

The Impact of Generational Diversity on Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace

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Vision

24(1) 70–80, 2020

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DOI: 10.1177/0972262919884841

journals.sagepub.com/home/vis

Abstract

The role of spirituality and religion in workplace (SRW) is important as SRW reinforces values of concern and appreciation for both self and others. This is foundational to a person's ethical schema, impacting how an individual interacts with others within the workplace, fostering organizational and individual goals. While there is a growing body of knowledge about the underlying assumptions and history of SRW, less is known about how contextual factors, such as generational diversity, impact SRW. The purpose of this study is to empirically investigate the differences in SRW among generational cohorts using the lens of cognitive spiritual development theory and multigenerational theory. The results indicate that there is a difference in spirituality and religion among generations in the workplace. Gen X and Baby boomers are similar in expressing higher spirituality and religiosity than Millennials, and religion is a less important factor among all generations. This research has important implications for organizations seeking to better understand personal core values for enhancing organizational outcomes and for individuals working towards meaningful personal and professional outcomes.

Key Words

Generational Diversity, Spirituality and Religion in the Workplace, Multigenerational Cohorts, Personal Core Values

Executive Summary

The influence of spirituality and religion in workplace (SRW) has attracted substantial attention, and yet little focus has been given to examining the relationship between SRW and generational diversity. The aim of this study was to examine the differences in SRW among generations in the workplace. Data were collected from employees using Amazon Mechanical Turk yielding 282 (97%) usable responses. The hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance with post hoc analysis using SPSS. The results revealed a difference in SRW among generations. Unexpectedly, the spirituality and religion of Gen X and Baby boomers were more similar than those of Gen Y (Millennials). Religion is a weaker component in SRW than spirituality in for all three generations.

Introduction

The role of spirituality and religion in workplace (SRW) is important, as SRW reinforces values of concern and

appreciation for both self and others. This is the foundation for a person's ethical schema, impacting how an individual interacts with other individuals and groups within the workplace encouraging more meaningful work experiences and fostering responsible business performance. The nature and role of SRW continues to be of interest to a growing number of academics (Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2009; Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014; Dean & Fornaciari, 2007; Karakas, 2010; Milliman, Gatling, & Bradley-Geist, 2017; Rhodes, 2006) and practitioners (Brooks, 2013; Lambert, 2010). Research indicates that spirituality and religion enhance ethical behaviours and leadership (Chan & Ananthram, 2017; Emerson, Emerson, & Mckinney, 2010; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; McCormick, 2013; McLaughlin, 2005; Vitell et al., 2016). Benefiel et al. (2014) argued that SRW represents a set of ethical values guiding actions promoting new business models which combine employee well-being, environmental and social responsibility without sacrificing financial performance. Although there is a growing body of knowledge about the underlying assumptions and history of SRW (Benefiel et al., 2014), less is known about

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how contextual factors, such as generational diversity, impact SRW.

A recent phenomenon in the workplace is the existence of generational diversity with often four generations employed within the same workplace. Generational characteristics shared by employees from the same generational cohort affect their philosophical stance on relationships, work ethic and behaviour, motivators, attitude towards teamwork, communication preferences, perception of organizational hierarchy and their approach to managing change (Cates, 2010; Venus, 2011). Therefore, while practitioners are increasingly required to address the impact of generations in the workplace (Haserot, 2008; McDonald, 2008), there is a limited body of scholarship which focusses on the impact of generational diversity on workplace attitudes and behaviours (Arsenault, 2004; Bell, 2008). Apart from a few studies (Arli & Pekerti, 2017; Loroz 2006; VanMeter, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2013), there is little empirical work on the relationship between SRW and generational diversity.

The purpose of this study is to examine SRW by addressing the research question using the theoretical lens of cognitive spiritual development theory and multigenerational theory: 'How do different generations view SRW?' The answer to the research question can be of importance as organizations seek to tap into individual core values to enhance strategic and tactical functions such as leadership, ethical decision-making, problem-solving and innovation. Having knowledge of generational views on SRW could contribute to better productivity (Sori, Ahma-die, & Iman, 2014) and facilitate human resource policy development in organizations by meeting employee expectations and needs better (Hernaus & Pološki Vokic, 2014). A multigenerational lens is needed, both in theory and in practice, to gain an improved understanding of workforce diversity and its effects since the failure to include generational diversity may limit the ability to accurately understand individual attitudes and behaviours in organizations (Hernaus & Pološki Vokic, 2014). This research may also enlighten individuals working towards meaningful personal and professional goals.

What follows is a review of the literature addressing first spirituality and religion and then generational diversity. Based on this literature review, a research model is proposed and empirically tested on a sample of employed individuals, the results are discussed and future research areas and limitations are presented.

Theoretical Background and Research Model

At the organizational level, SRW is a descriptor of the organization in terms of a common vision, mission and set of organizational values. At mid-range level (the division, team or unit level), SRW provides a framework to integrate

and link between individual and organization such that concepts of empowerment, power sharing, caring and non-financial values can be nurtured and enacted (Benefiel et al., 2014). It is this linkage that creates the cross-level connection between the group and individual and organization. Understanding SRW is also of interest, as there is an increasing overlap between work and life, and with this intersection, many pursue opportunities for meaningful experiences in the workplace (Pawar, 2009). Additionally, the continual workplace churn from major organizational changes, such as downsizing, innovations and layoffs, positions SRW as a way towards more meaningful work experiences (Benefiel et al., 2014). In the following sections are reviews of the separate dimensions of SRW—spirituality and religion (Badrinarayanan & Madhavaram, 2008; Frey, 2003; Geh & Tan, 2009) and generational diversity, followed by the research model.

Spirituality

Spirituality is an employees' internal life which sustains him/her and is sustained by the community's meaningful work (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). This definition conveys the fluid nature of the relationship between work and personal inner life and highlights that spirituality is not solely an individual phenomenon. López, Ramos, and Ramos (2009) propose capturing the complexity of spirituality with a deeper focus on the influence of the environment and conclude that spirituality is the outcome of the interaction of various processes and elements at the individual, organizational and societal levels. Badrinarayanan and Madhavaram (2008) focus on spirituality and suggest that organizations need to recognize a) the importance of the inner self, b) meaningful work and c) connectedness as the components of spirituality.

A spiritual workplace provides employees with an environment of opportunities and means of internal transformation ensuring ethical and moral behaviour and increased job satisfaction levels and productivity (Joshi & Jain, 2016). Thus, it has been suggested that higher levels of spirituality tend to create a trend of respect, trust, responsibility, authenticity and commitment among employees, enhancing a pleasant work environment and rewards for employees (Shojaiel, Barani, & Seyyedrezaie, 2013).

Religion

Religion is generally characterized as an outward, formal set of standardized practices and beliefs (Mohr, 2006). In Mitroff and Denton's (1999) study, managers clearly distinguished between religion and spirituality, and further studies by the Pew Foundation (2010) emphasized that people define religion as a more formalized belief and practice system shared by others who join together in an ongoing, structured way. A comprehensive review shows

that religion is based on tenets and dogma while spirituality is based on less prescribed values and beliefs (Badri-narayanan & Madhavaram, 2008). The cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects focus on belief in, and worship of, a superhuman controlling power within systems of formalized and structured rituals, texts and practices. Therefore, religion is a multidimensional construct of formal religious beliefs, commitments, behaviours and involvement at the personal and institutional levels (Cornwall, Albrecht, Cunningham, & Pitcher, 1986).

There is a growing body of knowledge of religion in business education and ethics. Conroy and Emerson (2004) found that those who reported higher religiosity, defined as church attendance, were more likely to identify unethical business situations as unacceptable. Saroglou, Delpierre, and Dernelle (2004) used meta-analysis to review studies on 21 samples from 15 countries, investigating how religiosity was related to Schwartz's model of values. They concluded that '...religious people tend to favor values that promote conservation of social and individual order (Tradition, Conformity, and to a lesser extent, Security) and, conversely, to dislike values that promote openness to change and autonomy (Stimulation, Self-Direction)' (2004, p. 1). They also concluded that many effects were consistent across different religious denominations (Christians, Jews, and Muslims) and cultures, but the socio-economic development of the countries was an important contextual variable (Saroglou et al., 2004).

Generational Diversity

Today's workplaces are increasingly age diverse with multiple generations working side-by-side; this is the first time there have been four birth ranges employed in a wide variety of organizations across the globe (Chaturvedi, Zyphur, Arvey, Avolio, & Larsson, 2012; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). A generation is defined as a group of people, within a range of birth years and events linked to a specific time period (Arsenault, 2004). The multigenerational theory defines these as groups sharing birth years and, most importantly, sharing a set of world views anchored to social or historical events that took place in their formative years (Mannheim, 1952). These shared external contexts from the formative years are carried forward as each specific birth generational cohort ages, informing expectations, values, attitudes and beliefs (Cogin, 2012). The common birth ranges/generational cohorts identified in the literature are truers/silent or traditionalist generation), 1946–1964 (Baby Boomer generation), 1965–1980 (Generation X/Gen Xers), 1980–1999 (Generation Y/Gen Years—Millennials—Hoodies) and 2000 (Generation Z).

The composition of the multi-generational workforce is evolving. The Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (the Millennials) constitute the majority of those in the full-time workforce and define the generations studied in

this article. Each generation holds different motivators and expectations in their views of time and work (Cogin, 2012).

The Baby Boom generation (1946–1964)—the largest generational group—is competitive, works hard (perhaps too hard so they are often stressed out), sets goals and is generally loyal (Corbo, 1997; Frandsen, 2009; McGuire, Todnem, & Hutchings, 2007; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2013). Generation X/Gen Xers (1965–1980) is portrayed as having low expectations, with feelings of alienation, and is the first generation widely coming from two income families, is often described as selfish, questioning of authority and is organizational mobile (Corbo, 1997; McGuire et al., 2007; Zemke et al., 2013).

Generation Y/Gen Yers—Millennials—Hoodies (1980–1999) are citizens of the Internet and hence of the globe. They are more tolerant of diversity and risk, are able to multitask and are serious about personal time. In general, their work style and belief systems differ fundamentally from other generations (Epstein, 2002; Frandsen, 2009; Haserot, 2008; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; McGuire et al., 2007). Thus, the mix of generations in the workplace presents opportunities and challenges, in attitudes, ambitions, mindsets and values (Zemke et al., 2013). While there is no exclusivity among generations, prior research shows it is possible to identify collective memories and defining events of these birth ranges, thus representing generations (Schuman & Scott, 1989; Zacher, Rosing, Henning, & Frese, 2011b).

Quinn (2010) suggested each generation reacts differently towards eight workplace scenarios. The workplace scenarios are behaviours, training, learning style, communication style, problem-solving, decision-making, leadership style and feedback. The Baby Boomers tend to measure self-worth by how far they advance up the corporate ladder. Gen Xers often define themselves more by work and life responsibilities. Confident and fearless characterize Gen Yers. In addition, generations differ in such areas as commitments to organizations (Daboval, 1998), trust (Putnam, 2001; Robinson and Jackson, 2001; Zacher, Rosing, & Frese, 2011a), and in preferred leadership styles and favourite leaders (Arsenault, 2004).

Practitioner data supports differences in generational cohorts on workplace spirituality. Pew Foundation data indicated that Millennials were less religious than older Americans, but just as spiritual. This lower level of religiosity among Millennials was displayed in behaviours as well, with 27 per cent reporting that they attended religious services on a weekly basis, a substantially lower share than Baby Boomers (38%) (Alper, 2015). Crockett and Voas (2006) analysed the evidence from major British social surveys to describe and explain the continuous decline of religion throughout the twentieth century. This decline was overwhelmingly generational in nature; measures of religious affiliation, regular attendance at worship and religious belief showed nearly identical rates

of intergenerational decline. This decline was not offset by any positive age effects in an ageing society. Gay and Lynxwiler (2013) used the 2010 and 2012 General Social Surveys to analyse the relationship among cohort, subjective religiosity, subjective spirituality and various socio-demographic variables. They found that members of Generation X were the most likely to be spiritual but not religious and Millennials were consistently less religious than Baby Boomers. However, this previous work did not focus on the workplace.

A few studies (Arli & Pekerti, 2017; Giacomino, Brown, & Akers, 2011) examined possible changes in ethical orientations as a result of generational changes in SRW and identified that culture and generational markers influence ethical beliefs, ideologies, consumer ethics and value systems. In this vein, VanMeter et al. (2013) concluded that relativist Gen Yers were more tolerant of ethical violations, whereas Gen Y idealists were less tolerant of ethical violations.

The next section sets out a research model that examines SRW within a multi-generation workforce based on cognitive spiritual development theory (Cartwright, 2001) and multi-generational theory (Mannheim, 1952).

Research Model

The model in Figure 1 shows the impact of generational cohorts on SRW.

Cartwright’s (2001) theory of spiritual development emphasizes the importance of social and contextual variables to spiritual developmental change and argues that individuals’ subjective experiences, including social interactions, context and life events, inform development throughout their lifespans. In this study, it is posited that well-being, meaning and purpose and sense of community and interconnectedness vary with generation. The Baby

Boom generation (1946–1964) views well-being as an accumulation of assets and resources and increased productivity. Generation X (1965–1980) considers inspiring and meaningful work as indicators of well-being and Millennial generation (1980–1999) considers work as a vocation or a career, not linked to a specific organization. For a sense of meaning and purpose, the Baby Boom generation (1946–1964) finds meaning in professional and personal organizations that have integrity, purpose and structure. Generation X (1965–1980) considers core values as prime motivators, and Millennial generation (1980–1999) wants work to be beneficial for others. For a sense of community and interconnectedness, The Baby Boom generation (1946–1964) has strong local community ties, which are formal and well-established. Generation X (1965–1980) has weaker local community ties and will place social connections ahead of material connections, and Millennials (1980–1999) are global citizens with primarily social connections.

Integrating generational cohort differences in well-being, meaning and purpose and sense of community and interconnectedness with Cartwright’s (2001) spiritual development levels leads to the following two hypotheses that have been established in order to address the study’s research question:

- H₁: There will be a generational difference in spirituality and religion (SRW) by generational cohort with the Baby Boom Generation having the weakest spirituality and the Millennials the strongest spirituality, with Generation X in between.
- H₂: There will be a generational difference in spirituality and religion (SRW) by generational cohort with the Baby Boom Generation having the strongest religiosity and the Millennials the weakest, with Generation X in-between.

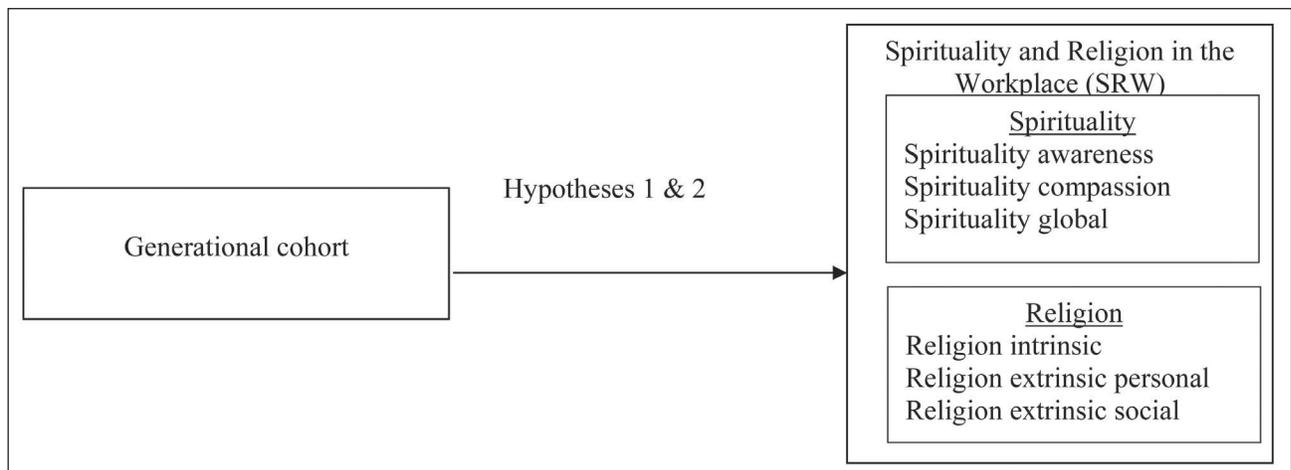


Figure 1. Research Model

Source: Author’s own.

Methods

Sample and Procedure

SRW is often seen as a personal sensitive matter, and prior research in this field has faced many challenges such as low survey response rates and organizations' unwillingness to examine spirituality and religious matters due to the separation of church and state. To overcome these difficulties, after ethics approval was granted, the primary data were collected using an anonymous survey instrument through an online marketplace. The data were collected from adult employees who voluntarily completed the anonymous survey through Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) (Bardeen & Michel, 2017; Stauner, Exline, Pargament, Wilt, & Grubbs, 2018). A total of 290 HITs were posted and accepted on AMT. Out of those, 282 (97%) of the surveys remained usable. Three attention check questions, in the form of reversals, were embedded within the survey measures to help ensure that participants were paying careful attention to each item. The participant needed to answer the three attention questions correctly to be included.

Demographic information on the level of education, number of employees in their organizations, sector of employment, position, number of years in current position, number of years in the current organization, country of birth and country in which the participant is working and gender were collected. Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents had a bachelor's degree or a master's or professional degree, and over half of the respondents worked for firms with fewer than 250 employees. The finance, insurance or real estate industry sector had the most respondents (27%), followed by the wholesale or retail trade (21%) and education (20%) sectors. Approximately 30 per cent of the respondents reported working in professional positions, with 15 per cent working as middle-level managers and 15 per cent were employed as lower-level managers, with the remaining 11 per cent in technical positions. The majority of respondents, 60 per cent, spent five years or less in their current positions with 30 per cent employed between 5–10 years. Approximately 39 per cent of the respondents reported being employed 1–5 years in their current organization, and 38 per cent were employed for 5–10 years. The respondents were almost evenly divided between males (55%) and females (45%). The majority of the respondents, that is, 93 per cent reported North America and 4 per cent reported Asia as their birth region and 98 per cent worked in North America. We concluded that our sample demonstrated breadth across demographic information except for birth region which was not surprising as the survey was only available in North America. We used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test whether there were differences in the demographic variables among the birth ranges and found no differences at $p < .05$, thus we did not use any of the demographic variables as controls in further analyses.

Measures

Spirituality was measured using the 20-item Human Spirituality Scale developed by Wheat (1991). In this study, age universal scale response anchors were used from the modification suggested by Maltby and Lewis (1996), that is, 1 (*yes*), 2 (*not certain*) and 3 (*no*). In addition, two response anchors were added to more explicitly capture data from those who reported score 4 (*do not go to church*) or 5 (*don't have a religion or believe in God*). The higher scores reflected lower levels of religiosity on each of the three dimensions: religiosity intrinsic, religiosity extrinsic personal and religiosity extrinsic social.

Generational cohorts were defined by asking respondents to select one of three birth ranges (1) 1946–1964, (2) 1965–1980 or (3) 1980–1999. This way of measuring generational cohorts is consistent with previous studies as identified by Cugin (2012).

Data Analysis

All hypotheses were tested using ANOVA with post hoc tests using SPSS. This type of analysis was most appropriate given the interest in testing whether generational cohorts affected workplace spirituality. Table 1 shows the group sizes; the millennial cohort is the largest cohort with 176 respondents (62%). Given unequal sample sizes, a Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was performed. While variances were homogeneous for the three spirituality variables, the variances were unequal for the three religion variables. Given this, post hoc tests were conducted using Dunnett's T3, a pairwise comparison test based on the studentized maximum modulus. This test is appropriate when the variances are unequal (IBM, 2017).

Results

Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of the study variables. There are several significant correlations, displayed in Table 3, among the variables of spirituality, religiosity and generational cohort. Generational cohort is negatively correlated with Spirituality Global ($r = -0.134$, $p < .05$), positively with religiosity intrinsic ($r = 0.191$, $p < .01$), religiosity extrinsic personal ($r = 0.224$, $p < .00$), and religiosity extrinsic social ($r = 0.149$, $p < .05$). As expected, the three factors of spirituality are positively correlated with each other, the three factors of religiosity are positively correlated with each other and spirituality factors and religiosity factors are negatively correlated. This negative relationship is expected because spirituality is a less formal and structured concept than religiosity.

Table 4 presents the ANOVA results, and Table 5 presents the post hoc tests since there were some significant differences among generational cohorts. There was one significant difference among the generational cohorts with

Table 1. Generational Cohort Sample Sizes and Test of Homogeneity of Variances

| Generational Cohort | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| 1946–1964 | 30 | 10.6 |
| 1965–1980 | 76 | 27.0 |
| 1980–1999 | 176 | 62.4 |
| Total | 282 | 100.0 |

| Test of Homogeneity of Variances | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
| spirit_aware_life | 0.475 | 2 | 279 | 0.622 |
| spirit_compassion | 2.421 | 2 | 279 | 0.091 |
| spirit_global | 0.753 | 2 | 279 | 0.472 |
| religion_intrinsic | 4.868 | 2 | 279 | 0.008 |
| religion_expersonal | 11.596 | 2 | 279 | 0.000 |
| religion_exsocial | 3.454 | 2 | 279 | 0.033 |

Source: Author’s own.

spirituality global ($F = 4.295, p < .05$). However, there were significant differences with religiosity in all three dimensions and in the expected direction—religiosity intrinsic ($F = 5.510, p < .00$), religiosity extrinsic personal ($F = 7.343, p < .000$) and religiosity extrinsic social ($F = 3.168, p < .05$).

Post hoc analyses showed minimal support for H_1 in that there were significant differences among generational cohorts but in unexpected directions. Gen Xers were significantly higher than Millennials in spirituality awareness in life and spirituality global, and the Baby Boomers were higher than the Millennials in spirituality comparison.

Hypothesis 2 is fully supported in the three dimensions of religiosity—intrinsic, extrinsic personal and extrinsic social. Lower scores reflect higher religiosity; the response anchors for the three religiosity variables are 1 (*yes*), 2 (*not certain*), 3 (*no*), 4 (*do not go to church*) or 5 (*don’t have a religion or believe in God*). The mean difference on religiosity intrinsic is significant at the .05 level between the Baby Boomers ($M = 2.48$) and the Millennials ($M = 3.29$) and between Gen X ($M = 2.71$) and the Millennials ($M = 3.29$). The mean difference in religiosity extrinsic personal is significant at the 0.05 level between the Baby Boomers ($M = 2.14$) and Gen X ($M = 2.71$) and Millennials

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

| | | N | M | SD | Std. Error |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----|------|-------|------------|
| Spiritual awareness life | 1946–1964 | 30 | 3.30 | 0.925 | 0.169 |
| | 1965–1980 | 76 | 3.49 | 0.801 | 0.092 |
| | 1980–1999 | 176 | 3.21 | 0.906 | 0.068 |
| | Total | 282 | 3.30 | 0.886 | 0.053 |
| Spiritual compassion | 1946–1964 | 30 | 3.87 | 0.388 | 0.071 |
| | 1965–1980 | 76 | 3.74 | 0.578 | 0.066 |
| | 1980–1999 | 176 | 3.64 | 0.531 | 0.040 |
| | Total | 282 | 3.69 | 0.535 | 0.032 |
| Spiritual global | 1946–1964 | 30 | 3.82 | 0.570 | 0.104 |
| | 1965–1980 | 76 | 3.92 | 0.504 | 0.058 |
| | 1980–1999 | 176 | 3.70 | 0.576 | 0.043 |
| | Total | 282 | 3.77 | 0.563 | 0.034 |
| Religiosity intrinsic | 1946–1964 | 30 | 2.48 | 1.433 | 0.262 |
| | 1965–1980 | 76 | 2.71 | 1.571 | 0.180 |
| | 1980–1999 | 176 | 3.29 | 1.657 | 0.125 |
| | Total | 282 | 3.05 | 1.638 | 0.098 |
| Religiosity extrinsic personal | 1946–1964 | 30 | 2.14 | 1.312 | 0.240 |
| | 1965–1980 | 76 | 2.71 | 1.526 | 0.175 |
| | 1980–1999 | 176 | 3.24 | 1.688 | 0.127 |
| | Total | 282 | 2.98 | 1.646 | 0.098 |
| Religiosity extrinsic social | 1946–1964 | 30 | 3.38 | 0.896 | 0.164 |
| | 1965–1980 | 76 | 3.64 | 0.983 | 0.113 |
| | 1980–1999 | 176 | 3.87 | 1.165 | 0.088 |
| | Total | 282 | 3.75 | 1.101 | 0.066 |

Source: Author’s own.

Table 3. Correlations

| No. | Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|-----|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1 | Spirituality awareness in life | | | | | | |
| 2 | Spirituality compassion | 0.559** | | | | | |
| 3 | Spirituality global | 0.576** | 0.618** | | | | |
| 4 | Religiosity intrinsic | -0.353** | -0.162** | -0.228** | | | |
| 5 | Religiosity extrinsic personal | -0.299** | -0.147* | -0.203** | 0.923** | | |
| 6 | Religiosity extrinsic social | -0.277** | -0.092 | -0.160** | 0.759** | 0.716** | |
| 7 | Generational cohort | -0.088 | -0.141* | -0.134* | 0.191** | 0.224** | 0.149* |

Source: Author's own.

Notes: ** indicates that correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). * indicates correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

($M = 3.24$). In addition, there is a significant difference between Gen X ($M = 2.71$) and the Millennials ($M = 3.24$). Furthermore, there is a significant difference in the mean scores on religiosity extrinsic and social between the Baby Boomers ($M = 3.38$) and the Millennials ($M = 3.87$).

Discussion

The results indicate both similarities and differences among generational cohorts in SRW. Contrary to expectations, the Millennial generational cohort does not have the highest spirituality. In two of the three dimensions of spirituality (awareness and global), Gen X expressed a more frequent spiritual connection than Millennials. This is particularly surprising given the frequent characterization of Gen X as more self-centred (McGuire et al., 2007), but it is consistent with results from Gay and Lynxwiler (2013). The result that the Baby Boomers more frequently reported compassionate spirituality than the Millennials did is unanticipated. This could be related to more life experiences among Baby Boomers, but the mechanism of this process needs further research. This is particularly important as

Grühn, Rebucal, Diehl, Lumley, and Labouvie-Vief (2008) reported that cross-sectional age differences reflect a cohort rather than an age effect, and older cohorts reported lower levels of empathy than younger ones.

Consistent with prior research the results confirm the popular belief that Baby Boomers reported higher levels of religiosity than Millennials. In addition, Gen X members had higher levels of intrinsic and extrinsic personal religiosity than Millennials. Baby Boomers and Gen X members report similar levels of religiosity, but all generational cohorts expressed low levels of extrinsic social religiosity (mean scores 3.38, 3.64 and 3.87) indicating that religiosity for social reasons is not important. This may be attributable to the many options people have to be connected with friends and colleagues via social media. The higher level of religiosity among Baby Boomers may be due to their propensity to find meaning in professional and personal organizations that have formalized purpose and structure. Furthermore, Baby Boomers were socialized by a previous generation (traditionalists) which had stronger attachments to religiosity (Crockett & Voas, 2006). Even though Baby Boomers expressed higher levels of religiosity, their responses did not

Table 4. Analysis of Variance—Generation with SRW

| | | ANOVA | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Spirituality awareness in life | Between groups | 4.075 | 2 | 2.037 | 2.624 | 0.074 |
| | Within groups | 216.615 | 279 | 0.776 | | |
| | Total | 220.690 | 281 | | | |
| Spirituality compassion | Between groups | 1.617 | 2 | 0.808 | 2.865 | 0.059 |
| | Within groups | 78.725 | 279 | 0.282 | | |
| | Total | 80.342 | 281 | | | |
| Spirituality global | Between groups | 2.663 | 2 | 1.332 | 4.295 | 0.015 |
| | Within groups | 86.502 | 279 | 0.310 | | |
| | Total | 89.165 | 281 | | | |
| Religiosity intrinsic | Between groups | 28.636 | 2 | 14.318 | 5.510 | 0.004 |
| | Within groups | 724.947 | 279 | 2.598 | | |
| | Total | 753.583 | 281 | | | |
| Religiosity extrinsic personal | Between groups | 38.064 | 2 | 19.032 | 7.343 | 0.001 |
| | Within groups | 723.141 | 279 | 2.592 | | |
| | Total | 761.206 | 281 | | | |
| Religiosity extrinsic social | Between groups | 7.569 | 2 | 3.785 | 3.168 | 0.044 |
| | Within groups | 333.331 | 279 | 1.195 | | |
| | Total | 340.900 | 281 | | | |

Source: Author's own.

Table 5. Post Hoc Tests—Dunnett T3 Multiple Comparisons with Unequal Variances

| Dependent Variable | (I) Birth Range | (J) Birth Range | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Spiritual awareness in life | 1946–1964 | 1965–1980 | –0.190 | 0.192 | 0.691 | –0.67 | 0.29 |
| | | 1980–1999 | 0.087 | 0.182 | 0.950 | –0.37 | 0.54 |
| | 1965–1980 | 1946–1964 | 0.190 | 0.192 | 0.691 | –0.29 | 0.67 |
| | | 1980–1999 | 0.277* | 0.115 | 0.049 | 0.00 | 0.55 |
| | 1980–1999 | 1946–1964 | –0.087 | 0.182 | 0.950 | –0.54 | 0.37 |
| | | 1965–1980 | –0.277* | 0.115 | 0.049 | –0.55 | 0.00 |
| Spirituality compassion | 1946–1964 | 1965–1980 | 0.135 | 0.097 | 0.419 | –0.10 | 0.37 |
| | | 1980–1999 | 0.233* | 0.081 | 0.018 | 0.03 | 0.43 |
| | 1965–1980 | 1946–1964 | –0.135 | 0.097 | 0.419 | –0.37 | 0.10 |
| | | 1980–1999 | 0.098 | 0.077 | 0.504 | –0.09 | 0.28 |
| | 1980–1999 | 1946–1964 | –0.233* | 0.081 | 0.018 | –0.43 | –0.03 |
| | | 1965–1980 | –0.098 | 0.077 | 0.504 | –0.28 | 0.09 |
| Spirituality global | 1946–1964 | 1965–1980 | –0.092 | 0.119 | 0.822 | –0.39 | 0.20 |
| | | 1980–1999 | 0.127 | 0.113 | 0.598 | –0.15 | 0.41 |
| | 1965–1980 | 1946–1964 | 0.092 | 0.119 | 0.822 | –0.20 | 0.39 |
| | | 1980–1999 | 0.220* | 0.072 | 0.008 | 0.05 | 0.39 |
| | 1980–1999 | 1946–1964 | –0.127 | 0.113 | 0.598 | –0.41 | 0.15 |
| | | 1965–1980 | –0.220* | 0.072 | 0.008 | –0.39 | –0.05 |
| Religiosity intrinsic | 1946–1964 | 1965–1980 | –0.237 | 0.318 | 0.838 | –1.02 | 0.54 |
| | | 1980–1999 | –0.814* | 0.290 | 0.022 | –1.53 | –0.10 |
| | 1965–1980 | 1946–1964 | 0.237 | 0.318 | 0.838 | –0.54 | 1.02 |
| | | 1980–1999 | –0.577* | 0.219 | 0.028 | –1.11 | –0.05 |
| | 1980–1999 | 1946–1964 | 0.814* | 0.290 | 0.022 | 0.10 | 1.53 |
| | | 1965–1980 | 0.577* | 0.219 | 0.028 | 0.05 | 1.11 |
| Religiosity extrinsic personal | 1946–1964 | 1965–1980 | –.566 | .297 | .171 | –1.29 | .16 |
| | | 1980–1999 | –1.092* | .271 | .001 | –1.76 | –.42 |
| | 1965–1980 | 1946–1964 | 0.566 | 0.297 | 0.171 | –0.16 | 1.29 |
| | | 1980–1999 | –0.526* | 0.216 | 0.048 | –1.05 | 0.00 |
| | 1980–1999 | 1946–1964 | 1.092* | 0.271 | 0.001 | 0.42 | 1.76 |
| | | 1965–1980 | 0.526* | 0.216 | 0.048 | 0.00 | 1.05 |
| Religiosity extrinsic social | 1946–1964 | 1965–1980 | –0.258 | 0.199 | 0.482 | –0.75 | 0.23 |
| | | 1980–1999 | –0.490* | 0.186 | 0.033 | –0.95 | –0.03 |
| | 1965–1980 | 1946–1964 | 0.258 | 0.199 | 0.482 | –0.23 | 0.75 |
| | | 1980–1999 | –0.231 | 0.143 | 0.288 | –0.58 | 0.11 |
| | 1980–1999 | 1946–1964 | 0.490* | 0.186 | 0.033 | 0.03 | 0.95 |
| | | 1965–1980 | 0.231 | 0.143 | 0.288 | –0.11 | 0.58 |

Source: Author’s own.

Note: * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

indicate a strong endorsement as the average answer was ‘uncertain’. The results indicated a general trending away from religion. The study results show that overall generational cohorts exert a stronger influence on religiosity than on spirituality. This is reflected in the three dimensions of religiosity that is significantly different among the cohorts while only one dimension of spirituality (global) is. Given the fact that religiosity is more tangible and observable, and people seem to have clearer positions on it, this finding is understandable.

The study extends prior research on generation, spirituality or religiosity dynamics in a number of ways. It is among the few comparative studies on how generational cohorts affect SRW, shedding new light on the way in which different generations embrace SRW. In view of these findings indicating the general decline in spirituality, religiosity and

perhaps, ethics, new areas of research for other potential motivators of productivity and leadership are suggested. Organizations will need to work to discover alternatives if SRW is waning as a behavioural control and if lessening of concern and appreciation for both self and others is more prevalent. If SRW, as a foundation for a person’s ethical schema, is dampening, identifying and reinforcing other foundational value schema are important, especially as Baby Boomers exit the workplace and Generation Z enters. Generation Z is the generation born in the early-2000s who arrive in the workplace after Baby Boomers.

One alternative is for more organizational training and development of employees focussed on the SRW, emphasizing ethical decision-making. As the findings indicate that Millennials have a lower level of spirituality and religiosity as compared to Gen X and Baby Boomers, employers may

consider reinforcing ethical values through rewards and recognitions adapted to generational cohorts (Faurote, 2018). Additionally, leadership opportunities and training for Gen X are increasing, as they have the opportunity to understand their roles as leaders and act as mentors to the Millennials and the Generation Z.

Further research can be used to assess the generalizability of the study's findings to a larger population than the sample used in this study. In addition, the sample was limited because it was not a random sample and the responses were overwhelmingly from the United States. Generational impacts may be different in other cultural settings. Future studies should go beyond the self-reported measures and scales which are often culturally and ideologically sensitive or biased. In addition, future research should consider examining how different spiritual, ethical and religious orientations might impact performance outcomes, not only on different generational cohorts but on the organization as a whole. Other interesting future research areas are the contributions of generational diversity to innovation, critical thinking and customer service (Loechner, 2017).

Conclusion

The influence of SRW has attracted substantial attention, and yet little focus has been given to examining the relationship between SRW and generational diversity. This study examined the differences in SRW among generations in the workplace using data collected from employees. The results revealed a difference in SRW among generations; unexpectedly, the spirituality and religion of Gen X and Baby Boomers were more similar than of Millennials. Religion is a weaker component of SRW for all three generations. This study contributed to a better understanding of differences in generational cohorts presenting leadership opportunities to recognize and use generational diversity as a positive force with distinctive sets of skills and bringing different strengths to the workplace.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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