

2003

Organisational values and generational values: a cross cultural study

Peter Miller
Southern Cross University

Huichun Yu

Publication details

Post-print of: Miller, P & Yu, HC 2003, 'Organisational values and generational values: a cross cultural study', *Australasian Journal of Business and Social Enquiry*, vol.1, no.3, pp.138-153.

ePublications@SCU is an electronic repository administered by Southern Cross University Library. Its goal is to capture and preserve the intellectual output of Southern Cross University authors and researchers, and to increase visibility and impact through open access to researchers around the world. For further information please contact epubs@scu.edu.au.

Post-print of: Miller, P & Yu, HC 2003, ' Organisational values and generational values: a cross cultural study', *Australasian Journal of Business and Social Enquiry*, vol.1, no.3, pp.138-153.

Organisational values and generational values: a cross cultural study

Dr Peter Miller

Senior Lecturer
Division of Business
Southern Cross University
Australia.
pmiller@scu.edu.au

Dr Hui-Chun Yu

Assistant Professor
Department of Business Administration
China Institute of Technology
Taipei, Taiwan.
fayyu@hotmail.com

Abstract

Value statements are a relatively recent addition to the corporate public face of many organisations and are made to clearly articulate the fundamental beliefs of the leaders and members of the organisation. However, the individual values of employees of organisations are rarely uniformly shared and congruence with the organisation's espoused values is problematic at best. To complicate further the values issue in organisations, Western researchers conclude that generational groups of employees have different work values. The objective of this study is to investigate if Western research, concerning values, applies equally to generational groups in Taiwan's workplaces, specifically in the higher education sector and manufacturing industry. The research found that generational groups in the manufacturing industry have different work values, while there were no differences in work values for generational groups in the education sector.

Introduction

Leaders of organisations have long recognised the importance of vision and mission statements to articulate clearly to organisational stakeholders, the future aspirations of the organisation's leaders and most organisations now have formal vision and mission statements in place. In general, vision statements articulate the broad conceptualisation about where the organisation desires to be in its ultimate destination. Mission statements, on the other hand, are meant to be different from vision statements, and are about the more immediate future and usually delineate the organisation's reason for existing. To operationalise the reason for existing, mission statements often include statements about the organisation's purpose, objectives and goals.

For example, the vision statement for a local government authority in Australia indicates its desire to:

'..become the premier area in which to live and work and visit'

while the same local government authority's mission statement provides:

'In partnership with the community, balance peoples aspirations for development and enhancement of the unique environment by providing affordable quality services in a safe and competitive manner'

The authority's mission statement then goes on to outline some specific corporate goals for the organisation.

Recently, there has been another addition to the corporate statements issued by organisations designed to inform those outside the organisation such as investors and potential employees wishing to understand what an organisation is about and where the organisation might be heading. A more recent innovation in modern organisations is the development of organisational 'value statements' that are designed to complement the vision and mission statements.

Value statements are the fundamental beliefs of the leaders and members of the organisation. That is, they represent underlying reasons for the actions and behaviours of organisational members. The organisational value statements are also often expressed as 'individual values', which staff within the organisation are expected to observe while 'corporate values', are the values staff are expected to observe collectively when representing the organisation. For example, the same local government authority referred to above lists individual and corporate values separately in its public 'values statement' as shown in Table 1.

Demonstrate leadership through commitment to the following individual and corporate values:	
Individual values	Corporate values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - responsive - impartial - transparent - respectful - accountable - consistent - conscientious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stewardship - organisational performance - staff development - innovation - safe environments

Table 1 - a local government authority in Australia 'values statement'

Values are often defined as an individual's basic standards and beliefs about what is good and bad, acceptable and not acceptable, moral and immoral (Carlopio, Andrewartha and Armstrong 2001).

An individual's values are the most stable and enduring characteristics they possess and are the foundation upon which attitudes and behaviours are formed, usually early in life. While

an individual's values may change over time and with experience, they are the basis for crucial life decisions. Much of what people are is a product of the basic value system they have developed.

An organisation's values as articulated in a values statement are much like that of an individual. The organisation's value statement is meant to define the basic shared beliefs within the organisation and the basis on which every action and decision in the organisation is taken. It helps shape a common and enduring identity within the organisation. While the value statement is meant to guide decisions and goals within the organisation, one cannot assume however, that each and every member of the organisation is going to share the values of the organisation as written in the values statement or agree with them.

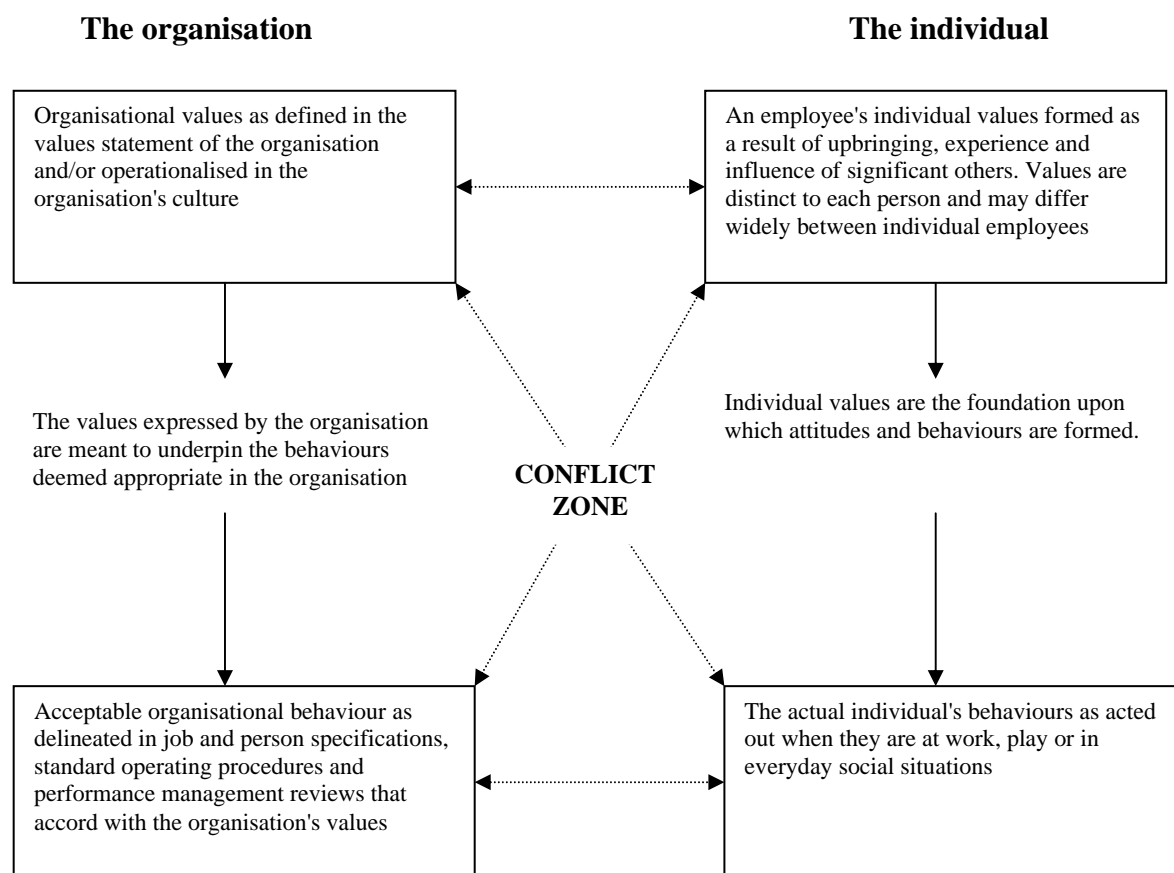
One of the main reasons for the development of a value statement is to influence the attitudes and behaviours of employees who work for the organisation. It also provides clear guidance to potential employees about what is considered to be fundamental in the organisation. Thus, a clear and precise value statement can guide and motivate employees' work behaviour towards organisational objectives and assist in recruiting employees that share and can relate to the stated values of the organisation (LeMon 2000).

The significance of leaders being clear about the organisational value system cannot be overstated. Research has found that employees, who hold values that are congruent with their organisation's values, are more productive and satisfied (Kouzes 2003).

Organisational values and individual values

It is also known that younger workers are much more in tune with their individual values than older generations, and that the younger generations pay significant attention as to how their individual values might be fulfilled when looking at career options and potential employers (Sullivan, Sullivan & Buffton 2002).

Once an individual joins an organisation, value clashes are also thought to be a major source of conflict within organisations. This is because of the interplay between an employee's individual values and the values espoused by the organisation. If the individual's values are inconsistent with the values espoused and acted upon by the organisation, the potential for serious conflict is aroused. Figure 1 attempts to demonstrate the potential clashes between individual and organisational values and behaviours within organisations.



----- These lines indicate potential areas for conflict

Figure 1 - The interplay of organisational and individual values (Source: Developed for this research)

From the figure above, it is possible to see how conflicts might arise in organisations when employees behave in a way that is congruent with their own values, but not congruent with the expected values and behaviours of the organisation. An example might be when a staff member does not treat a customer of the organisation in the manner expected but, after being corrected by the manager cannot see that they have done anything wrong.

Conflicts can arise when there is a miss-match of an individual's values with those of the organisation, and those expected by the organisation, and between the organisation's espoused values and those actually practiced in the organisation, especially by managers.

This is one reason why organisations increasingly develop value statements and recruit staff on the basis of the job applicant's 'values' and not the 'skills' the job applicants hold. The principle is that skills can be easily learnt by employees while on the job but the values new staff bring to an organisation cannot be changed. While these potential conflicts are important for employees, they are even more important for managers who are expected to be the 'role models' of the values of the organisation. It is inconceivable that a manager could effectively lead in an organisation unless there is at least some congruence between the manager's own values and the values espoused by the organisation.

It is important to note that clarifying employee's and organisation's values can help to create a win-win outcomes for all concerned. Individuals can find meaning in their work and organisations can develop a committed workforce that is able to function well through periods of change (Sullivan & Sullivan & Buffton 2002). In fact, many management researchers link clearly articulated organisational values with organisation success. A study by Dearlove and Coomber (1999) indicated that values-led organisations resulted in higher-level productivity than non values-led organisations. Significantly, lower turnover rates were found among 1,000 US graduates when the employing organisation values were explicitly around respect and teamwork.

However, it is argued that organisations use value statements simplistically in attempts to influence the attitudes and behaviours of employees. In addition, too many of today's organisations establish 'fashionable' value statements that do not fit their employees. For example, the organisation value statements might be so ambiguous that employees cannot translate the stated values into job behaviour or the values stated are irrelevant to the business.

In today's organisations, the values issue is complicated by yet another factor. This factor is the difference in individual values known to exist due to generational differences amongst employees. Younger workers are playing a greater role in the workplace. Today's workforce can be divided into three distinct groups of people. There are the Baby Boomers, X Generation (Xers) and Y Generation (Dot com generation). Baby Boomers are people born between the years of 1945-1964, a cohort that has been the source of many important cultural and economic changes. Generally, it is accepted that the Xers are people who were born between 1965 and 1980. Some researchers refer to them as 'baby busters', due to the drop-off or 'bust' in births following the Baby Boomer generation after World War II. The Y Generation or the 'dot com' generation are people who are born after 1980 (Solomon 1992). This group of employees is only just entering the workplace and therefore their influence at this time is still emerging. Modern workplaces are typically diverse with all three generational groups represented.

It is recognised that the values of the three generations are different in many respects, and this difference can be explained by factors such as the differences in living environments when the values of these generations were formed. Baby Boomers are the group currently holding most executive and senior management positions in organisations. Many writers envisage a value statement, created by senior management for lower level employees, is hard for them to swallow (Sullivan & Sullivan & Buffton 2002; Dearlove and Coomber 1999; LeMon 2000; Kouzes 2003). Questions also arise about whether value statements created by Baby Boomers can guide and influence the attitudes and behaviours of younger generational employees.

Organisational values and generational values

The power of value statements to focus the efforts of an organisation and motivate its employees has become increasingly important in recent years. Many researchers indicate the importance of shared organisational values and the role of the value statement (Sullivan & Sullivan & Buffton 2002; Dearlove and Coomber 1999; LeMon 2000; Kouzes 2003). Lencioni (2002) declares that empty value statements create cynical and dispirited employees, alienate customers, and undermine managerial credibility.

Bryce (2002) states that developing a strong organisational value statement can, in combination with a few long-term recruiting techniques, reduce both employee turnover and recruitment costs. It is argued that, if the value statement is ambiguous, the job applicants attracted to the organisation might not be those who hold appropriate individual values, and the organisation might not recruit the right people.

One significant difference between individuals aged in their 20s and individuals in their 40s is their value system (Stauffer 1997). Xers tend to be more independent, self-motivated and self-sufficient. Baby Boomers on the other hand, tend to be more diligent on the job and prefer a more stable working environment (Loomis 2000).

The most consistent finding in the literature when comparisons of work characteristics are made between Xers and Baby Boomers is that each generational group exhibits a different mixture of lifestyle values and work ethics. The Baby Boomers tend to work hard and are generally loyal to their employer. Baby Boomers are willing and expect to work with others. In terms of leadership style, Baby Boomers accept the chain of command. In addition, they expect their managers to give direction and to lead them towards organisational goals. Baby Boomers are however, not highly technologically savvy, nor do they generally like change (Raths 1999).

In contrast, unlike the Baby Boomers, work values for the X Generation emphasise their personal satisfaction rather than just working hard, and a tendency to look for any opportunities to improve their working skills. They are loyal to their profession. X Generation are more individualistic compared to the preceding generation. They have a high need for autonomy and flexibility in their lifestyles and jobs, thus a less need for leadership. Additionally, X Generation are technically savvy and are eager to update knowledge and application into their work. That is, due to the fact that X Generation grew up with rapidly changing technology and the availability of massive amounts of information (Keaveney 1997) they are more individualistic.

However, Levin (2001) argues that the difference between Baby Boomers and X and Y Generation is currencies. To Baby Boomers the currency is money – what do things cost, while for the X Generation the currency is information – where can I get the information I need, regardless of the cost. For Generation Y the currency is time. Thus, Levin suggests a proper currency is a crucial issue on work values for different generation members.

Boomers are the generation responsible for rebuilding our economies after the Second World War. Boomers are now the presidents, CEOs, managers and owners of many leading businesses. These people have a strong belief in age-old values, a deep sense of loyalty to their employers and an attitude that puts work above leisure (Losyk 1997).

Moreover, X Generation employees seek to achieve their own goals and value individuals over the chain of command. From their perspective Baby Boomers place too much value on work itself and seem to respect tenure more than performance. Thus, X Generation employees argue ‘they are serious about work but they don’t see themselves as serious as Baby Boomers’ (Joyner 2000 p. 64).

In a study about the importance of job security, Mary Ellen Rodgers, National Director for the Advancement of Women at Deloitte & Touche, Cleveland, found that the X Generation

want structure in their jobs. The majority put ‘stable’ and ‘clearly structured’ as their priority, while they describe an ideal work environment (Wah 2000).

In summary, while not all generations hold the same values, there does appear to be a distinctive value base of Baby Boomers and the X Generation which influences behaviours and attitudes about work. A summary of these values is shown in Table 2.

Baby Boomer	X Generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work hard • Loyal to employer • Teamwork • Chain of command • Wants to manage • Technically challenged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal satisfaction • Loyal to skills • Prefers to work alone • Individual is first • No need to lead • Technically savvy

Table 2 - Work values between baby boomers and X generation

As shown in Table 2, each age group exhibits a different mixture of lifestyle values and work ethics.

Although the literature reviewed for this research shows a substantial difference between work values, the research is limited mainly to Western countries while little research has been undertaken in non-Western countries. Therefore, questions may arise about the generalisability of these findings to other than Western cultures.

It was, therefore, proposed to investigate if the work values of generational groups in Taiwan's workforce are as Western researchers have concluded and to investigate if reported differences exist. Thus, it will be the objective of this study to investigate if the conclusions, on generational work values drawn from Western research, apply equally to generational groups in Taiwan's workplace. As workplaces are mainly comprised of Baby Boomers and Xers, this paper will focus attention on these two generational groupings.

To guide the research, an appropriate research expectation was posited that the same differences present in Western generational work groups would be present in Taiwan:

Research expectation 1: There is a significant difference in the mean scores of constructs measuring work values between Xers and Baby Boomer employees in Taiwan.

Methodology

To select a sample of generational workers in Taiwan, the target population was set as Baby Boomers and Xers in all public and private higher educational institutions in the Taipei region and all registered private machinery manufacturing Small to Medium Enterprises in Kaohsiung region of Taiwan.

These industries were selected as they were accessible by the researchers and offered research sites that were thought to have fundamentally different working environments that might have some impact on the generational issues under investigation. For example, the nature of the work undertaken in a higher education institution is essentially knowledge-based. Manufacturing work is process and skill oriented. The organisational climates,

working conditions and levels of employee autonomy between the two sites can also be differentiated.

A total of 20 higher education institutions in the Taipei region and 148 manufacturing SMEs in machinery manufacturing in Kaohsiung county were identified. Using systematic sampling techniques, every 3rd higher education institution and every 15th name from the manufacturing SMEs was drawn from the overall list of organisations. To avoid the periodicity problem, the lists were checked and compared with government publications to ensure random arrangement of elements on the list so that there was no systematic pattern.

A questionnaire was developed and used as a data collection technique. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section (A) consisted of five questions regarding the respondent's demographic background. Section (B) dealt with questions about work values, which consisted of questions about various aspects of work values drawn from previous studies in the literature.

Questions were rated on a five point Likert scale with 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strong disagree.

A pilot study was conducted with selected workers from the target population in each education institution and manufacturing organisation. The questionnaire was directly delivered to respondents to get direct feedback on any potential problems. Several changes were made to the questionnaire in response to the feedback from the pilot study. All questionnaires were written in Chinese and back-translated into English.

After data was processed through editing, coding and tabulation, a statistical technique was selected. Research expectation tests were conducted. To test construct validity, factor analysis was also performed. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also conducted to test for significant differences between the variables under investigation.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the data analysis related to the research expectation.

The overall response rate in this research was 62% with 437 useable surveys returned. Types of industry and age status were the key variables identified through the questionnaire and used to segment the sample into groups for further comparative analysis. Therefore, results of the survey are divided into four groups based on age and industry types. Respondents who are under 35 years old are classified as Xers and respondents over 35 years old are classified as Baby Boomers.

In the educational sector, the majority of the respondents (65.1 percent) were between the ages of 35-55 years and 23% were between the ages of 25-35 years. Very few were in the category of over 55 years and between the ages of 20-25 years (5.6 percent and 6.2 percent respectively). There were no respondents in the age of under 20 years. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the respondents from the education industry are aged between 35-55 years and are therefore classified as Baby Boomers.

By contrast, in the manufacturing industry the largest group (39.4 percent) of the respondents were those between the ages of 25 and 35 years. The second largest group (24.7

percent) consisted of respondents between the ages of 35 and 45 years. There were 17.8 percent in the age bracket of 20-25. Moreover, 14.7 percent of the respondents fell within the age of 45-55 years, and only 3.5 percent were in the age group of over 55 years. There were no respondents less than 20 years old. Table 3 details the demographics of the respondents.

Industry status	Generational group	Frequency	Percent
Education sector	Xers	52	29.2
	Baby Boomers	126	70.8
	Total	178	100.0
Manufacturing industry	Xers	148	57.1
	Baby Boomers	111	42.9
	Total	259	100.0

Table 3- Demographics of respondents

Table 3 indicates that, in the education industry, approximately 29.2 percent of the respondents were Xers and 70.8 percent Baby Boomers. In the manufacturing industry the majority of the respondents (57.1 percent) were Xers and 42.9 percent Baby Boomers.

These demographic statistics are in accordance with the population. The education sector consists mostly of staff over the age of 35, while the manufacturing industry mostly consists of staff of a much younger age.

The variables that make up the construct were then subjected to principal component analysis. To calculate the appropriate number of factors, a number of techniques were deployed. These were: (1) the latent roots criterion or eigenvalue, (2) the Scree Test Criterion or Scree Plot, and (3) communality (Hair et al 1995). Only factors with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or more, and communality above 0.50 were considered significant and retained for further investigation. Remaining variables were summarised into a smaller number of factors for multivariate analysis.

The remaining variables had three components with an eigenvalue greater than one and this represented more than 54 percent of the variance in the set of the five reward preference items. The first factor consisted of items on the importance of stable income job, job promotion, loyalty to the employer and emphasised co-operation in a team. In accordance with the labelling procedure recommended by Hair et al. (1995), consideration was given to the high loading variables which labelled this factor as the 'Job security/loyalty' factor. The second factor was labelled as the 'Personal development' factor, which consisted of items on personal interests on job, job to gain self-improvement, importance of personal goal, personal development and personal independence. The third factor was labelled as the 'Work value gaps' factor, which consisted of items on work value in job promotion issues and work value gaps with colleagues.

In addition, all factors achieved an alpha reliability score above the minimum 0.5 level (Davis & Cosenza 1988). It can, therefore, be concluded that the constructs are reliable for exploratory research purposes. Table 4 summaries the results of the factor analysis and reliability tests undertaken.

Construct	Factor	Explained variance%	Alpha Value(P)
Work values	Job security/loyalty	29.6	0.73
	Personal development	45.0	0.75
	Work value gap	54.3	0.66

Significant when $P < .05$

Table 4 - The factor analysis and reliability test results

Having determined that the construct under study was sufficiently reliable and valid, the data analysis proceeded to *multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)*.

Two-way MANOVA analysis procedures were undertaken to enable group comparisons based on generation group and industry group. The analysis allowed relationships across various groups to be examined in terms of extracted factors. In particular, comparisons were made relating to the research hypothesis. The results of the analysis are summarised in Table 5.

Effect	Value	F =	P <
Generation group	.987	1.927	.125
Industry group	.927	11.304	.000

Significant when $P < .05$

Table 5 - Two-way MANOVA tests using Wilks' Lambda

Table 5 shows the overall result that suggested there was a statistically significant difference between industry (education and manufacturing industry) on the combined dependent variables: $F = 11.304$, $P = .001$, and Wilks' Lambda = .927, where P value less than significant level .05. However there was no significant difference between generational group (Xers and Baby Boomers) on the combined dependent variables: $F = 1.927$, $P = .125$, and Wilks' Lambda = .987.

To identify which industry group contained significant difference in the mean, one-way MANOVA was conducted. The results of the one-way MANOVA are shown in Table 6.

Effect	Value	F =	P <
Education industry	.972	1.672	.175
Manufacturing industry	.946	4.851	.003

Significant when $P < .05$

Table 6 - One-way MANOVA tests Wilks' Lambda for education and manufacturing industry

As indicated in Table 6, a one-way analysis indicated there was a statistically significant difference between generational groups in the manufacturing industry on the combined dependent variables: $F = 4.851$, $P = .000$ and Wilks' Lambda = .946 and no significant difference in the education sector on the combined dependent variables: $F = 1.672$, $P = .175$ and Wilks' Lambda = .972.

To further explore the differences in the manufacturing industry an investigation on significant different factors was conducted through one-way MANOVA. Table 7 shows the results.

Construct	Industry status	Generational group	Mean	Standard Deviation	F =	P <
Work Values	Education industry	Xers	2.068	.365	2.212	1.39
		Baby Boomers	2.149	.312		
	Manufacturing industry	Xers	2.444	.508	6.641	.011
		Baby Boomers	2.273	.558		

Significant when $P < .05$

Table 7 - Main effect evaluation for differences between two generations

Table 7 reveals the construct and their associated mean scores. The results for MANOVA reveal that there is a significant difference between Xers and Baby Boomers in the manufacturing industry on the work value construct. There was no difference in the mean scores for the work values construct in the education sector.

The result of this study, specifically in the Taiwan manufacturing industry is supported by the Western literature. Thus, the research expectation that there would be a significant difference between the Generational groups in respect of work value is accepted in the Taiwan manufacturing industry and rejected in Taiwan higher education industry.

Having examined the research expectation, attention then turned to possible statistical differences between the generational groups in manufacturing industry for the identified component factor of job security/loyalty, personal development and work value gap. A one-way MANOVA was conducted for the further analysis. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 8.

Industry Status	Factor	Generational group	Mean	F=	P<
Educational industry	Job security/loyalty	Xers	2.135	.023	.880
		Baby Boomers	2.123		
	Personal development	Xers	2.004	3.655	.058
		Baby Boomers	2.140		
	Work value gaps	Xers	3.250	.818	.367
		Baby Boomers	3.183		
Manufacturing industry	Job security/loyalty	Xers	2.422	9.751	.002
		Baby Boomers	2.137		
	Personal development	Xers	2.480	3.951	.048
		Baby Boomers	2.315		
	Work value gaps	Xers	3.203	.539	.463
		Baby Boomers	3.248		

Significant when $P < .05$

Table 8 - Test of component factors in manufacturing industry

Table 8 shows the 3 identified component factors that emerged from the work values construct used in the questionnaire. It can be seen from the table that for the manufacturing industry, Xers scores were higher than Baby Boomers in two of the extract factors which revealed significant differences between the two generational groups.

The results of this study, specifically in the Taiwan manufacturing industry are supported by the literature. The results of this research conclude that X Generation employees are more loyal to their personal profession and emphasise their own personal goals rather than be

loyal to their employers or organisation goals as the Baby Boomers do. X Generation employees also prefer to have an independent job rather than work within a team. This may be because X Generation employees seek achievement of their own goals and value individualism over the chain of command. Boomers, on the other hand, tend to be most comfortable working within a chain of command and have respect for authority.

The findings are consistent with the results of previous research that concluded that the X Generation are more loyal to their own profession and prefer have an independent job while Baby Boomers are more loyal to their employer and willing to work with others (Coupland 1991; Itzhak 1999; Joyner 2000; Leung et al. 2000; Levin, 2001; Tulgan 1996; Wah 2000; Yankelovich 2000).

However, the results of previous studies are not supported in the Taiwan higher education industry. There was no significant difference between the two generational groups in work values. This may be due to a difference in the nature of industry itself.

The results of this study show both the X Generation and Baby Boomers employees who work in the education industry tend to be more loyal to their organisation than those who work in the manufacturing industry. In the education industry, both generations see job security as an important issue. The reason for the difference between employees in the education and manufacturing industries may be due to the length of tenure available to employees in the education industry but not available to employees in the manufacturing industry. Educational employees tend to have a longer tenure on their job position than people who work in the manufacturing industry. It is particularly important that education employees see the education industry as providing a stable job and income and most employees have an acute need to feel that their contribution is worth-while, appreciated and acknowledged. Therefore, the assumptions in Western research about the differences between the two generations in respect of work values cannot be applied to the education industry in this research.

Regarding the nature of the industries under examination, the research has found that the people who work in different industries show different results in terms of work values. In the education industry, all employees have significant autonomy over their own time management. This is because they need to manage their own working hours, developmental agendas and the relationships they establish with students and other staff. Indeed, this is one of the main reasons why employees select higher education as a career stems because of the opportunity for this level of personal autonomy (Rowley 1996).

In addition, in the educational industry, the results indicate that majority of respondents have attained university degrees with a majority having completed a postgraduate program. This indicates that people with a higher level of education tend to be more individualist and have high self-esteem and prefer an autonomous style of work (Rowley 1996; Sekaran 2000).

It is also interesting to note that the results of this study found that the two generations in both education and manufacturing industries have a tendency to lean towards individualism. Both generations emphasis a high value on personal development/goal as well as preferring autonomous work. This indicates the possibility of some other contributing factors being present such as the nature of the industry, educational levels and technology that might also have an impact on an individual's work values.

Conclusion

Many management researches link the clear articulation of organisational values with organisation success, indicating that values-led organisations result in higher level productivity. However today, many organisations develop a values statement that is either unconvincing, ambiguous or one that employees can not translate into required job behaviours. At times it appears that the value statements are irrelevant to the business and can not guide and motivate employee's work behaviour toward organisational objectives (LeMon, 2000). Thus, to clarify employee's values it is essential that organisations know what employee's values are in the context of the work undertaken in order to bring people and resources together in harmony to achieve organisational goals.

The assumption in this research was that the generation gap in values between Baby Boomers and Xers found in Western research would also be found to exist in generational groups in Eastern workplaces. However, since national culture plays an important role in determining people's values, and these values are thought to be translated into the workplace, it was considered that Eastern cultural influences might have an impact on the applicability of Western research in Taiwan.

However, Eastern cultural influences may themselves be influenced by the forces such as globalisations and in particular the export of Western (mostly American) management practices and theories into Taiwan.

The research found significant differences between Baby Boomers and Xers in aspects of work values, specifically in the Taiwan manufacturing industry. These findings are consistent with the results of prior Western research.

However, the research also found no differences between the generational groups in the educator sector in Taiwan. This is not consistent with the general Western literature in regard to work values.

The work values construct did not show a difference between the two generational groups in the education sector. The reason for the difference between employees in the education and manufacturing industries may be due to the nature of the industry. The industry culture and employee work characteristics in the education sector are very different from employees in the manufacturing industry. In the education sector, all employees place a high value on personal development, job autonomy, job involvement and social recognition, power and prestige.

The research found that people who work in different industries show different work values. In the education sector, all staff have significant autonomy over their own time management because they need to manage their own working hours, development agendas and the relationships they establish with students and other staff. Indeed, this is one of the main reasons why staff select higher education as a career (Rowley 1996). Staff in the education industry are also highly motivated with high self-actualising needs (Pastor 1982; Glickman 1982). According to Maslow's theory, individuals who have high self-actualisation needs are likely to exercise autonomy and independence and to develop skills (Collins & McLaughlin 1996). Employees in the manufactory industry do not enjoy this sophisticated cultural and enlightened environment.

In addition, as would be expected, the research found that the educational level of respondents in the education sector were much higher than staff in the manufacturing industry with most staff having attained at least university degrees, a majority of which were postgraduate. The research indicates that people with a higher level of education tend to be more individualistic and have high self-esteem and prefer job autonomy (Rowley 1996; Sekaran 2000).

Accordingly, it can be concluded that, in respect of work values, there is a generation gap in Taiwan's manufacturing industry but not in the education sector.

In respect of the cultural factors in this research, many studies have shown that independence at work tends to be actualised for people who are more individualistic or come from low power distance cultures such as America. However, Taiwanese culture is categorised as high power distance with collectivism according to Hofstede (1980). Therefore, it can be concluded from this study that the Taiwanese culture is changing to be more individualistic with lower power distance. This is more so in the Xer generation. The changes maybe because of the influence on Taiwanese workers from foreign cultures especially from Western countries.

Several limitations of the study should be noted. First, this study was conducted in Taiwan and was restricted to the higher education sector and manufacturing industry. Therefore outcomes cannot be applied to all types of industries in Taiwan. Second, the study design is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. More time could cause different perceptions in terms of work values. Further research may need to be conducted with a longitudinal analysis design.

References

- Anonymous, 2000, 'Is the boomer/Gen-X war over?', *HR Focus*, vol. 77, no. 5, pp.13.
- Bryce, J. 2002, 'Using a mission statement to staff assisted living', *Nursing Homes*, vol. 51, no. 8, pp.54.
- Campbell, A. and Young, S. 1991, 'Creating a sense of mission', *Long Range Planning*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 10-20.
- Carlopio, J., Andrewartha, G. and Armstrong, H. 2001, *Developing Management Skills: A comprehensive guide for leaders*, 2nd Edition, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest.
- Collins, R. & McLaughlin Y. 1996, *Effective Management*, 2nd ed., CCH Australia Limited, Sydney, pp. 787.
- Coupland, D. 1991, *Generation X*, St. Mazrtin's Press, New York.
- Cyr, D. 2000, 'The X-files', *Catalog Age*, vol.17, no.6.

- Davis, D. & Cosenza, R.M. 1988, *Business Research for Decision Making*, 2nd ed., PWS-KENT Publishing Co., Boston.
- Dearlove, D. & Coomber, S. 1999, *Heart and Soul and Millennial Values*, Blessing/White.
- DGBAS 2000, *Monthly Bulletin of Manpower Statistics*, Executive Yuan, Taiwan (R.O.C).
- Giles, J. 1994, "Generalizations X" *Newsweek*, June 6, pp. 62-72.
- Glickman, C.D. 1982, 'Supervising the Developing Teacher', *Action in Teacher Education*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 7-15.
- Hair, J.R., Joseph, F., Andreson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. & Black, W.C. 1995, *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 4th ed., Prentice-Halls Inc., New Jersey.
- Hofstede, G. 1980, *Cultures' Consequences*, Sage Publications, London.
- Itzhak, J. 1999, 'The transformation of work values in Israel', *Monthly Labor Review*, vol.122, no.5, pp. 46-50.
- Joyner T. 2000, 'Gen X-ers focus on life outside the job, fulfillment', *The Xecured Lender*, vol.56, no.3, pp. 64-68.
- Keaveney, S.M 1997, 'When MTV goes CEO: what happens when the "unmanageable" become mangers?', *Marketing Management*, vol.6 no.3.
- Kouzes, B. 2003, *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*, Pfeiffer, San Francisco
- Kraus, S. 2000, 'Crisis Management', *Adweek*, Eastern edition, vol.41, no.37.
- LeMon, C. 2000, 'Motivating adult employees to grow up', *Employment Relations Today*, vol. 3, no. 3, New York.
- Lencioni P.M. 2002, 'Make your values mean something', *Harvard Business Review*, July, vol. 80, no. 7, pp. 113-117.
- Leung, J., Mertens B., Jordan T., Nakada G., Irwin J. 2000, 'Brave new material world?', *Asian Business*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp.16-17.
- Levin, M. 2001, 'Bridging the generation gap', *Association Management* vol. 53, no. 1.
- Loomis, J.E. 2000, *Generation X*, Rough notes Co., Indianapolis.
- Losyk, B. 1997, 'How to manage X'ers', *PM. Public Management*, vol.79, no.12.
- Pastor, M.C. 1982, 'A Study of Higher Order Need Strength and Job Satisfaction in Secondary Public School Teachers', *Journal of Educational Administration*, vol. 20, pp. 21-24.
- Raths, D. 1999, 'Bridging the generation gap', *InfoWorld*, vol. 21, no. 45, pp. 84.

- Rowley, J. 1996, 'Motivation and academic staff in higher education', *Quality Assurance in Education*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 11-16.
- Sekaran, U. 2000, *Research Methods for Business: a skill-building approach*, 3rd ed., John Wiley, Chichester.
- Solomon, M.R. 1992, *Consumer Behaviour*, Allyn and Bacon, New York.
- Stauffer, D. 1997, 'For generation Xers, what counts isn't work or all play', *Management Review*, vol. 86, no. 11, pp. 7.
- Sullivan, W., Sullivan, R. & Buffton, B. 2002, 'Aligning individual and organisational values to support change', *Journal of Change Management*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp.247-254.
- Taylor, R. 1996, 'Asian Management System: Chinese, Japanese and Korean Styles of Business (Book reviews), *Asian Affairs*, vol.27, no.1.
- Tulgan, B. 1996, *Managing Generation X: how to bring out the best in young talent*, Capstone Publishing Limited, Oxford.
- Tylee, J. 1999, *Older People Have Changed – so why haven't agencies?*, Campaign, Wellington.
- Wah, L. 2000, 'Managing Gen Xers strategically', *Management Review*, vol.89, no.3.
- Wang, C.G. 1992, *The Change of Generation Work value in Transferring Sociality*, National Science Council Research, Taipei.
- Wiener, Y. 1988, 'Forms of values systems: a focus on organizational effectiveness and cultural change and maintenance', *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 534-545.
- Wilkinson, H. 2001, 'Working@life', *Management Today*, January.
- Yankelovich, 2000, *Generational Marketing*, Harperbusiness, New York.
- Zevin, D. 1997, 'Boom time for gen X?', *U.S. News & World Report*, vol. 123, no. 15, pp. 68-77.