

## IMPACT OF GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON WORK ETHICS OF EMPLOYEES AT ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN DELHI: A STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Multi generation human resources work together and managing them is strenuous task. Specially after addition of Generation Z (people born 2000 onwards) which is more digital friendly whereas Generation X (1965 – 1979) and Generation Y (1980 – 2000) group of people are enriched more with work ethics, generational contradiction arises. The present research paper describes the concept of work ethics of different generation's employees at the workplace of selected Academic Institutions in Delhi. The paper finds out the best approaches to manage the employees of different generations and suggest various measures based on employee's feedback.

**Keywords:** Generational Diversity, Work Ethics, Academic Workplace, Digitization.

### Introduction

India is the second largest democracy in the world in which people of divergent cast, beliefs, religion, culture, nationality as well as people of different generations are working together at workplace for the development of economy. This results in diversity that makes the workforce a bit strenuous to manage. Although having generational diversity of age is beneficial at workplaces but in the era of information transformation and competitive world, organizations are facing various challenges. Generally, in last few decades, research has been done in the area of diversity at work place such as gender equality, racism, and ethnicity behaviours etc., but age-related issues of generational diversity are completely ignored, which is one of most important area of research at workplace linked with organizational performance.

### Conceptual Meaning of Generational Diversity

Generational diversity means having human resources of wide generation cohorts or age groups that work together in an organization.

Kupperschmidt (2000) defined generational cohort as 'an identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and life events at critical development stages'. According to Zemke, Raines and Filipczak as "Generational diversity is defined as 'a group of people who share birth years, history and collective personality as a result of their defining experiences'.

S. No.	Generation Cohort Name	Born Between	Traits
1	Traditionalists or silent generation	1925 to 1945	70 years old, usually hard working and loyal, may not know about technology.
2	Baby Boomers	1946 -1964	Also diligent, faithful but have exposure to technology.
3	Generation X	1965 – 1980	Self-reliant, comfortable with technology, balances between work and life.
4	Generation Y or Millennials	1981 – 1996	Do not like micro supervision, do smart work, very much comfortable in technology and know how to use technology for self-benefit.
5	Generation Z / iGen or post millennials	1997 – 2012	Born after millennials, first generation born in the information technology era, digital natives, highly independent, self-assured.
6	Generation Alpha	2010 – 2025	Youngest age group on which the world is looking at now. Tech savvy, grew up with smart phones in their hands, Artificial Intelligence is their world and reality.

Michele Debczak (2019) categorizes following generations at the workplace:

Figure: Categorization of Generational Diversity

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### Literature Search & Review

**Notter Jamie & Grant Maddie (2015)** said that readers, leaders or managers should look at the four capacities important for a successful organization in the age of millennial i.e. Digital, Clear, Fluid and Fast. Managers should prepare themselves for a new era by being well equipped through a collection of new tools and techniques.

**Lee Caraher (2014)** in his book 'Millennials & Management' suggested not only to work with Millennial / Generation Y but also to understand their view point, attitude & background at workplace.

**John Bret Becton, Walker & Farmer (2014)** in a study titled "Generational differences in workplace behavior" described that generational differences among workers exist in workplace behavior in terms of attitude, desire and ethical values. Generational differences bring challenges at workplace, hence needs to be recognized. Failure to understand these may lead to miscommunication, conflicts, diminished employee productivity, poor working relationships and misunderstanding. HR Managers should identify ways to manage and work with people from different generations (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

**Chue Shih Young (2012)** in his paper titled "Millennial at work" said that Millennial get more attention at the workplace in order to motivate these employees at the workplace, there is a need to implement various kind of leadership.

**Jenny Devinein E (2010)** in his study titled "Five Myths and Realities about Generation Y" stated that Generation Y is equipped with facing challenges as they acquire certain traits to face challenges. They are prone to technology which makes them cost efficient for the organizations.

**Justin Meier (2010)** in "Generation Y in the Workforce: Managerial Challenges" briefed that the most visible conflict between Generation X and Generation Y may be the technology differences and Managers can bring a positive environment at workplace by knowing ways to manage the varied traits of each generation. Generation X can encourage Generation Y recalling themselves who they once were when they see Generation Y.

**Keith L. Zabel et.al (2016)** in their article 'Generational Differences in Work Ethic: Fact or Fiction?' highlighted that though baby boomers or matured age groups have more work ethics than those in the younger age cohorts but it is unclear whether age related differences exist or not. Generational diversity was measured with workplace parameters like job satisfaction and commitment towards the organization.

### Statement of the Problem

An empirical study has been carried on the selected employees from Teaching & Non-Teaching department of the academic institution Sri Aurobindo College Evening to understand generational diversity at the workplace.

### About the Institution

Sri Aurobindo College Evening (University of Delhi) is situated in the vicinity of Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Malviya Nagar. The College was established in 1984 and has been recently accredited with 'B+' grading by NAAC. It aims at imparting holistic academic and extra-curricular education with an inclusive and diverse environment not only for students but for its employees also. The College also aims to develop Human Resources (Teaching and Administration employees) of this institution as a talented work force of global standards.

### Objectives

- To identify the work Ethics of Different generations employees in the academic institutions
- To identify the best approaches to manage the employees in academic institutions
- To recommend the various measures on the basis of feedbacks received from employees.

### Hypothesis

There are significant differences in work ethics of different generations' employees in academic institutions.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The present study was carried out using descriptive method. A structured e- questionnaire was designed by the researcher keeping in view objectives of the study. The questionnaires were circulated amongst the employees of Sri Aurobindo College Evening, being the target population. An MS-Excel

based analysis as well as graphical analysis has been done based on responses received corresponding to each question of the questionnaire. In this study, responses of 70 participants have been received against the targeted population of 100. Chi Square is used to test the hypothesis of the study.

- Have you helped a new employee younger in age to you to get oriented to the job?

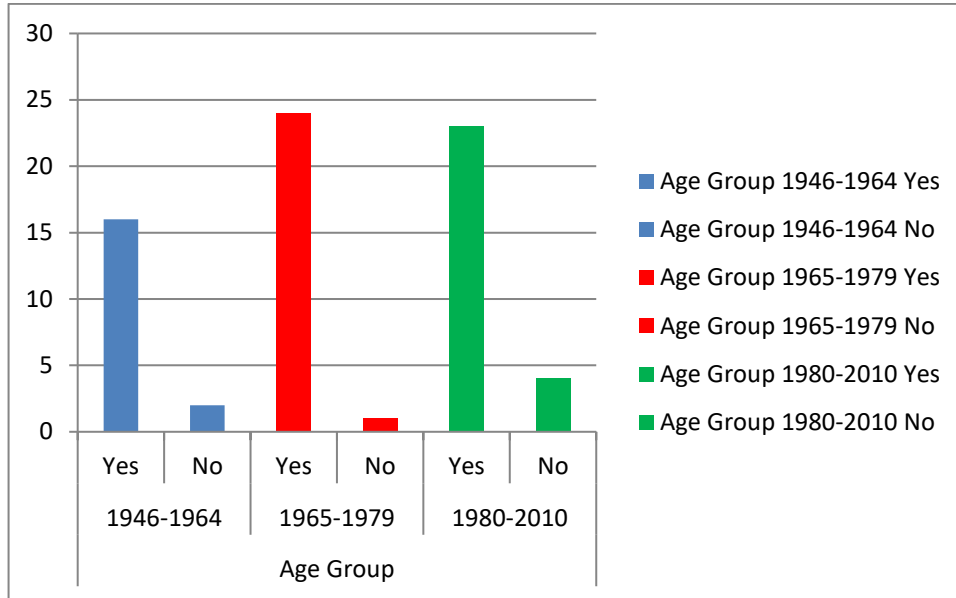


Figure 1: Bar Graph - Ques.1

The figure 1 shows the responses of various age group that 23% of employees (16) helped a new employee in the age group 1946-1964, whereas 3% of employees (2) did not help a new employee,34% of employees (24) helped in the age group 1965-1979 whereas 1% of employees (1) did not help a new employee,33% of employees (23) in the age group 1980-2010, whereas 6% of employees (4) did not help a new employee.

- Do you finish some work for a Junior/Senior co-worker who has to leave early?

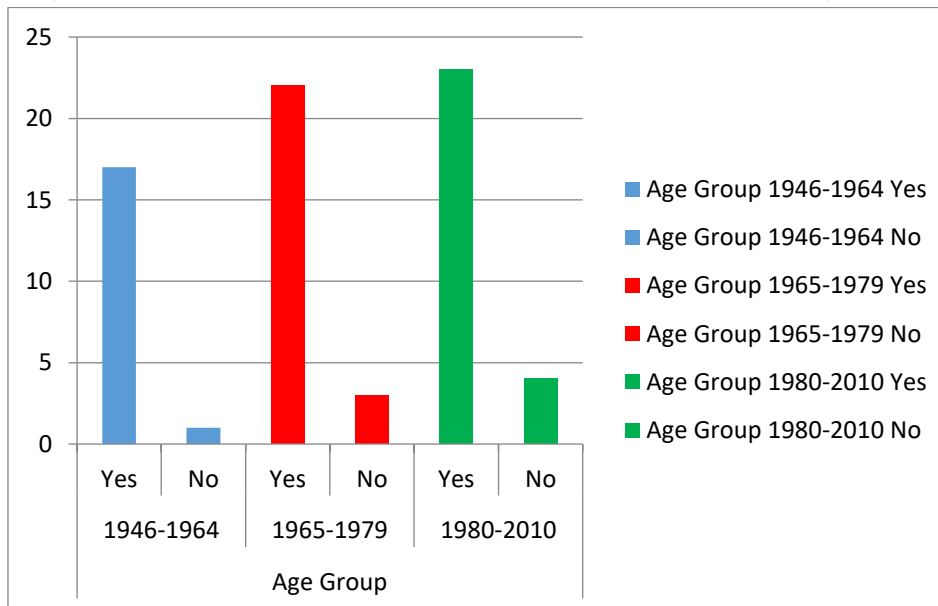
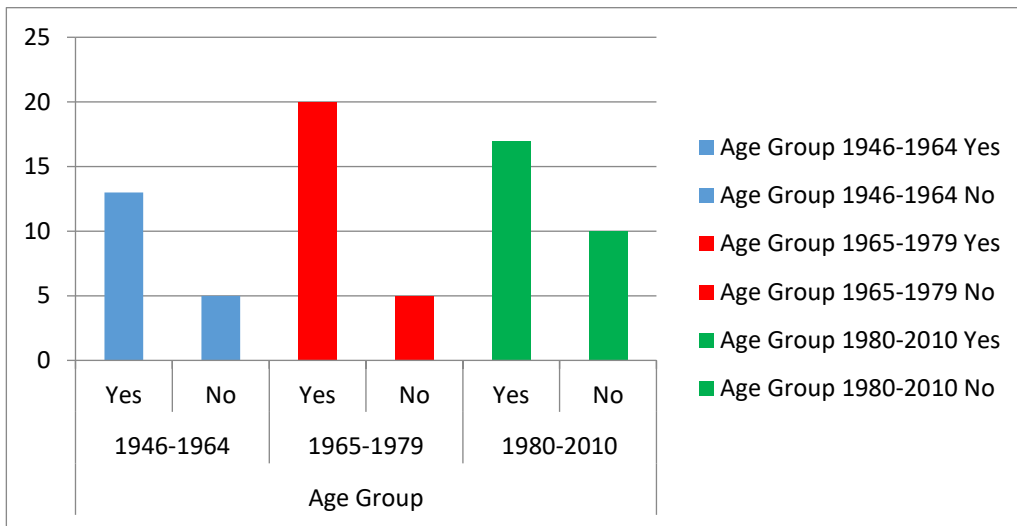


Figure 2: Bar Graph - Ques.2

The figure 2 shows that responses of various age group that 24% (17) of the employees, they finish some work for a Junior/Senior co-worker who has to leave early in the age group 1946-1964 whereas 1% of employees (1) did not act like that, 31% of employees (22) in the age group 1965-1979 whereas 4% of employees (3) did not,33% of employees (23) in the age group 1980-2010, whereas 6% of employees (4) did not.

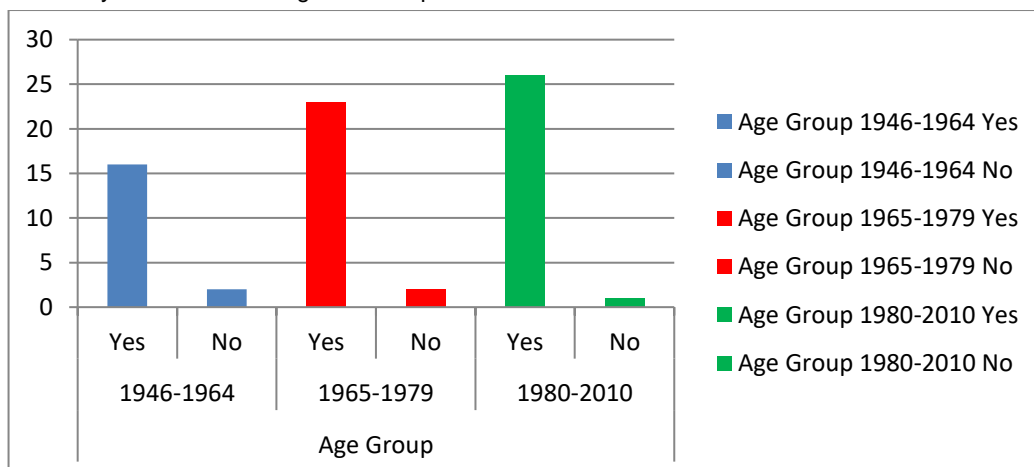
- Have you helped a co-worker with 10 years age gap in case he/she is facing a personal tragedy, dealing with stress etc.?



**Figure 3: Bar Graph - Ques.3**

The figure 3 shows responses of various age group that 19% of employees (13) helped a co-worker with 10 years age gap in case he/she is facing a personal tragedy, dealing with stress etc. in the age group 1946-1964, whereas 7% of employees (5) did not, 29% of employees (20) in the age group 1965-1979 whereas 7% of employees (5) did not, 25% of employees (17) in the age group 1980-2010 whereas 14% of employees (10) did not.

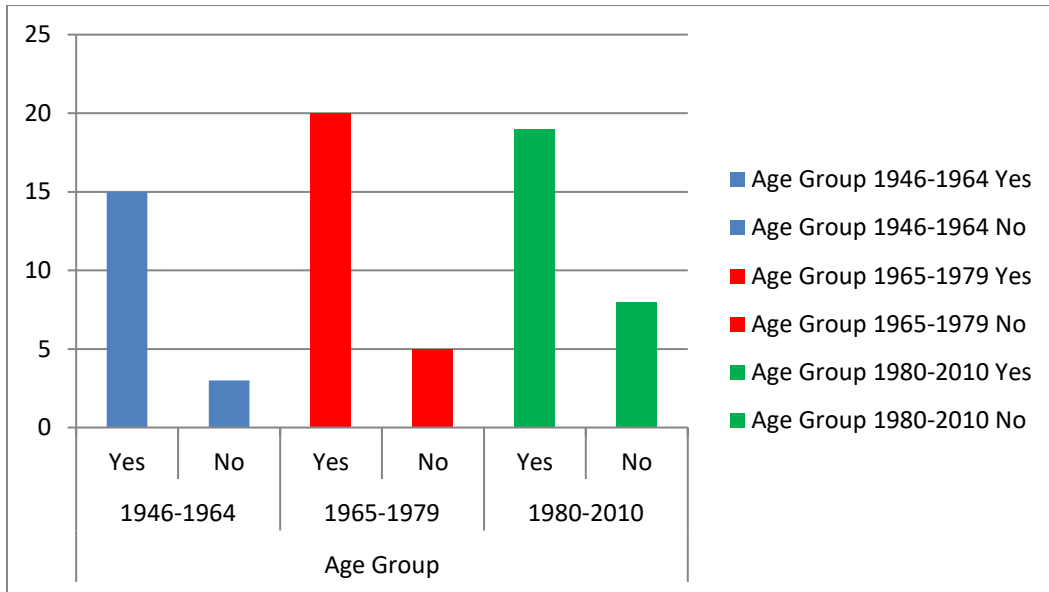
- Do you assist a colleague at workplace to deal with a difficult work situation?



**Figure 4. Bar Graph - Ques.4**

The figure 4 shows the responses of various age group that 23% of employees (16) in the age group 1946-1964 feel to assist a colleague to deal with a difficult work situation whereas 3% of employees (2) did not feel so, 33% of employees (23) in the age group 1965-1979, whereas 3% of employees (2) did not,37% of employees (26) in the age group 1980-2010, whereas 1% of employees (1) did not.

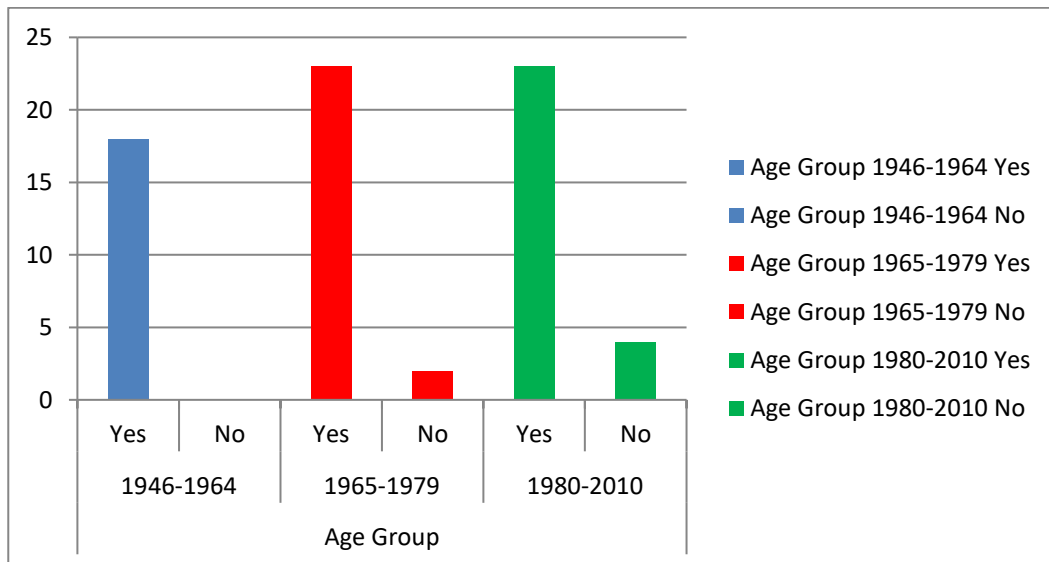
- Have you ever defended a different age group co-worker who was being ill-treated?



**Figure 5: Bar Graph - Ques.5**

The figure 5 shows the responses of various age group that 22% of employees (15) in the age group 1946-1964 defended a different age group co-worker who was being ill-treated whereas 4% of employees (3) have not defended,29% of employees (20) in the age group 1965-1979, whereas 7% of employees (5) have not done so,28% of employees (19) in the age group 1980-2010, whereas 11% of employees (8) have not done so.

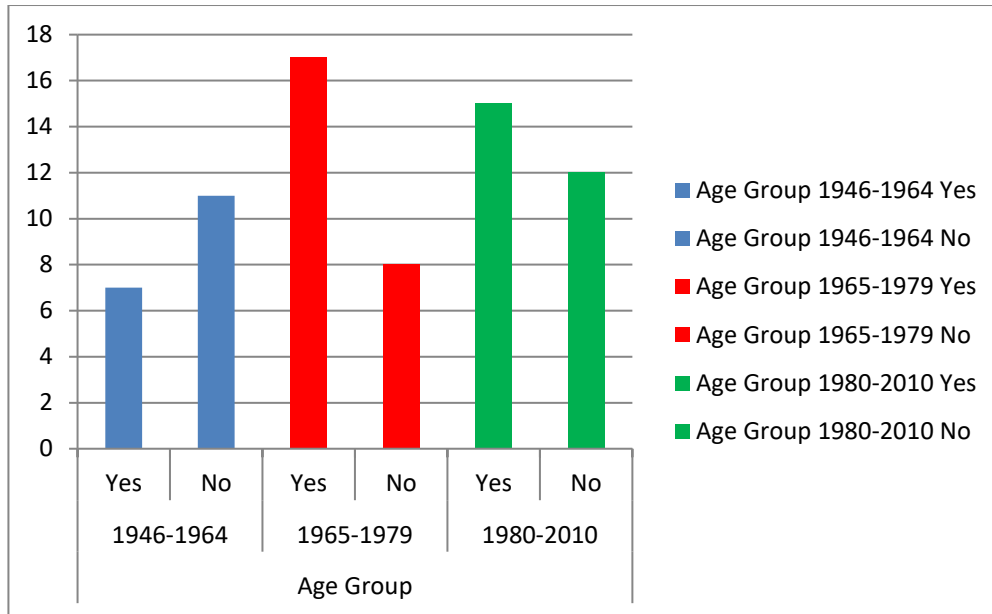
- Have you heard patiently when a co-worker of different age group face either work related or personal problem?



**Figure 6: Bar Graph - Ques.6**

The figure 6 shows the responses of various age group that 26% of employees (18) in the age group 1946-1964 have heard patiently to an age diversified colleague whereas 0% of employees (0) did not,33% of employees (23) in the age group 1965-1979 whereas 3% of employees (2) did not,33% of employees (23) in the age group 1980-2010, whereas 6% of employees (4) did not.

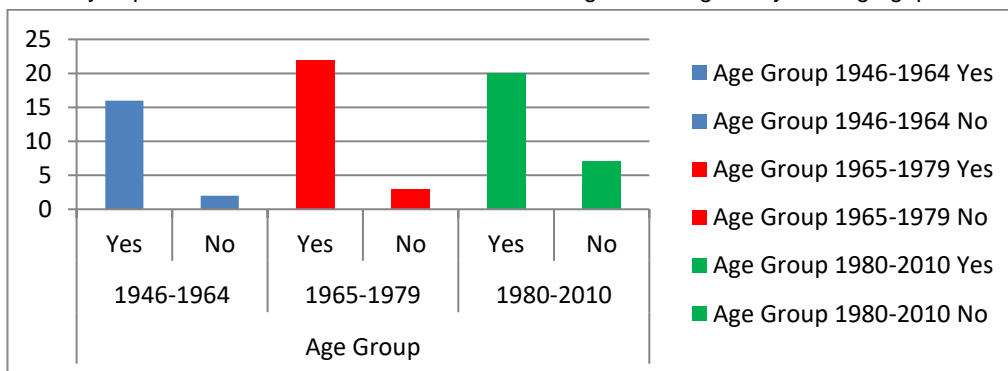
- Have you developed extra co-curricular activities for colleagues?



**Figure 7: Bar Graph - Ques.7**

The figure 7 shows the responses of various age group that 10% of employees (7) in the age group 1946-1964 developed extra co-curricular activities for colleagues, whereas 16% of employees (11) did not, 25% of employees (17) in the age group 1965-1979, whereas 12% of employees (8) did not, 22% of employees (15) in the age group 1980-2010, whereas 17% of employees (12) did not.

- Do you prefer to have shared lunch/tea with colleagues having a 10 years' age gap?



**Figure 8: Bar Graph - Ques.8**

The figure 8 shows the responses of various age group that 23% of employees (16) in the age group 1946-1964 preferred to have shared lunch/tea with age diversified colleagues, whereas 3% of employees (2) did not, 31% of employees (22) in the age group 1965-1979, whereas 4% of employees (3) did not, 29% of employees (20) in the age group 1980-2010, whereas 10% of employees (7) did not.

**Major Findings of the Study**

- It was observed from the research that majority (34%) of the employees in the age group of 1965-1979 accepted that they helped a new employee & very few no. of employees in all age groups did not help a new employee.
- It was also observed that majority (33%) of employees finished some work for a Junior/Senior co-worker who has to leave early in the age group 1980-2010 while very few (1%) of the employees did not act like that in other age group.

- The study revealed that 29 % of employees in the age group 1965-1979 & 25% of employees in the age group 1980-2010 have helped a co-worker of different age group to deal with a difficult work situation whereas 7% of employees did not help a co-worker in dealing same situation in age group 1965-1979.
- It was observed that 93% of employees in all age groups were willing to assist a colleague to deal with a difficult work situation whereas 7% of employees were not willing to do so in all age groups.
- It was also observed that majority of employees in the age group 1965-1979 have defended a different age group co-worker who was being ill-treated whereas very few of the employees have not done so the age group 1946-1964.
- It was also found that most- of the employees (91%) amongst all age groups have heard patiently to an age diversified colleague while few of them (9%) of employees amongst all age groups had not done like that.
- Many employees in the age group 1965-1979 developed extra co-curricular activities for colleagues while 17% of employees have not done so in the age group 1980-2010.
- Most of employees in the age group 1965-1979 preferred to have shared lunch/tea with age diversified colleagues while very few of the employees (3%) in age - group 1946-64 did not prefer so.

### Testing of Hypothesis

#### Hypothesis

There are significant differences in work ethics of different generations' employees in academic institutions.

**Ques. 1:** Have you helped a new employee younger in age to you to get oriented to the job?

#### Hypothesis Test Result

Cross table formula has been applied to test hypothesis on significant difference in work ethics of different generations' employees. The result found is that the chi-square calculated value is 1.7202 which is lower than chi-square critical or tabulated value. The result indicates that there are no significant differences in work ethics of different generations on this statement. Hence, the hypothesis has been not proved and rejected.

**Ques. 2:** Have you helped a co-worker with 10 years age gap in case he/she is facing a personal tragedy, dealing with stress etc.?

The chi-square calculated value is 2.6868, which is lower than chi-square tabulated value. The result indicates that there are no significant differences in work ethics of different generations on this statement. Hence, the hypothesis has been not proved and rejected.

**Ques. 3:** Do you assist a colleague at workplace to deal with a difficult work situation?

The chi-square calculated value is 0.9365, which is lower than chi-square tabulated value. The result shows that there are no significant differences in work ethics of different generations on this statement. Hence, the hypothesis has been not proved and rejected.

The Chi square result also indicates that significance level is .05 of all hypotheses.

### Conclusion

This research has produced the fact that there is a need to acknowledge & manage Generational Diversity at workplace especially in the context of academic institutions. The study helps to understand that each generation workforce brings different ideas, values & work ethics that are important to bridge generation gap among employees. Generational Diversity can be channelized in a positive manner by understanding & enhancing the work ethics of different generations employees like assisting different age-group employees by encouraging and supporting them to become IT friendly at workplace or helping them to deal with a different work situation. The study also emphasized upon striking a balance between different generation by collaborative team work and accepting each age groups' work ethics so that organizations common objectives can be achieved up to the maximum potential. The study has also paved way for further research towards work ethics and generational contradiction at academic institutions.

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