

# Generational Groups in Different Countries

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**Received: 2019-01-08**

**Accepted: 2019-02-30**

**Published online: 2019-02-11**

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## **Abstract**

Most studies have been conducted on different generations in the United States and other Western countries. In this case, according to the prevailing culture in these countries, there is a special grouping for generations. This grouping, which consists of four generations (Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y), is now being used stereotyped in the major research literature in this field. But since local cultures and important historical events in different countries of the world have influenced the experiences of the people of each country, this grouping cannot be generalized to all countries of the world. The extent of this influence is such that in each geographic region and sometimes in each country we see different generational groups. This study, by examining some of the literature on generational groups in different countries, and the similarities and differences between them, has concluded that there is no way to speak of global generation groups and therefore it is necessary Prior to any generation research, generational groups of destination countries should be carefully identified and classified.

**Keywords:** Generations, generational cohorts, generational differences.

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## **Introduction**

Kupperschmidt (2000) defines a generation as an identifiable group, which shares years of birth and hence significant life events at critical stages of development.

A generational cohort shares historical and social life experiences, which affect the way people in that generation develop and distinguish one generational group from another. Smola and Sutton (2002) posit that the social context in which a generational group develops impacts their personality and a person's feelings towards authority, their values and beliefs about organizations, their work ethic, why and how they work and their goals and aspirations for their work life (Smola and Sutton, 2002). It has also been suggested that each generation is likely to develop distinct preferences or traits that distinguish their feelings toward work and what they desire from work (Jurkiewicz and Brown, 1998; Kupperschmidt, 2000).

## **Different Views on the Classification of Generations**

### *Researches that do not support national differences in generations*

Most of the previous researches have relied solely on the Western (mostly American) definition of the generation without considering the specific cultural and historical conditions of each country (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). In addition, many empirical studies have been conducted almost exclusively in Western societies (Parry and Urwin, 2011). This theory is based on the argument that, with the continuous rise of technology, especially ICT, the trend of globalization has continued to increase, and so different nationalities are affected by major global events in the same way. For example, Edmunds and Turner (2005) propose the development of the concept of "global generations".

### *Researches that confirm national differences in generations*

As noted, in part of the literature, there is a tendency to consider the American definitions of generations suitable for world-class application, or at least for use in all Western countries such as England and Australia. This seems to be credible as if these countries are similar in cultural terms. But if we consider the different historical, political, cultural and technological events, we can consider different categories for other countries (Parry and Urwin, 2011). Generations may differ according to the experience of social, economic, and historical events (Mannheim, 1952).

Accordingly, a small group of researchers have examined the extent of influencing and shaping local cultures on life experiences and differences between generational cohorts. This group of researchers believes that generational cohorts are different in different societies (Murphy et al., 2004).

In total, it seems that in order to do any research on the status of generations in different countries, it is necessary that this study begins with a generalization based on Western culture and experience, and then, by testing it in the target community, the fields of sharing and difference are known. This will allow the researcher to first discover how generational theory works and then apply it appropriately in other countries, cultures, and regions of the world. For this reason, we will first examine the status provided for generational groups in Western countries and then in some of the sample countries.

## **Generational Cohorts in America and some European Countries**

A generational cohort is a group of people who share some historical or social experiences in life, whose effects are fairly stable over a period of their life. These

experiences can be the source of the recognition of one generation from another generation (Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998).

Based on an age-based approach, conventional classification has been established over the past years and has been used extensively in the United States and European countries. According to this classification, there are now four different generations as follows in the societies of these countries: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, the unknown generation, or the Generation X, and Millennials or Generation Y (Kelan, 2014).

This classification has been most used among researches related to the issue of generational research in organizations (Parry and Urwin, 2011). Table 1 illustrates the details of this classification in terms of the birth year from the viewpoint of some scholars. As can be seen in this table, with some differences, there is an agreement on the time interval of generations.

Table 1. Grouping of Generations in Western Countries based on Year of Birth

	<b>Zemke et al., 2000</b>	<b>Twenge et al., 2010</b>	<b>Howe et al., 2000</b>	<b>Gursoy et al., 2013</b>
Traditionalists	1922 - 1943	-	1925 - 1944	-
Baby Boomers	1943 - 1960	1946 - 1964	1945 - 1964	1946 - 1964
Generation X	1960 - 1980	1965 - 1981	1965 - 1979	1965 - 1980
Generation Y	1980 - 2000	1982 - 1999	1980 - 2000	1981 - 2000

It is worth mentioning that, although by examining the generational situation in some countries, it is possible to find certain times when the old generation is over and the new generation begins, but in general, generations start the date and There is no definite and exact ending, and there is always some overlap between the two generations in succession. Usually, in that joint period, the characteristics of two consecutive generations exist simultaneously and in combination.

Table 2 shows some of the features associated with each of these four generations, along with a number of values of each generation that it considers useful for better understanding of them.

Table 2. Characteristics and Values of Generations

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Generational Characteristics</b>	<b>Generational Values</b>
Traditionalists	This generation is accountable, formal, reliable, productive, positive, and has strong work ethic.	Sacrifice and commitment, hard work, respect, conformity, duty, acceptance of time delay in awarding rewards, order and timeliness, loyalty to the organization (Gursoy et al., 2008).
Baby Boomers	From the characteristics of this generation is the rationality of spending, saving and being economical, and accepting the power gap, respecting hierarchy and obedience (Gursoy et	Optimism, risk taking, group focus, personal growth, work, interactivity, importance for personal growth and development, equal rights and

	al., 2008).	opportunities, entrepreneurship and the creation of new business (Gursoy et al., 2008).
Generation X	It is a positive generation and has the energy to advance in the workplace.	Variety, thought, and global interest, self-reliant, technology literature, entrepreneur, skepticism and distrust, lack of loyalty to the organization, belief in meritocracy, flexible and highly adaptable, happy, joyful and entertaining, independent and independent Self-reliance and self-esteem, attention to informality (Gursoy et al., 2008).
Generation Y	The people of this generation are team-oriented and, while questioning anything, tend to evolve. This generation has witnessed parental efforts to create better opportunities for them, and thus the expectation of parents of those who have been financially successful in their own right. A combination of positive economic conditions as well as parents' attention and encouragement has created an optimistic eye on this generation (Zemke et al., 2000)	Civic Responsibility, Confidence, Optimism, Social Abilities, Successful and Self-conceived, Realistic, Sentimental, Friendly Participation, Important Situation, Friendly, Fast Feedback, Very Interesting, Fun, Friendly, and Responsive. Networking activity, Friendly membership in the village and the international community (Gursoy et al., 2008).

### **Generational Cohorts in Armenia**

In Armenia, the people born after the independence of the country from the Soviet Union in year 1991 are known as Independence Generation. This generation speaks differently to previous generations and has a different way of interacting with each other and the world. They think clearly beyond the worn-out view of their predecessors. Despite their heroes and patterns from the past, they are looking for their perspective in the real world. Since the global generation and the application of advanced technologies, they use their own logic and reasoning, and they refer to the world through their sense of time and place. While they are aware of shortcomings in their own, they are not willing to collapse (Titizian, 2014).

### **Generational Cohorts in Brunei**

A research has been conducted to identify generational groups in Brunei by Abdul Rahman (2015). Considering the fact that every country in the world has a distinct ethnic composition and its own cultures and languages that ultimately leads to socio-economic and political differences, it has begun that generational cohorts in the Brunei are not like the known generation groups in the United States or any other country. To do this research, mainly from secondary data and the use of quantitative methods, and completing it with some preliminary data collected from the 224 people's views by qualitative method has been performed. The research results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Generational cohorts in Brunei (Abdul Rahman, 2015)

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Nationalists</b>	<b>Pre-independent</b>	<b>Independent</b>
Year of Birth	1947 - 1968	1969 - 1982	1983 - 1998
Cultural situation	The prevalence of 10to 20 children in families Under the influence of TV	Smaller families with 6 to 7 children Under the influence of the Internet	Families with 4 children or less Under the influence of social networks Working parents
Main values	Strong awareness of independence Religious awareness	Strong identity awareness Religious Awakening	Strong global awareness Religious appreciation
Current job status	Some are among the leaders and middle management, and some have retired	Either as a specialist or an experienced workforce	Some are newly recruited and younger ones are entering higher education

### **Generational Cohorts in China**

Egri and Ralston (2004), in their study, rejected the theory of the same generational groups in all countries, comparing generational groups in both the United States and China. They concluded that, based on the political and historical events that had come to fruition in China, four generations could be identified in this country, and these generations were identified as the following:

- The generation of social reform,
- The generation of republican,
- The generation of consolidation,
- The generation of Cultural Revolution.

They also showed that the orientation of generational values in the United States follows age-related patterns, while the younger generation in China seems to be more oriented towards entrepreneurial values.

They then discovered clear differences in the characteristics of generations in the United States and China. It is important to pay attention to the national context of each country in the development of generational groups and to support the idea that the characteristics of a generation, rather than being globally identical, are specific to a national environment.

Hung et al. (2007) also conducted two empirical studies to examine how important historical events of the past few decades in China could contribute to and enhance the growth of life experiences of different generations in the country. By identifying and understanding social events, they found that the social institutional changes arising from these events shaped the experiences of people's lives in the form of values and behaviors long after the events, and eventually led to the formation of different groups have a different generation in this country. Thus, they concluded that

at present three different generations according to Table 4 can be distinguished in this country.

Table 4. Generational cohorts in China (Hung et al., 2007)

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Red Guard</b>	<b>Modern Realist</b>	<b>Global Materialist</b>
Year of Birth	1966 - 1979	1980 - 1991	now1992 -
Social Institutional Change	Cultural Revolution	Economic Reforms	Globalization
Life experiences	Join the Red Guard Workers movement in rural areas Strong relationship between peers	Investing in coastal areas and special economic zones to take advantage of the market economy Entrepreneurship and accumulation of personal wealth	Increased exposure to mass media and the Internet Influenced by global consumption culture Increased exposures to multinationals and foreign brands
Values	Pessimistic Immaterial	In search of innovation Material	In search of innovation(more than the previous generation) Material (more than the previous generation)

### **Generational Cohorts in India**

Rajeshand Ekambaram (2014) conducted an exploratory study to examine the phenomenon of generational diversity among the workforce employed in India and to identify the values, attitudes, behaviour and work culture of each generation. They point out that the focus of most studies on workplace diversity in India, to date on gender diversity and disability, states that at present, in many organizations, in particular, companies' fundamentals of knowledge, men and women belong to different generations. Therefore, it is necessary, while accurately identifying this generation diversity, to firstly use the fundamental differences between them as a leverage to further benefit the organization and, secondly, to avoid the perceived harmful consequences of differences in attitudes.

In this regard, by conducting an ongoing storm process involving more than 250 representatives from various Indian companies, they succeeded in classifying the workforce in India into five distinct generations according to Table 5. Since the birth year of a group of people indicates the social, cultural, political, economic, and technological status in which it has grown, birth-timing intervals are recognized to be appropriate for the desired generation of division. Another goal of this research is to understand the professional choices and specific work ethic of each of the generations in order to provide guidance for managing the underlying differences between them, and to this end, identifying behavioral patterns and beliefs each of the generational groups is concentrated.

Table 5. Generational cohorts in India (Rajesh and Ekambaram, 2014)

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Veterans</b>	<b>Free-Gens</b>	<b>Gen X's</b>	<b>E-Gen's</b>	<b>Gen Y's</b>
Year of Birth	1920 -1945	1945 - 1960	1961 - 1970	1971 - 1980	1981 - 1990
Features	This generation is rarely found among the today's workforce, so this study did not address the details of their characteristics	Desire to serve Emphasis on relationship The desire to please others Good teamwork Lack of comfort when confronted Social shyness More important to the process than the results Very responsive to feedback	Compatible Technology literacy Creative Multitasking Aggressive behavior towards growth and development Ease of leadership Value to self-esteem Pragmatic	Flexible Worldview Practical mastery of technology The importance of environmental protection Focus on your education Special attention to life alongside work Strongly indifferent in interest and lack of interest	Collective action Optimism Tenacity Great mastery of technology Quick recovery capability after problems Need for supervision and structure Low-experience The need for paternal and inspirational leadership, at the same time, a constant challenge
Percentage of current work force	0%	20%	25%	29%	26%

In India, generations tend to follow a pattern similar to the widespread model that is prevalent in the West. However, there are still major differences, especially in older generations. One of the perspectives sees India's independence in 1947 as a major change in generational topics. The births of the 1930s and 1940s tended to fit into the traditional section of society. Individuals belonging to the generation of the explosion of the Indian population, those born after independence and born in the early 1960s, tended to leave India for success and looked suspiciously into traditional social institutions. Events like state Urgency in India between 1975 and 1977 raised their doubts about the government. The X generation is experiencing the economic progress of India and it is easy to deal with in a variety of perspectives. In the Y, this pattern continues (Erickson, 2009).

### **Generational Cohorts in Iran**

Akhavan Sarrafet al. (2016) conducted a study to determine generational groups in Iran. They declared five different generations in Iran. Characteristics of each generation are described in the Table 6.

Table 6. Generational cohorts in Iran (Akhavan Sarraf et al., 2016)

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Older generation (A)</b>	<b>Middle-aged generation (B)</b>	<b>Global Materialist (C)</b>	<b>Middle-aged generation (D)</b>	<b>The last generation (E)</b>
Year of Birth	1937-1961	1962 - 1976	1977 - 1986	1987 - 1996	now1997 -
Corresponding	Traditionalists	Generation X	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Y

western generations	and Baby Boomers		Generation Y		
Socialization process	In the years before the Islamic Revolution in Iran	In the period of the war between Iraq and Iran	During the post-war reconstruction period and dominance of welfare values	In the period of extensive political and social reforms in Iran	They still stay on the beginning phases of socialization

### **Generational Cohorts in Netherlands**

Bontekoning (2007) has studied the views of former scholars such as Becker (1992), Van Steensel (2000) and Jeekel (2005) on how to group the generations in the Netherlands. By summarizing these views, he points out that there are five different generations in the country, and has expressed some of the characteristics of each generation. Table 7 shows the status of generational cohorts in the Netherlands based on this information.

Table 7. Generational cohorts in Netherlands (Bontekoning, 2007)

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Silent Generation</b>	<b>Baby boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Pragmatic Generation</b>	<b>Screenagers</b>
Year of Birth	1930 - 1940	1940 - 1955	1955 - 1970	1970 - 1985	1985 - 2000
features	---	Use force or coercion strategy to persuade others Having strong emotions	Conservative and temperate Unwilling to protest against the existing status	Individualism Working hard The high participation rates of ethnic minorities and women	Valuing for Autonomy, Liberty and Individual Development The importance of being happy Learning

### **Generational Cohorts in Malaysia**

Tung and Comeau (2014) conducted research aimed at identifying real gaps in Malaysia. They stated that it might be misleading for a country like Malaysia, due to the difference in the important events of life from one country to another, to consider similar generational groups as those prevalent in Western countries. Accordingly, based on the socio-economic and demographic developments in the country over the last seventy years, the study finally came to be divided into four generational groups. The groupings performed by these researchers are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Generational cohorts in Malaysia (Tung and Comeau, 2014)

Generation	Seekers	Builders	Developers	Generation Z
Year of Birth	1943 - 1960	1961 - 1981	1982 – 2004	now 2005 -
Lifeexperiences	WWII Independence in 1957 The period of conflict, difficulty and struggle for independence	The beginning of industrialization and urbanization Developments in education New economic policies (1971) aimed at economic reconstruction	Improve the rate of economic growth, income and consumption Earlier access to higher education Urbanization / towards modernization (2020 vision) TV / Convert the Internet to a Norm Change in employment (from agriculture to industry to service)	More urbanization More educated Higher income Taking more Access and travel around the world Set the crowd Stronger competition to win jobs
The cause of the name	This generation has witnessed occupation by Japan and British colonialism, and has been strongly seeking independence and survival.	This generation has witnessed the beginning of a shift towards a new era of industrialization, economic self-control, the development of education, and progress in becoming an independent and developed state.	This generation has grown in a more prosperous environment with better career opportunities and advancements in technology. They are the groups that help the country to progress towards development in 2020.	This is a growing generation in a highly globalized world. This generation is heavily connected and has the lifelong use of communications and media sharing with others. Differences and fundamental challenges arise between this generation and the previous generation.

### **Generational Cohorts in Philippines**

In the Philippines, people are also known by Western groupings such as Generation X and the Generation Y, as well as being distinguished by pre-World War II births and those born during the World War II. "Martial Law Babies" are those who were born during the period between the imposition of military rule by President Ferdinand Marcus on September 21, 1972 and his official removal in January 1981. This term is sometimes extended to any person born during Marcus's 21-year rule.

The Philippine Popular Revolution in 1986 captured two military bases on a street called Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) in the suburbs of Manila, which led to the overthrow of the regime. Since then, the street has attracted global attention as a symbol of a peaceful popular revolution. As many demonstrations, which included more than two million Filipino civilians, as well as known political, military, and religious groups, were formed along the street, those born after this revolution, are called the children of the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (Burgos, 2014).

### **Generational Cohorts in South Africa**

The country's first democratic election was held after the era of racism. The people born after the election are referred to in the media as the "Born-free Generation" (Smith, 2016).

### **Generational Cohorts in South Korea**

In South Korea, generational groups have often defined the events associated with the democratization of this country. Accordingly, different naming has been made as follows:

- Generation of Democracy or 386 Generation: The people of this generation have witnessed the June uprising.
- *April 19th generation: This generation fought against the "Syngman Rhee" regime in the 1960s.*
- June 3rd generation: This generation fought against the normalization treaty with Japan in 1964.
- 1969 Generation: This generation fought against a constitutional review that allowed three presidential periods.
- New Generation: This generation is also referred to as "Shinsedae"(Sun-Young, 2007).

### **Generational Cohorts in Taiwan**

Yu and Miller (2003) studied the differences between western generations with the generations of Taiwan. They achieved some of the differences between the population of the population explosion and the Generation X in the variables of work values, attitudes and expectations in the manufacturing industry, but these results were not endorsed in the education sector.

### **Conclusion of Generational Cohorts in Different Countries**

Different generations have different values and characteristics based on the various experiences that they have had throughout their lives. Now, given the fact that different countries and even different regions of the world have experienced quite different events over time, it can be said that it is impossible to create a single generation theory that applies all over the world. However, in the literature on intergenerational studies, it seems that the dominant tendency is to ignore the impact of the national culture of countries.

In this article, some researches in other countries of the world about the grouping of generations were investigated. The results of this study show that the way of grouping the generations in these countries is different from each other and in no

way can an international unit be grouped. This difference is observed both in the number of generational groups of countries and in the time period for each generation in each country.

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