinct historical and social contexts (McKenna, 2022; Dimock, 2019), which influence their work-related attitudes and behaviors (Githinji & Wekesa, 2017; Quinn, 2010). Additionally, there's a distinction between "digital natives" and "digital immigrants," based on their familiarity with the internet (Rowlands et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2013). Managing a multi-generational workforce poses challenges (Quinn, 2010), and it's crucial to recognize that each generation has unique needs and preferences (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). Generalizing employees' needs based on their birth cohorts can be a mistake, as values may differ even within the same generation (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020).

Evaluating individual work performance and work engagement without considering these backgrounds may lead to a wrong solution to address work-related issues. Tolbize (2008) has pointed out that one of the possible causes of work ethics decline is the generational conflicts in the workplace. The study of Smola & Sutton, (2002) showed that the work values of managers had declined from 1974-1999 and the decline is also caused by generational differences. This is the main focus of this research. The workforce of the Divine Word College of Laoag is considered diverse because they belong to different generations namely baby boomers, generation X, millennials, and generation Z. These different generations certainly have different attitudes toward work which consequently may lead to different levels of work engagement. The purpose is to differentiate training programs to solve problems related to their work.

There has been no research yet concerning the effect of generational work ethics on work engagement and this research addresses such a gap. Assessing individual work performance and work engagement without considering employees' generational backgrounds may yield incorrect solutions to work-related issues (Tolbize, 2008).

Generational conflicts in the workplace, as highlighted by Tolbize, can contribute to a decline in work ethics. Smola and Sutton's study (2002) further revealed a decline in managers' work values from 1974-1999, attributed to generational differences. This study focuses on addressing these generational differences within the diverse workforce of the Divine Word College of Laoag, comprising baby boomers, Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z. The goal is to tailor training programs to address work-related challenges stemming from varying work attitudes. Notably, there is limited research on the impact of generational work ethics on work engagement, making this study particularly relevant to fill this gap.

The paper is divided into several parts. The first part is the introduction that explains the rationale or reason and purpose of conducting the study. The second part is the literature review which presents the theories of the study based on the existing literature and studies. The third part is the research methodology which presents the research design, population, locale, research procedures, research instruments, ethical review, and statistical treatment of data. The fourth part is the data presentation and analysis in which the data are presented in the form of tables and then followed by analysis or interpretation. The fifth part is the result and discussion which discuss further the finding and its implication, then followed by the conclusion.

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to deepen the understanding of the study based on the existing literature. Reviewing the literature helps the researcher to establish the theories of the study and determine the conceptual framework of the study.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Taking Something Positive from the Shaky Foundation of the Generational Theory

The concept of generational classifications, such as baby boomers, Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z, is commonly heard, but understanding its origins and significance is important. Beresford Research Center (2022) categorizes these generations by birth years: Boomers (1955-1964), Gen X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Gen Z (1997-2012). The discussion on generational classifications has a long history, spanning about 70 years (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). This discussion arises from the assumption that individuals born in the same period share values and traits that distinguish them from those born in other eras.

Karl Mannheim (1952) introduced the concept of "generation" as a driver of social change, identifying five processes facilitating this change, as noted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2020). These processes involve the emergence and disappearance of participants in the cultural process, limited participation time, cultural heritage transmission, and continuous generational transitions. Mannheim's theory posits that generations instigate social movements while maintaining continuity through the transmission of traditions and practices to successive generations.

Ryder (1965) supported Mannheim's perspective on the generation's role in social change. He emphasized that generations are defined by two critical elements: a common historical time frame with shared events and an awareness of that historical context. This view implies that generations are not exclusive clubs but rather formed by individuals who have experienced and engaged in defining events of their time. Both Mannheim and Ryder stressed that generational rhythms depend on the timing of historical, social, and cultural events that influence people's experiences. Ryder specifically highlighted that events during young adulthood have a significant impact on social change.

Expanding upon Ryder's perspective (1965), Riley (1973, 1987) emphasized that not only historical events but also culturally significant life stages like education, marriage, family-building, and working years play a crucial role in shaping life and values. Elder (1998) further reinforced this notion, highlighting how historical events during childhood and adolescence can profoundly impact an individual's lifelong development trajectory. This implies that experiences during childhood and adolescence not only influence adult behavior and development but also deeply shape individual values and behaviors (Elder, Kirkpatrick-Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003).

Expanding on the concept of generations, Strauss and Howe (1991) proposed a theory suggesting that a new generation emerges every 20 years. However, this theory lacks empirical evidence and relies mainly on case studies featuring representative personality types from different generations throughout history (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). They applied labels to various American generations, like the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Millennials, although these labels originated from popular culture and media, predating Strauss and Howe's work.

The origins of these labels, such as "Silent Generation" and "Baby Boomer," remain unclear and predate their formal use. For instance, "Baby Boomers" described those born between 1955 and 1964, following a significant post-war birth rate increase and subsequent decline. "Generation X," coined by photographer Robert Capa and popularized by Billy Idol and author Douglas Coupland in the 1970s and 1991, respectively, emerged from popular culture (BBC News, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). "Millennials," named by Strauss and Howe, refer to those born around the millennium. More recently, “Generation Z" or "Zoomers,”have been heard, denoting the youngest generation just entering the workforce (Dimock, 2019).

The classification of generations, such as the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z, primarily stems from popular culture, introduced and popularized by influential individuals and the media, with no scientific basis. Researchers like Strauss and Howe (1991) discussed generational differences based on these non-scientific ideas, a trend continued by later studies. For valid generational classifications, scientific evidence should underpin them, and they should reflect historical events rather than simply birth years (Reeves & Oh, 2007). Consequently, terms like Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z (Zoomers) lack a scientific foundation and historical event-based labeling.

The literature on generational differences in the workplace, as cited above, lacks a strong scientific foundation. However, discussions on generational differences are prevalent in various sources, as noted by Rudolph et al. (2021). The workplace comprises individuals from different generations, each born in distinct social environments and times. These differences have been associated with factors like declining work ethics (Cenkus, 2017; Zabel et al., 2017) and increased job turnover (Adkins, 2016; Costanza et al., 2012).

Despite the uncertain origins and lack of solid scientific evidence, organizations have utilized generational classifications for the past two decades to manage their workforces. This approach helps address the diverse needs of employees from various age groups or generations since different generations bring distinct views, needs, values, and behaviors shaped by their unique historical events (Quinn, 2010). Managing a diverse generational workforce can present work-related challenges due to varying attitudes and behaviors (Sajjadi et al., 2012).

The Characteristics of Each Generation Based on the Research Finding

In the last two decades, research has examined generational characteristics in the workplace and their impact on organizational performance. Despite the unclear historical background of generational theory, both researchers and management have utilized it for workforce classification and management. Workforces now consist of various generations, including digital natives and digital immigrants (Hakkarainen & Salmela-Aro, 2015), with these differences influencing their work attitudes (Gross, 2012; Garnar & McCaffrey, 2013).

Management recognizes that a one-size-fits-all management style is inadequate and needs to be tailored to each generation, as generational differences affect behavior and, consequently, leadership and management styles (Salahudin, 2011; Hakkarainen & Salmela-Aro, 2015).

The study suggests that generational differences exist but are not as pronounced as their shared characteristics (Garnar & McCaffrey, 2013). These similarities stem from values passed down from past generations (Mannheim, 1952), while differences arise from distinct historical backgrounds based on birth years (Reeves & Oh, 2007).

Researchers have classified five generations and their workplace characteristics: traditionalists (born 1925-1945), baby boomers (born 1946-1964), generation X (born 1965-1980), millennials or generation Y (born 1981-2000), and generation Z (born 2001-2020) (Bourne, 2009; Pew Research Center, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2010; Accenture Strategy, 2017; Purdue Global University, 2022).
These generations exhibit distinct motivations, communication preferences, and worldviews. Traditionalists are motivated by respect, recognition, and long-term company value, preferring personal communication and valuing obedience. Baby boomers prioritize company loyalty, teamwork, and duty, with efficient communication styles and a worldview emphasizing sacrifice. Generation X values diversity, work-life balance, and personal-professional interests, favoring efficiency in communication and adaptation to change. Millennials are driven by responsibility, manager quality, and unique experiences, preferring text and email communication, and seek growth, fun work life, and balance. Generation Z is motivated by diversity, personalization, individuality, and creativity, favoring text messages and social media, embracing independence, and valuing innovation and technology. Effective management requires addressing these unique generational traits to enhance workplace engagement and performance.

Regarding generational differences, Jenkins (2007), Karp et al. (2002), O'Bannon (2001), and Deal (2007), as cited by Tolbize (2008), identified key distinctions and similarities between generations, along with management strategies. Generation X is often characterized as independent, self-reliant, and less loyal to employers, whereas Baby Boomers are seen as workaholics and loyalists (The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Office of Diversity, 2006; Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008). Traditionalists are known for their hardworking nature.

Generational loyalty also varies, with traditionalists and boomers tending to be more loyal to employers compared to Generation X. Xers prioritize loyalty to co-workers, exhibit higher job turnover intentions, and are less work-centric (Karp et al., 2002; Smola and Sutton, 2002).
When it comes to training and development, different generations benefit from distinct approaches. Generation X and Millennials (Generation Y) can acquire both soft and hard skills on the job, while traditionalists and boomers typically acquire soft skills on the job and hard skills in a classroom setting (Deal, 2007; O'Bannon, 2001).

In the world of today's workforce, we find ourselves amid a fascinating interplay of generations, each with its own unique characteristics and perspectives. As we delve into the pages of Board Brief (2014), we unearth a treasure trove of insights into the generational dynamics that shape our workplaces.
Traditionalists, those stalwarts born in the earlier part of the 20th century, stand out for their dedication, strong work ethic, and unwavering commitment to duty. To them, work is a solemn obligation, something not to be taken lightly.

In stark contrast, the Baby Boomers, the post-World War II generation, bring their own vigor to the workplace. They are known for their work-driven, almost workaholic approach. Efficiency is their mantra, and they view work as an exciting adventure, embracing each day with an unbridled spirit.
Generation X, often called the "latchkey generation," displays a self-reliant streak. They value structure and guidance, seeking direction in their professional journey. To them, work is a challenging contract that they are determined to fulfill.

And then, we have the Millennials, the digital natives of the time. Ambitious, goal-oriented, and masters of multitasking, they approach work with an entrepreneurial spirit. For them, work is not just a means to an end but also a source of fulfillment and self-expression.

In the realm of leadership, these generational differences playing out are seen. Traditionalists prefer hierarchy, embracing a directive, command-and-control approach. They value the chain of command and expect leaders to be at the top.

Baby Boomers, on the other hand, seek consensus and a more collegial style of leadership. Their approach is characterized by teamwork and inclusivity, where everyone's opinion matters.
Generation X values competence and a willingness to challenge the status quo. They are comfortable questioning authority and asking "why." Leadership, for them, is about encouraging others to think critically.

Millennials desire leaders who are achievement-oriented and who foster collaboration. Their world is one of innovation and technology, and they expect leaders who can keep up with their fast-paced, goal-focused mindset.

Communication styles further illuminate the generational landscape. Traditionalists prefer the formality of written memos. Baby Boomers favor direct, face-to-face communication, valuing the personal touch.

Generation X values immediate and direct communication, reflecting their need for clarity. Millennials, the digital natives, embrace email and voicemail, appreciating the efficiency and speed of these modern tools.

Lastly, the motivations that drive each generation differ. Traditionalists find fulfillment in job satisfaction and a job well done. For Baby Boomers, it is all about the tangible rewards – money, titles, and recognition.

Generation X values independence and appreciates feedback as a source of growth. For Millennials, achieving a work-life balance is paramount, reflecting their desire for a harmonious integration of life and work.

So, as navigating the ever-evolving landscape of today's diverse workforce is essential to recognize and embrace these generational differences. Understanding the unique perspectives, values, and motivations of each generation empowers organizations to create more inclusive, effective, and harmonious workplaces that harness the collective strengths of all generations.

The Philosophy of Work

The concept of work ethics is closely tied to the philosophy of work, as it pertains to one's attitude toward work and how work should be viewed. Definitions of work, such as those from Dictionary.com and The Free Dictionary, describe work as an activity involving mental or physical effort directed towards achieving a purpose or result. Britannica (2020) also highlights the nature of work as a combination of physical and mental activities with the aim of bringing about change and attaining desired objectives. These definitions do not explicitly define the purposes of work, allowing us to explore various ideas from authors and philosophers about the purpose of work.

Various philosophers and authors have offered different perspectives on the purpose of work. Plato's view, as cited by Cholbi (2022), suggests that work's purpose is to improve both society(Ward & King, 2017) and the individual, with work serving as an instrument for social and personal change. However, totalitarianism and capitalism offer contrasting viewpoints, where work is seen to benefit the community or accumulate wealth (Nestark, 2022, Richard, 1998), leading to the perception of workers as slaves.

Little (1948) presents an original perspective on work, defining it in two senses: as manual labor and as a deliberate production to change matters for the better. In this view, work involves physical and mental efforts directed at producing goods valued by others.

Little's concept emphasizes that work is not solely about obtaining wages or serving the community but is essential for the self's perfection (Schwartz, 2022). Work, according to Little, is part of human nature and serves the purpose of perfecting oneself through the creation of visible good in the material world, making work intrinsically valuable(Sharma and Rai, 2015). Little's perspective challenges contemporary notions of work tied to employment and paycheck, highlighting the broader value of work that goes beyond monetary compensation. Work, in this view, is a means for individuals to exercise their rationality, develop, and perfect themselves (Clark, 2017; Elster, 1989; Sayers, 2005).

The Concept of Work Ethics

Understanding work ethics is closely tied to the philosophy of work. From a philosophical perspective, work encompasses both physical and mental effort, and it goes beyond being an obligation for earning a living. Instead, work is intrinsic to human nature and serves as a means for self-perfection, aligning with Little's view (1948). Various definitions of work ethics exist, reflecting different dimensions and emphases. Bazzy (2018) defines it as an individual's attitude toward work and effortful activities, while Bouma (1973) and Nelson (1973) emphasize the belief in the inherent value and importance of work for its own sake. This perspective aligns with the philosophy that work is an essential part of human existence.

Little's view, which is also in line with the philosophy of work, asserts that work is part of human nature, allowing individuals to perfect themselves through their creative and productive efforts. This concept does not necessarily contradict the idea of rational wealth pursuit or economic production. Economic pursuits (Lessnoff, 1994; Petrovic, 2008) can coexist with the philosophy that work serves the purpose of self-perfection.

Several studies have shown that a strong work ethic, particularly emphasizing hard work, is linked to success, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. These findings are consistent with research by Mudrack (1997), Marri et al. (2012), Ud Din et al. (2019), Athar et al. (2016), and Salahuddin (2011), among others.

Regarding the measurement of work ethics, scholars have debated whether it should be viewed as a multidimensional construct or a single-dimensional one. While Miller (2002), Bazzy (2018), and Van Ness et al. (2010) support the multidimensional view, Sharma and Rai (2015) argue for a single-dimensional approach. In the current study, we adopt the single-dimensional construct by Sharma and Rai (2015) as it aligns with the philosophy of work, focusing on attitudes toward work, and has undergone rigorous validity testing. This 10-item Work Ethics Scale is free from religious bias and is thus deemed suitable for our purposes.

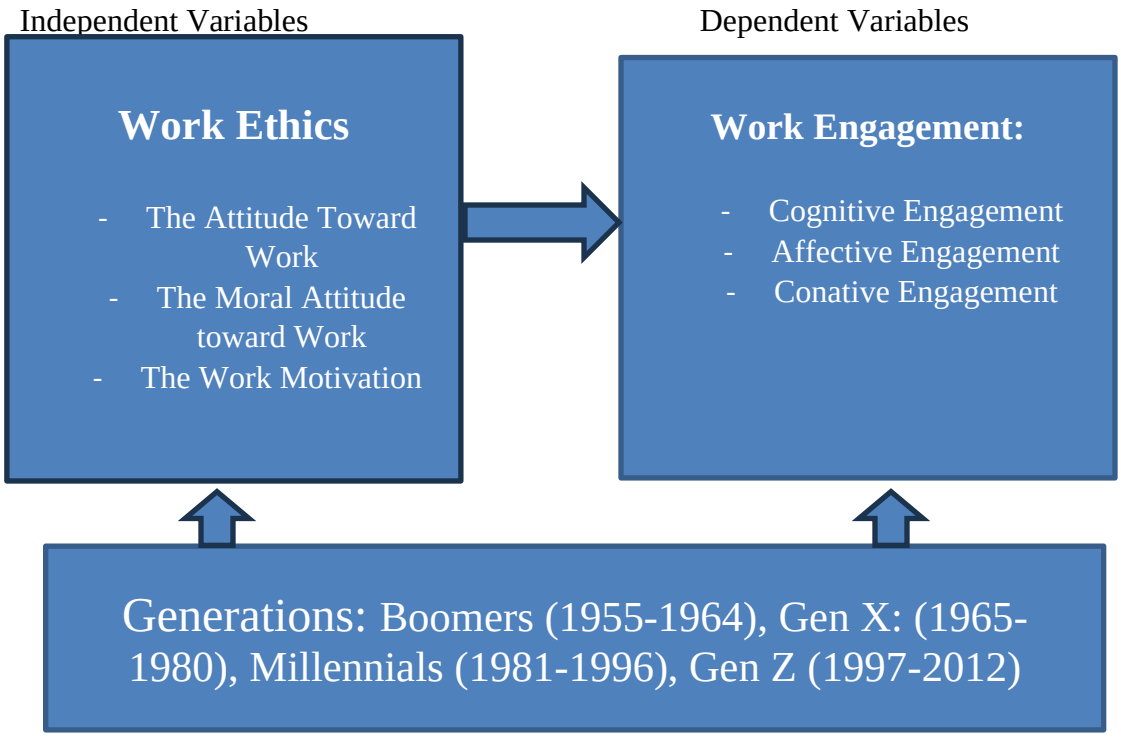
The Concept of Work Engagement and Its Effect on Work Performance

Organizations aim to achieve sustainability and competitiveness, requiring attention to the work environment and both economic and human dimensions (Hart & Milstein, 2003; Spreitzer et al., 2012; Florea et al., 2013). However, the human dimension, particularly work engagement, is often overlooked (Spreitzer et al., 2012; Florea et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2016). Global statistics on employee work engagement are concerning, with only 21% of employees engaged at work according to Gallup's report (2022). Work engagement, as defined by Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), is a positive, affective-motivational state characterized by high energy, dedication, and a strong focus on work. It is necessary for affecting creativity, task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and client satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2014 as cited by Bakker & Albrecht, 2018).

Work engagement is characterized by a psychological connection between employees and their work, driven by high energy, involvement, and efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).
Schleupner and Kuhnel (2021) define work engagement as "an affective-motivational state of feeling vigorous, absorbed, and dedicated while working." Three dimensions of work engagement have been identified, including a positive emotional state, energy, and positive work-oriented behaviors (Green et al., 2017). Kuok and Taormina (2017) also distinguish three elements of work engagement: cognitive engagement, affective engagement, and conative engagement, involving knowledge, emotion, and behavior. Work engagement is distinct from workaholism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) and plays a crucial role in promoting organizational outcomes.

Research shows that work engagement is primarily influenced by the fulfillment of needs, with the confirmation or disconfirmation of needs resulting in varying levels of engagement (Green et al., 2017). Additionally, support from colleagues, supervisors, performance feedback, skills variety, autonomy, learning opportunities, and positive self-evaluation contribute to work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Hobfoll et al., 2003). The work environment, whether bureaucratic, humanistic, or entrepreneurial, also plays a role in work engagement (Abun et al., 2021).
Furthermore, work engagement has a significant impact on performance. Studies by Kim et al. (2012), Yao et al. (2022), Bakker and Bal (2010), Wang and Cheng (2020), and Bakker et al. (2012) have all found that work engagement positively influences individual and job performance, supporting the importance of addressing work engagement in organizational management.

The Conceptual Frameworks



Source: Beresford Research (2022), Sharma and Rai (2015), Kuok and Taormina (2017)

Figure 1: The conceptual frameworks explain the effect of the work ethics of different generations on the work engagement of employees.

Statement of the Problems

The study aims to examine the effect of the work ethics of employees from different generations on work engagement. It specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

1. **What are the generations of the employees:**
   1.1 Boomers (1955-1964)
   1.2 Gen X (1965-1980)
   1.3 Millennials (1981-1996)
   1.4 Gen Z (1997-2012)
2. **What is the work ethics of employees?**
3. **What is the work engagement of employees?**
4. **Is there a relationship between work ethics and work engagement?**
5. **Is there a relationship between generations and work engagement?**
6. **Is there a relationship between generations and work ethics?**

Assumption

The study assumes that age or generation affects the work ethics which in turn affect the work engagement of employees.

Hypothesis

Meriac, et al (2010) and Mangundjaya (2017) found the difference in work ethics among generations or age groups and the influence of work ethics on work engagement. Based on these findings, the current study hypothesizes work ethics affect work engagement and that generational differences affect both work ethics and work engagement.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study covers only the work ethics of different generations among employees of Divine Word College of Laoag and its effect on work engagement in terms of cognitive, emotional, and physical work engagement.

Research Methodology

Scientific research requires following procedures and techniques to carry out the study scientifically. The research methodology determines the quality and reliability of the study (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Thus, the study was carried out through appropriate research methodologies such as research design, data gathering instruments, population, the locale of the study, data gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

Since the study is quantitative research and thus, it used descriptive assessment and correlational research design to determine the level of the leadership competency of administrators and its effect on the work engagement of employees. The use of descriptive research is to describe what is found in the data collected through questionnaires and tabulated through statistical methods. It is also used to describe profiles, frequency distribution, describe characteristics of people, situations, phenomena, or relationship variables. In short, it describes “what is” about the data (Ariola, 2006, cited by Abun, 2021).

In line with the current study, the descriptive assessment and correlational method were deployed. The study determines the level of employees’ trust in management and its effect on work engagement.

The Locale of the Study

The locale of the study was Divine Word Colleges of Laoag, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte

Population

The population of the study was composed of all employees and faculty of Divine Word College of Laoag, Ilocos Norte. The total enumeration sampling was used and 141 employees were taken as respondents to the study.

Data Gathering Instruments

The study adopted validated questionnaires by Sharma and Rai (2015) on employees 'work ethics and Kuok and Taormina (2017) on work engagement.

Data Gathering Procedures

In the data gathering process, the researcher sent a letter to the President of the College, requesting him to allow the researcher to flow his questionnaires in the college. The researcher personally met the Presidents and employees and requested them to answer the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were retrieved between the employees' representatives and the researcher with the help of employees and faculty of the college.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Consistency with the descriptive assessment and descriptive correlational research design, therefore descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used. The percentage and Weighted Mean are used to determine the ranks between generations and the level of employees' work ethics and employees' work engagement and the ANOVA was used to measure the correlation between employees' work ethics, and the employee's work engagement and generational differences and work ethics and work engagement.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

Statistical Range	***Descriptive Interpretation***
4.21-5.00	*strongly agree/Very high*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High*
2.61-3.40:	*Somewhat agree/Moderate*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly disagree/Very Low*

Data Presentation and Analysis

This part presents the data according to the statement of the problems of the study and is followed by the analysis.

Problem 1. What are the generations of the employees:

1.1 Boomers (1955-1964);
1.2 Gen X (1965-1980);
1.3 Millennials (1981-1996);
1.4 Gen Z (1997-2012)?

Table 1*:* Table 1. Distribution of the employees in terms of their generations (n=141)

Generations	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%).
Boomers	13	9.22
Generation X	25	17.73
Millennials	46	32.62
Generation Z	57	40.42

As indicated in the distribution table, it presents that the majority or 40.42 % (57) of the 141 employees of Divine Word College of Laoag are Generation Z(zoomers). The second, after Generation Z is the millennials which is composed of 32.63% or 46 of the 141 employees. The third place is occupied by Generation X (Xennials) which consists of 17.73 % or 25 of the 141 employees. The fourth rank is the boomers which is around 9.22% or only 13 of the 141 employees.

Problem 2: What is the work ethics of employees?

Table 2. Work ethics of employees (n=141)

WORK ETHICS	WEIGHTED MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
Attitude toward work		
I consider my occupational career to be one of the most important activities in my life	4.12	*A*
I believe that a person is known in society by the work he does	3.88	*A*
I believe that one's work provides the best source of achieving perfection in life.	4.12	*A*
Even if I don't have to work to earn a living, I would still prefer to continue working.	4.24	*SA*
I believe that work provides a powerful channel to express one's knowledge, ability and creativity.	4.33	*SA*
Composite Mean	**4.14**	*A*
The Moral Attitude Toward Work		
Even in this fast-changing world, sincerity, hard work and integrity continue to be the golden keys to success in one's work life.	*3.80*	*A*
I feel a moral obligation to give a full day's work for a full day's pay.	4.16	*A*
I believe that one should never be last for work unless there is some real emergency	4.22	*SA*
Composite Mean	**4.06**	*SA*
The Work Motivation		
I believe that a job well done is a reward in itself	4.40	*SA*
I welcome jobs that involve greater responsibility and challenge as they contribute to my learning and growth.	4.39	*SA*
Composite Mean	**4.40**	*SA*
Overall Mean of Work Ethics	**4.20**	*A*

Source: (Sharma & Rai, 2015)

Legend:

Range of Mean Values	*Descriptive Interpretation*
4.21 - 5.00	*Strongly agree/Very high*
3.41 - 4.20	*Agree/High*
2.61 - 3.40	*somewhat agree/Moderate*
1.81 - 2.60	*Disagree/low*
1.00 - 1.80	*strongly disagree/very low*

The data in the table reveals that Divine Word College of Laoag employees have a high overall work ethic with a mean rating of 4.20. Work ethics components rank as follows: work motivation (4.40), attitude toward work (4.14), and moral attitude toward work (4.06), aligning with Sharma and Rai's (2015) three dimensions.

Employees highly value their work and believe in sincerity, hard work, and integrity as keys to success. Continuous learning and job satisfaction are their primary work motivators.

Problem 3: What is the work engagement of employees in terms of:

3.1 cognitive engagement;

3.2 motional Engagement;

3.3 physical engagement?

Table 3. Work engagement of employees in terms of cognitive engagement (n=141)

Work Engagement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Cognitive Engagement		
My mind is often full of ideas about my work	4.07	A
Wherever I am, things happen that often remind me of my work	3.85	A
My mind is fully engaged with my work	4.11	A
My thoughts are fully focused when thinking about my work	4.12	A
I give a lot of mental attention to my work.	4.21	SA
I rarely think about a time when I am working	3.85	A
Composite Mean	**4.04**	**A**

Source: Kuok and Taormina (2017)

The table data indicates that employees' cognitive work engagement has a high mean rating of 4.04, signifying agreement. This reflects that their cognitive engagement is consistently high across all indicators, showing active involvement in their work. Research suggests that such work engagement leads to sustained performance (Kodden, 2020), with engaged employees working more diligently and focused (Van Rhenen, Bakker et al., Kodden and Hupkes, Kodden and Groenveld, 2019).

Table 4: Work engagement of employees in terms of emotional engagement (n=141)

Work Engagement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Emotional Engagement		
I feel very delighted about what I am doing whenever I am working.	4.01	A
I am very eager to do my work	4.32	SA
I feel very happy when I am carrying out my responsibilities at work	4.12	A
I feel very good about the work that I do.	4.28	SA
I feel strong enthusiasm for my work.	4.34	SA
I feel a sense of gratification from my work performance	4.06	A
Composite Mean	**4.19**	**A**

Source: Kuok and Taormina (2017)

The table data reveals that employees' emotional work engagement has a high mean rating of 4.19, indicating agreement. Even when examining individual indicators, most items fall within the range of 4.01-4.34, signifying strong agreement. Employees express delight, eagerness, happiness, enthusiasm, and satisfaction in their work. Research by Yoo and Jeong (2017), Chan (2009), and Han et al. (2018) supports the idea that emotional engagement leads to increased job satisfaction, performance, customer orientation, and service quality.

Table 5: Work engagement of employees in terms of Physical Engagement

Work Engagement	***Weighted Mean***	***Descriptive Interpretation***
Physical Engagement		
No matter how much I work, I have a high level of energy	3.88	A
I have a great deal of stamina for my work.	3.92	A
I always have a lot of energy for my work	4.04	A
I am often physically driven by my work.	3.95	A
I am frequently energized by my work.	4.13	A
I find my work to be physically invigorating.	3.98	A
Composite Mean	**3.98**	A
Overall Mean Rating (cognitive, emotional and Physical Engagement	**4.07**	**A**

Source: Kuok and Taormina (2017)

The data indicates that employees' physical work engagement has a high mean rating of 4.07, signifying agreement. This suggests their physical engagement is consistently high across all indicators, with employees reporting high energy, stamina, and invigoration. Research by Meulensteen et al. (2017) supports the idea that high physical work engagement positively affects job performance.

Problem 6: Is there a relationship between work ethics and work engagement?

Table 6: Work Ethics and Cognitive Work Engagement

The combined factors of work ethics, including work motivation (WM), moral attitude toward work (MAW), and attitude toward work (ATW), significantly predict employees' cognitive work engagement ($F(3,141) = 36.504$, $p < .01$), with an overlap of .667 between these predictors and cognitive engagement. Specifically, ATW ($B = .447$, $p < .01$) and MAW ($B = .306$, $p < .01$) play significant roles in predicting cognitive engagement, with a Y-intercept of 1.151.

Thus, when considered together, WM, MAW, and ATW can forecast employees' cognitive engagement, accounting for differences in their engagement. However, when examined individually, only ATW and MAW have a significant predictive effect on employees' cognitive engagement. Therefore, changes in ATW and MAW can lead to changes in employees' cognitive engagement.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.667[a]	.444	.432	.36875

a. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.891	3	4.964	36.504	.000[b]
	Residual	18.629	137	.136		
	Total	33.520	140			

a. Dependent Variable: COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.151	.321		3.590	.000
	ATW	.447	.073	.477	6.115	.000
	MAW	.306	.075	.307	4.084	.000
	WM	-.048	.059	-.056	-.807	.421

a. Dependent Variable: COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

Table 7: Work Ethics and Emotional Work Engagement

Collectively, work ethics factors encompassing work motivation (WM), moral attitude toward work (MAW), and attitude toward work (ATW) significantly predict employees' emotional engagement (F (3, 141) = 13.956, p < .01), with a shared variance of .484. Specifically, ATW (B = .403, p < .01) represents the Y-intercept of the regression equation.

Hence, the combined influence of WM, MAW, and ATW in employees' work ethics can forecast their emotional engagement, accounting for variations in emotional engagement. However, when examined individually, only ATW significantly predicts employees' emotional engagement. Therefore, changes in ATW within employees' work ethics will lead to changes in their emotional engagement.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.484[a]	.234	.217	.48786

a. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.965	3	3.322	13.956	.000[b]
	Residual	32.607	137	.238		
	Total	42.571	140			

a. Dependent Variable: EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT
b. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.840	.424		4.339	.000
	ATW	.403	.097	.382	4.168	.000
	MAW	.195	.099	.173	1.961	.052
	WM	-.024	.078	-.026	-.314	.754

a. Dependent Variable: EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Table 8: Work Ethics and Physical Work Engagement

The combined work ethics factors - work motivation (WM), moral attitude toward work (MAW), and attitude toward work (ATW) - significantly predict employees' emotional engagement (F (3, 141) = 13.956, p < .01), accounting for 48.4% of the variance. In particular, ATW (B = .403, p < .01) serves as the Y-intercept in the regression equation.

Therefore, when considered together, WM, MAW, and ATW in employees' work ethics can forecast their emotional engagement, explaining variations in emotional engagement. However, when examined individually, only ATW significantly predicts emotional engagement. Consequently, changes in ATW within employees' work ethics will lead to changes in their emotional engagement.

In a similar vein, when WM, MAW, and ATW are collectively considered, they significantly predict employees' physical engagement (F (3, 141) = 11.139, p < .01), with a shared variance of 44.3%. ATW (B = .502, p < .01) and WM (B = -.236, p < .01) contribute to the Y-intercept (2.622) in the regression equation.

Hence, the combination of WM, MAW, and ATW within employees' work ethics can predict their physical engagement.

Variations in physical engagement are influenced by changes in these work ethic factors. However, when examined individually, only ATW and WM can significantly predict physical engagement, indicating that changes in these two aspects of employees' work ethics will lead to variations in their physical engagement.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.443[a]	.196	.178	.53173

a. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.449	3	3.150	11.139	.000[b]
	Residual	38.735	137	.283		
	Total	48.184	140			

a. Dependent Variable: PHYSICAL ENGAGEMENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.622	.462		5.672	.000
	ATW	.502	.105	.447	4.763	.000
	MAW	.078	.108	.065	.725	.470
	WM	-.236	.085	-.233	-2.770	.006

a. Dependent Variable: PHYSICAL ENGAGEMENT

Table 9: Work Ethics and Work Engagement

Collectively, work ethic factors including work motivation (WM), moral attitude toward work (MAW), and attitude toward work (ATW) significantly predict employees' work engagement ($F(3,141) = 23.661$, $p < .01$), with a shared overlap of 58.4%. Specifically, ATW ($B = .450$, $p < .01$) and MAW ($B = .193$, $p < .05$) contribute to the Y-intercept (1.870) in the regression equation.

Therefore, when considered together, the amalgamation of WM, MAW, and ATW in employees' work ethics can predict their work engagement. The observed differences in employees' work engagement are thus attributable to variations in their work ethics.

However, when examined individually, only ATW and MAW can predict employees' work engagement. Consequently, variations in employees' work ethics, particularly in ATW and MAW, lead to changes in their work engagement.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.584[a]	.341	.327	.38780

a. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.675	3	3.558	23.661	.000[b]
	Residual	20.603	137	.150		
	Total	31.278	140			

a. Dependent Variable: WORK ENGAGEMENT
b. Predictors: (Constant), WM, MAW, ATW

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.870	.337		5.547	.000
	ATW	.450	.077	.497	5.856	.000
	MAW	.193	.079	.200	2.450	.016
	WM	-.102	.062	-.125	-1.643	.103

a. Dependent Variable: WORK ENGAGEMENT

Problem 7: Is there a relationship between generational differences and work ethics and work engagement?

Relationship between Generations

And Work Engagement

The chi-square test done to determine the relationship between generations and work engagement resulted in a chi-square value of 7.735 (df = 6, N=141), $p > .05$, phi coefficient =. 234.

This result indicates that the generation of the employees is not significantly related to their work engagement. This suggests that regardless of the employees' generation their work engagement is the same.

Relationship between Generations

And Work Ethics

The test of the relationship between generations and work ethics resulted in a chi-square value of 7.241 (df = 6, N=141), $p > .05$, phi coefficient =. 227

This result indicates that the generation of the employees is not significantly related to their work ethics. This suggests that regardless of the employees' generation their work ethics is the same.

Results and Discussion

The study aims to measure the work ethics and work engagement of employees, the relationship between both variables and whether generational differences play a role in work ethics and work engagement. The results of the study indicate that work ethics and work engagement of employees are considered high but not very high and the result of multilinear regression analysis suggests that work ethics of employees affect the cognitive, emotional and physical work engagement of employees. However, when it comes to generational differences, the results demonstrate that generational differences do not affect the work ethics and work engagement of employees.

The result of this study contradicts the result of other studies presented by Park and Gursoy (n.d), and Doe, et al. (n.d) that generational differences have moderating effect on work engagement. However, in terms of its effect on work ethics, a study by Zabe, et al. (2017) supports the current finding of the study which suggests that generational differences do not affect the work ethics of employees.

The result of the current study implies that management needs to focus more on improving the work ethics of employees to enhance employees' work engagement. The result is confirming the findings of other studies like that of Mitonga-Monga, et al. (2016) who found a relationship between work ethics and work engagement and Grabowski, et al. (2021) on work ethics and motivation to work.

This study examines employee work ethics, work engagement, their interrelation, and the potential impact of generational differences. While the overall work ethics and engagement levels are high but not exceptional, multilinear regression analysis highlights the significant influence of employee work ethics on cognitive, emotional, and physical work engagement.

Contrary to Park and Gursoy (n.d) and Doe et al. (n.d), our findings suggest that generational differences do not play a substantial role in affecting employee work ethics and work engagement. This contradicts previous claims of a moderating effect. Our results align with Zabe et al. (2017), indicating that generational differences have minimal impact on work ethics.

The practical implication of this study is clear: organizational management should prioritize improving employee work ethics to enhance overall work engagement. This recommendation aligns with Mitonga-Monga et al. (2016) and supports Grabowski et al.'s (2021) conclusion that work ethics significantly influences motivation and performance.

Moreover, this study contributes valuable insights into the dynamics between work ethics, work engagement, and generational differences. It emphasizes the importance of enhancing work ethics for optimal employee engagement, providing practical guidance for organizational management.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study identifies that a significant portion of Divine Word College of Laoag employees falls within the Generation Z and Millennials categories, with Generation X and Boomers following in succession. Notably, work ethics and work engagement are observed to be high across all generations. The correlation analysis highlights a connection between employees' work ethics and work engagement. However, no discernible correlation is found between generational differences and both work ethics and work engagement.

As a suggestion for future research, it is recommended to explore the impact of age differences on work engagement and performance, departing from the generational lens. This recommendation aligns with Rudolph et al.'s (2021) proposition, encouraging a nuanced examination of age-related factors in the workplace.

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