

## Reducing the Intergenerational Conflict between Generation Y and Generation Z through Creating a Culture of Mutual Respect

<sup>1</sup> Sadia Bukhari, \*, <sup>2</sup> Dr. Muhammadi Sabra Nadeem

### Article History:

#### Received:

18<sup>th</sup> March, 2024

#### Revised:

12<sup>th</sup> May, 2024

#### Accepted:

24<sup>th</sup> June, 2024

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The aim of this study is to understand the intergenerational conflict between generation Y and Z. This study also helps to determine the impact of creating a culture of mutual respect to reduce generational conflict.

**Methodology:** The data was collected from Higher Education Commission in the form of dyads. These dyads were representing generation Y as supervisor and generation Z as subordinates. The data was collected in non-dyadic method. The purposive sampling technique was used with two criteria, organizational structure and age. Ten interviews were conducted with the respondents which were classified into four dyads. For analysis, framework matrix method was used in the NVivo 14.

**Findings:** The results of the study indicate that generational conflict exists between generation Y and Z due to differences in their working values and a culture of mutual respect plays a positive role in curbing this conflict. The thematic analysis was performed by using framework matrix method to identify the main and sub themes. The three main themes have represented some overlaps and contrast in the summarized data of dyads. The maximum overlap is observed between these generations in the sub theme of 'Fostering a Culture of Mutual Respect.'

**Implication:** The study provides a theoretical contribution in terms of validating the cognitive dissonance theory in reducing generational conflict through creating a culture of respect. An important practical implication of the study is to provide useful comprehensions to the organizational leaders to manage the young generation as they are entering into Pakistani workforce. The findings of the study also help to develop workplace policies in the organizations that help in mutual transfer of knowledge between both generations.

**Keywords:** Generations Y, Generation Z, Mutual Respect, Intergenerational Conflict, Thematic Analysis, Dyads.

## 1. Introduction

In today's dynamic workplaces, the coexistence of generation Y (born 1981-1996) and generation Z (born 1996-2012) sparks a fascinating interplay of values and perspectives (Milfont et al., 2021). Each generation brings a unique attitude to work which is shaped by societal shifts and

<sup>1</sup>Sadia Bukhari, PhD Scholar, COMSATS University, Islamabad, Email: [sadiabukhari@hotmail.com](mailto:sadiabukhari@hotmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Muhammadi Sabra Nadeem, Assistant Professor, COMSATS University, ISB, Email: [sabra.nadeem@comsats.edu.pk](mailto:sabra.nadeem@comsats.edu.pk)

technological advancements (Butakova, 2022). Generation Y, also known as millennials, prioritizes flexibility and self-expression, seeking personal growth and autonomy while generation Z emphasizes diversity, social justice, environmental sustainability, and multiculturalism. This dynamic blend creates an exciting landscape for collaboration and innovation (Bulut, 2021). These distinctions in values, although reflecting each generation's unique context, can cause a way for intergenerational conflicts. In today's fast-paced workplace, the clash between generation Y and Z is not just a battle of age, rather it is a clash of values. But why should we care? Because when these two generations collide, productivity takes a hit, creativity suffers, and morale disappears. Intergenerational conflict is not just a trouble but a roadblock to progress. By understanding and addressing these differences, the researcher paves the way for a more harmonious and thriving workplace where everyone's unique perspectives are celebrated.

The research investigates the core issue of potential disagreement between generation Z employees, newly entering the workforce, and their generation Y supervisors, rooted in differing work values. This research is identifying an ongoing conversation and explain how the intergenerational phenomenon will move forward by developing further knowledge for the readers. These divergent values not only create tension but can also escalate into personality clashes. Millennials may perceive generation Z as idealistic or demanding, while generation Z may see millennials as less socially conscious individuals (Bulut, 2021). This idealism or perceived rigidity can intensify conflicts and extend a cycle of misunderstanding and friction that can hinders productive collaboration and synergy within the workplace as the conflicts blocks the creativity of employees and diminishes their morale.

The purpose of this study is to determine the intergenerational conflict between generation Y and Z due to differences in their working values. The researcher also investigates that by fostering open and respectful communication channels, organizations can facilitate constructive dialogue and mutual understanding between two generational cohorts. Embracing and celebrating the strengths and unique qualities of each generation can foster a cohesiveness (Foronda, 2020). By fostering a culture of mutual respect and appreciation, organization can surpass generational divides and club the collective potential of diverse perspectives and experiences. It may help to create an inclusive and vibrant workplace where individuals of all ages can thrive and contribute meaningfully towards shared organizational goals. The data of this study is collected from the Higher Education Commission in the form of dyads, with each dyad representing a supervisor from generation Y and a subordinate from generation Z. The data collection employed a non-dyadic method, involving separate interviews conducted with supervisors and subordinates. Purposive sampling technique was used by following two criteria: organizational structure and age. A total of ten interviews were conducted, resulting in the classification of respondents into four dyads. For analysis, the framework matrix method was used in NVivo 14. The study findings reveal the presence of generational conflict between two generations stemming from differences in their working values, with a notable role played by a culture of mutual respect in mitigating this conflict. The thematic analysis, conducted through framework matrix method, identified three main themes capturing the summarized data

from the dyads. These themes demonstrated both overlaps and contrasts between generation Y and Z. Particularly, a significant overlap was observed in the sub theme ‘Fostering a Culture of Mutual Respect’, indicating common ground attributing to respectful interactions between the two generations.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Work Values of Generation Y**

Generation Y possess distinct work values compared to previous generations, as revealed by various research findings. One of their primary values is seeking alignment with organizational values, prioritizing opportunities to work that share their personal beliefs (Alteneiji, 2020). They accept a lower salary to join an organization that upholds their values. They also have pursuit of interesting and challenging tasks that foster personal growth and learning. They place great importance on feeling a sense of achievement and making a meaningful impact through their work (Bogueva & Marinova, 2022). Another key value of generation Y is building positive relationships with co-workers and working in a collaborative environment. Additionally, they seek employment in organizations that contribute positively to society and the environment (Chayal et al., 2021). For generation Y, salary is not the sole determinant for opportunities for professional development. Instead, they prefer to work for organizations that invest in their employees. Generation Y also prioritizes flexible work schedules to accommodate personal pursuits outside of their jobs. Meaningful motivation, such as engaging in creative work, utilizing their skills to benefit others, and contributing to meaningful projects, drives generation Y (Halim et al., 2021). Finally, they appreciate positive feedback and recognition for their efforts. It is worth noting that although there are disparities in work values between generation Y and other generations, but these differences are not as exaggerated as often portrayed by the media (Hui et al., 2021).

### **2.2 Work Values of Generation Z**

The generation Z work values revolve around making a difference in people’s lives, having an fascinating and inspiring job, ensuring job security, and favorable benefits (Aggarwal et al., 2022). Literature indicates that cognitive and instrumental work values have utmost significance to this generation. It has been found that the generation Z prioritize building a solid career path by acquiring robust skill sets that enable them to progress quickly in their professional activities (Dobrowolski et al., 2022). Based on the available search results, some work values have been identified among generation Z. Despite being recognized for their practicality and desire for financial stability, generation Z also exhibit a strong concern for ethics, activism, and values (Holzer et al., 2022). They prioritize a positive working environment that embraces flexibility, values mental health, social justice promotes a healthy work-life balance. While salary remains a consideration, generation Z tends to place less emphasis on it when compared to previous generations (Janssen & Carradini, 2021). Furthermore, generation Z has sense of mission and determination, they seek opportunities that are aligned with their personal values and create a meaningful difference (Kautish

et al., 2022). It is important to accept that research on generation Z is still in its initial stages, therefore, further studies are necessary to gain an ample understanding of their preferences in the workplace.

### **2.3 Intergenerational Conflict**

Intergenerational conflict between generation Y and Z has become a prominent subject of discussion (Sattar et al., 2023). One noteworthy difference between the two generations lies in their personality traits and working values because generation Z tends to prefer working independently, on the other side, generation Y considers collaboration on prominence (Appelbaum et al., 2022). Despite these differences, both generations collaborate in constructive way, if managed intelligently. It is critical to acknowledge that intergenerational conflict is not a new phenomenon rather it remains an ancient aspect of society as the older generations had been voicing dissatisfaction with the younger ones (Jr, 2020). On the other side, intergenerational diversity provides an opportunity to working teams by fostering innovation and effectiveness. It is worth noting that clashes can arise when the two generations having expertise in technology, collide and lead to conflicts in the digital realm (Lina Damera et al., 2022). Both generations have distinction in various aspects such as their fashion choices, buying behaviors and technology usage (Sattar et al., 2023). However, it is important to recognize the prospective collaboration and innovation between these generations as well as to struggle for finding common ground for development.

### **2.4 Creating a Culture of Mutual Respect**

Culture of mutual respect involves creation of an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity, fairness, and consideration despite of their generational differences (Foronda, 2020). It involves promoting open communication, active listening, and valuing diverse perspectives. Leaders and team members should encourage empathy and understanding, They should nurture an atmosphere where everyone feels respected and heard (Liu et al., 2021). By promoting inclusive practices, recognizing and appreciating individual contributions, and addressing conflicts constructively, a culture of mutual respect can be cultivated (Tingvold & Munkejord, 2021). Furthermore, providing ongoing training and development opportunities that emphasize respect, diversity, and inclusivity can help to embed these values into the organizational culture and reinforce mutual respect among all members of the workforce (Vásquez-Fernández et al., 2021). Literature affirms that by cultivating an environment of mutual respect enhances employee engagement, helps in fostering innovation and ultimately, achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Classen, 2022).

### 3. Theoretical Perspective

The literature indicates that generational studies have been conducted by using the generational cohort theory. However, the present study is based on cognitive dissonance theory. Whenever individuals of two different generations work together, the differences in their working values create a stiffness in the workplace that affects the performance of individuals. To maintain a healthy working environment, the individuals adapt some behavioral changes during such tough situations at workplace. Similarly, the cognitive dissonance theory states that individuals are motivated to reduce dissonance between two or more conflicting beliefs or attitudes in order to bring their attitudes and beliefs into alignment (Aronson, 1969). This is also commonly referred to as "mental discomfort" which promotes an individual to update their attitudes and beliefs to make them consistent with one another. When people of generation Y and Z with divergent work values meet, they may feel cognitive dissonance, for example, an individual of generation Y may value work-life balance, flexibility and purpose in his/her career and an individual from generation Z may place more emphasis on diversity, social justice, and sustainability in the workplace. Individuals from each generation should try to rationalize these conflicting perspectives. This can lead to tension, misunderstandings, and intergenerational conflict. Hence, the researcher posits that:

*Proposition 1: The differences in the work values of generation Y and Z are likely causing Intergenerational Conflict at workplace*

Differences in work values between generation Y and Z create cognitive dissonance, leading to intergenerational conflict. This conflict arises as individuals resist the values of the other generation. An individual may address this issue through three ways that are: (a) by changing his belief or attitude (b) by changing his behavior and (c) by rationalizing his behavior. Similarly, fostering a culture of mutual respect is crucial as it reduces cognitive dissonance by valuing and appreciating each generation's perspectives. As the subordinate of generation Z are working in hierarchal structure and individual from generation Y are their supervisor, therefore, whenever the employees of generation Z face a conflicting situation, they either change their belief about generation Y or change their action by following the directives of their supervisor or by understanding their own behavior. But these changes are only possible if the organization has a culture of mutual respect. Respectful communication and empathy may help in bridging the gap and find common grounds. Recognizing strengths and fostering a shared sense of purpose minimizes conflicts, helps in creating a harmonious work environment. Based on this, the researcher suggests that:

*Proposition 2: The Intergenerational Conflict between Generation Y and Z is likely to be reduced by fostering a culture of mutual respect at workplace*

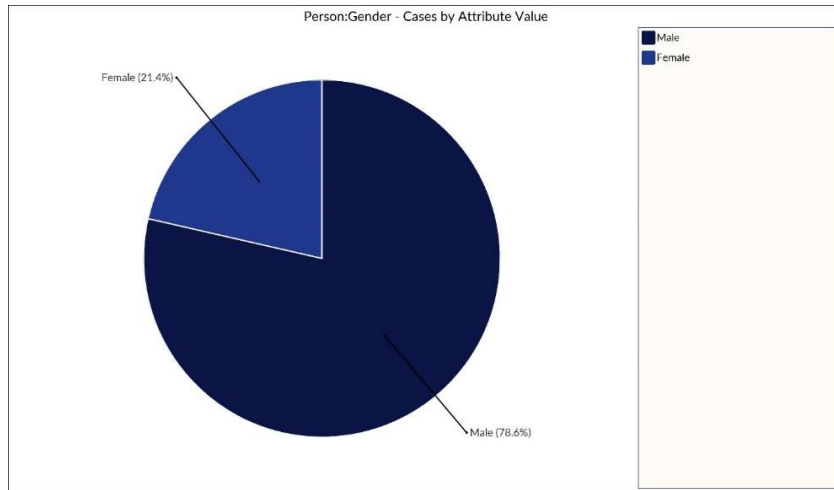
## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Sampling and Data Collection**

In dyadic studies data can be gathered by two ways; (a) dyadic data collection – the individuals in dyads are interviewed together and (b) non-dyadic data collection – the individuals in dyads are interviewed separately (Collaco et al., 2021). The couple data as a single unit whether collected through separate interviews (non-dyadic) or through together interviews (dyadic) provides in-depth understanding and additional perspective of the study (Byrne, 2022). For the said reason, the data of current study was collected in non-dyadic way where respondents were supervisor and subordinates in the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, and they were interviewed separately. The dyads of this study were in one-to-many relation that means one supervisor has more than one subordinate, and they were interviewed separately. The researchers used a purposive sampling method because only those individuals were selected for interviews who belong to generation Y as supervisor and generation Z as subordinates. The criteria for purposive sampling were (a) hierarchy (supervisor-subordinate relation) and (b) age (the supervisor must be from generation Y and subordinates must be from generation Z). These characteristics are crucial for addressing research objectives. Based on purposive sampling the researcher found 4 dyads in Higher Education Commission of Pakistan with 4 supervisors whom age was falling under generation Y, and they had 10 subordinates in total from generation Z.

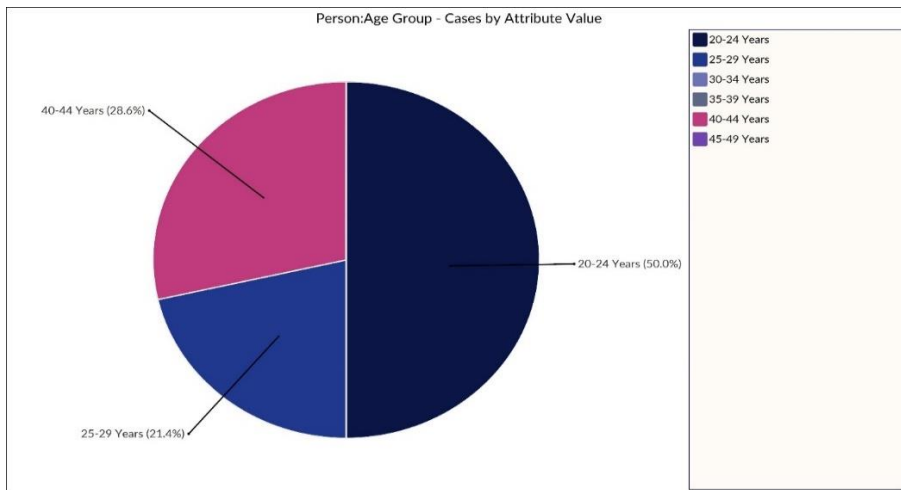
### **4.2 Analytical Strategy**

The researchers used NVivo 14 software for thematic analysis. For this, Braun and Clarke's approach of reflexive thematic analysis is adopted (Jackson, 2019). The data represented in figure 1 explains that 21.4% (total number=3) were females and 78.6% (total number=11) were male who participated in the study.



**Figure 1:** Gender wise Respondents

Similarly, figure 2 represents the age of participants who participated in the study and belongs to generation Y as supervisors and generation Z as subordinates. The maximum age of generation Y is 45 while the maximum age of generation Z is 27. The supervisors of generation Y who participated in the study have ages between 40 to 44 years while the subordinates of generation Z who participated in the study falls between two age groups that are 20-24 years and 25-29 years.



**Figure 2:** Age wise Detail of Respondents

The thematic analysis of this qualitative study is performed by adopting Braun and Clarke’s stages. Thematic analysis is a method to identify, analyze and report the patterns (themes) within the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). As the data of this study is dyadic in nature, therefore, themes are generated by using a framework method in NVivo 14. The framework method is different from other qualitative methodologies because in this method, a matrix is developed. In a Matrix, rows (Respondents) and columns (Codes of data) are created along with the cells of summarized data. This method helps the researcher to analyze the data by case (respondent) and code (theme) which allows the comparisons to be identified with more clarity (Bannon et al., 2021). Framework method helps the researchers to identify the overlaps and differences among the data. In this study, the researcher is analyzing the differences in working values of generation Y and Z that lead towards generational conflict. Hence, the framework method is the appropriate way to identify the differences and overlaps between two generations.

The stages of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (Byrne, 2022) that are (a) familiarization with data (b) initial code generation (c) themes generation (d) review of the potential themes (e) defining and naming the themes and (f) produce the report have been followed during the whole process. The analysis of this study begins with the interviews of the participants in non-dyadic format and these interviews are transcribed verbatim for analysis in NVivo. Braun and Clarke’s inductive approach is used to analyze with a focus what is meaningful for the participants (Jackson, 2019). This approach assisted the researchers to develop such themes which can offer deep insights into the respondents’ experiences which are subjective in nature. After making the dyads (pair of Supervisors and Subordinates), the researcher familiarized with the data and generated initial codes (themes). Then the researcher mapped the data visually through the framework matrix method. This method resulted in summarized data of codes to get a clear understanding of the dyads relation by identifying the overlaps (similarities) and contrasts (differences) among the supervisor and subordinates.

## 5. Findings

Fourteen interviews were conducted with 10 subordinates (2 females and 8 males) and 4 of their supervisors (1 female and 3 males). As such, there were 4 dyads (2 dyads with 1 supervisor and 3 subordinates and 2 dyads with 1 supervisor and 2 subordinates). Table 1 shows the description of dyads where word “Sup” represents supervisor and “Sub” represents subordinates while “Sup1Sub1” means the subordinate of Supervisor1 in dyad 1 and so on:

<b>Table 1: Dyads Description</b>	
No. of Dyads	Dyads Relation
Dyad 1	1 Supervisor (male) → Sup1 3 Subordinates (2 males and 1 female) → Sup1Sub1; Sup1Sub2; Sup1Sub3
Dyad 2	1 Supervisor (male) → Sup2 3 Subordinates (2 males and 1 female) → Sup2Sub1; Sup2Sub2; Sup2Sub3



Dyad 3	1 Supervisor (female) → Sup3 2 Subordinates (2 males) → Sup3Sub1; Sup3Sub2
Dyad 4	1 Supervisor (male) → Sup4 2 Subordinates (2 males) → Sup4Sub1; Sup4Sub2

Following Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis process, five broad but inter-related themes were conceptualized from the dataset. The first theme illustrated the distinctions in the working values of generation Y and Z. The second theme discussed the intergenerational conflict between both generations which arises due to the differences in their working values. The final theme is related to the impact of creating a culture of mutual respect at the workplace that helps in reducing intergenerational conflict. To better understand the intergenerational conflict between generation Y and Z and the impact of fostering a culture of mutual respect, these three main themes were divided into sub-themes. The main themes and sub themes are represented in Table 2:

Main Theme	Sub Themes
<b>Theme 1</b> Work Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Differences in Work Values</li> <li>▪ Flexibility at Work</li> <li>▪ Importance to Job Security</li> <li>▪ Meaningful Assignment</li> <li>▪ Participation in Decision Making</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2</b> Intergenerational Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difference of Opinion</li> <li>▪ Factors helping in Bridging the Gap</li> <li>▪ Factors leading to Conflict</li> <li>▪ Resolution of Conflict</li> </ul>
<b>Theme3</b> Culture of Mutual Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decreasing Trend of Respect in Young People</li> <li>▪ Factors helping to Foster a Culture of Mutual Respect</li> <li>▪ Factors making Young People Disrespectful</li> <li>▪ Impact of Fostering a Culture of Mutual Respect</li> </ul>

### 5.1 Theme 1: Work Values of Generation Y and Z

Theme 1 represents the work values of both generations, and its sub themes were developed to identify the differences in the work values of both generations.

Sub theme – Difference of Opinion:

Dyad 1 (The supervisor 1 and its 3 subordinates) results indicated that the participants of this dyad feel differences in the work values of two generations:

*“Yes, I feel that the working values of my supervisor are different from mine. I want that he assigned me the task and take the results, but he emphasizes how to carry out this assignment. I want to dispose off the task with my own style (Dyad1, Subordinate 1).”*

Similarly, the supervisor of dyad 1 expressed similar point of view on differences in work values of both generations.

The dyad 2 results showed that both generations have differences at workplace. It could be due to advancement in technology or due to prioritizing the task.

*“Yes, there is a difference. The new generation rely more on technology driven solutions while the older generation wants to develop the systems that are based on their previous working style (Dyad 2, Subordinate 2).”*

Dyad 3 findings on this sub theme are similar with the previous two dyads. The subordinates of dyad 3 also agreed that the differences exist between the two generations.

*“Yes, there is difference. The older generation has experience while the new ones are in the learning stage. It automatically creates a difference. Things have also changed. The new generation has technology driven solutions (Dyad 3, Subordinate 2).”*

The supervisor 3 also endorsed that slight differences are present between two generations.

Dyad 4 showed a strong agreement on the point that work values of generation Y and Z are different.

*“Yes, there are differences in the work values of older and new generation. They take the task light and try to resolve the given task with tools without putting their own efforts (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4).”*

Sub theme – Flexibility at Workplace:

The subordinates of dyad 1 showed that they want flexibility at workplace and want to be job done according to their style:

*“Independence in work is learning. I want autonomy in my task because the hierarchy creates the hurdles (Dyad 1, Subordinate 3).”*

Supervisor 1 was also in favor of flexibility. Here, the researcher found overlap (similarity) among the subordinates (generation Z) and the supervisor (generation Y):

*“To me, flexibility is especially important. I like the new working ways that are more efficient instead of given instructions to conduct a task. If we conduct a task as per given instructions, then we are robots. There will be no motivation, no inspiration. I keep my subordinates flexible and independent as it enhances their productivity (Dyad 1, Supervisor 1).”*

The subordinates of dyad 2 were in opinion that flexible working environment increases the productivity level.

*“Autonomy and flexibility lead towards creativity. The people think in their own ways and try to get a better solution to a problem. So, it increases an individual productivity (Dyad 2, Subordinate 2).”*

However, a contrast has been observed from supervisor 2 on this sub theme. The stance of supervisor 2 is given below:

*“Autonomy and flexibility lead towards creativity. The people think in their own ways and try to get a better solution to a problem. So, it increases an individual productivity (Dyad 2, Supervisor 2).”*

A slight agreement on flexibility at the workplace has been observed between the subordinates and supervisor of dyad 3.

*“Flexibility in the work improves performance. But people may have different opinion on it (Dyad 3, Subordinate 1).”*

While the supervisor 3 of this dyad strongly agreed with the flexibility at workplace.

*“As far as my experience is concerned, flexibility always increases productivity. In a flexible environment, people work like a time, and they are happier and show more productive behavior. But not all assignments are flexible. So, where flexibility can be allowed, I shall go for it otherwise not (Dyad 3, Supervisor 3).”*

Dyad 4 showed a contrast on this sub theme. The subordinates of this dyad were in favor of autonomy and flexibility, but the supervisor was in view that flexibility depends on the nature of the assignment.

*“It depends on the nature of the task. In some tasks, flexibility can be given to the subordinates but in some tasks, we must follow a set procedure (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4).”*

Sub theme – Importance to Job Security:

This sub theme depicted the interesting results as the subordinates and supervisors who were from different generations but showed equal importance to job security. However, at the same time, the employees who belongs to generation Z were eager to look for new and best alternate opportunities:

*“These days when unemployment is at peak in Pakistan, job security matters. But I do not believe to stick with one job rather go for the best option (Dyad 1, Subordinate 3).”*

The supervisor of dyad 1 expressed a similar viewpoint on the sub theme, Importance of Job Security.

Dyad 2 subordinates showed some similarity with their supervisors. Both generations were having importance towards secure job, but generation Z was found more inclined to career development.

*“Job security is important, but peace of mind is more important than security (Dyad 2, Subordinate 1).”*

The subordinates of dyad 3 were found having more focus towards the career development and they prefer the place where they can bring creativity in their work.

*“The place where I am free to execute my creativity and have better career development opportunities is important to me (Dyad 3, Subordinate 1).”*

The discussion with supervisor 3 indicated that she has more weightage to job security.

*“I prefer secure job with multiple career opportunities (Dyad 3, Supervisor 3).”*

In dyad 4, subordinates were giving importance to both the secure job as well as for the new opportunities, but it was observed that the supervisor who was from generation Y was more persuaded to the secure job.

*“Yes, Job security matters a lot. I like to work in the organization where my job is secure, and I have career development opportunities (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4).”*

Sub theme – Meaningful Assignment:

Meaningful assignments create a sense of pride and supremacy among the employees. So, the subordinates responded in favor of meaningful assignments:

*“It is particularly important. The task should be like that which makes me proud. I put extra effort to complete such assignments that have some purpose. Routine tasks make me bore (Dyad 1, Subordinate 2).”*

The supervisor of dyad 1 was agreed in meaningfulness of an assignment but he was more concerned with the responsibility:

*“Everyone wants recognition in the office and wants to engage in those tasks which represent the overall objective of the organization and have significance. But the tasks are assigned to the employees according to their competence, skills, and capacity to perform (Dyad 1, Supervisor 1).”*

The subordinates of dyad 2 were found in favor of meaningful task and they linked it with the pride.

*“The job without meaning and purpose is order that does not require any creativity and thinking (Dyad 2, Subordinate 2).”*

In contrast, the Supervisor of dyad 2 was focusing on the structure of the institutions that brings meaningfulness in any task. The viewpoint of supervisor 2 on this sub theme is reproduced below:

*“To me, the rank of the job matters as all tasks of the organization belongs to some framework and organizational structure, so they are meaningful and have some purpose (Dyad 2, Supervisor 2).”*

In terms of ‘Meaningful Assignment,’ an overlap has been observed in the subordinates and supervisor of dyad 3. Both generations expressed similar opinions on this sub theme.

*“The individual wants to do that job which is meaningful and has some purpose. The people want recognition which can be achieved by doing a meaningful job (Dyad 3, Subordinate 2).”*

An agreement was observed between the employees of both generations in this sub theme. The dyad 4 showed overlap between the supervisor and the subordinates thinking on meaningful assignment.

*“The employees feel pleasure and satisfaction when they get meaningful and purposeful job (Dyad 4, Subordinate 1).”*

Sub theme – Participation in Decision Making:

The last sub theme is about ‘Participation in Decision Making’. The subordinates of dyad 1 were strongly agreeing with participative decision-making style:

*“Yes. I feel good when my supervisor keeps me involved in every activity and ask my opinion on an assignment (Dyad 1, Subordinate 1).”*

Similarly, the supervisor also encourages the participative decision-making style. However, he believed in hierarchal structure, such decision-making styles are not adopted so we are bound to follow it.

An overlap has been found in dyad 2 against this sub theme. The subordinates and supervisor both were in favor of participative decision-making style.

*“Yes, participation in decision-making creates a sense of belongingness. We feel proud when we are asked to share your opinion on some matter (Dyad 2, Subordinate 3).”*

Both generations promoted a participative decision-making style in dyad 3. The results showed that participation in decision making creates ownership in the employees and enhances productivity.

*“If I am involved in decision making process then it would affect positively on my performance. I would work with whole heartedly and my output will increase (Dyad 3, Subordinate 1).”*

Dyad 4 showed consensus among the participants on participative decision-making process. Both the supervisor and subordinates indicated participation as a sign of efficiency and positive outcomes.

*“Yes, people become more engaged when they participate in decisions related to their tasks (Dyad 4, Subordinate 2).”*

## **5.2 Theme 2: Intergenerational Conflict**

The second theme is intergenerational conflict that exists between two generations. This theme includes ‘Difference of Opinion’, ‘Factors helping in Bridging the Gap’, ‘Factors leading to conflict’ and ‘Resolution of Conflict’ as sub themes.

Sub theme – Difference of Opinion:

Dyad 1 findings indicated that both generations agree that a difference of opinion exists among them. The participants of this dyad responded “yes” to such difference.

*“Yes, sometimes, difference of opinion comes between me and my supervisor and sometimes it happens that we could not reach to an agreement (Dyad 1, Subordinate 3).”*

The participants of dyad 2 also validated that difference of opinion in two different generations exists. However, they believed both generations do also have some commonalities at some points.

*“Yes, difference of opinion exists. It is more related to interpretation of something. The supervisor interprets the same thing in diverse ways and the subordinate in different ways. I promote the difference of opinion as it leads to new perspectives (Dyad 2, Supervisor 2).”*

Like previous dyads, dyad 3 also confirmed the existence of difference of opinion among two generations. However, the responses showed that this difference happens occasionally.

*“Yes, sometimes (Dyad 3, Subordinate 3).”*

Dyad 4 participants were also found in agreement that difference of opinion exists at workplace. But at the same time, their responses showed that this difference does not prevail among them all the time.

*“Not frequently (Dyad 4, Subordinate 1).”*

Sub theme – Factors helping in Bridging the Gap:

Dyad 1 supported that this gap can be bridged through friendly relationship, autonomy, and flexibility at workplace. The supervisor and subordinates’ viewpoints were overlapping in this sub theme.

*“We should believe in them, trust in them. By keeping them flexible and involving in decision-making may ensure a strong working relationship among us (Dyad 1, Supervisor 1).”*

The participants of dyad 2 from both generations were in view that intergenerational conflict can be bridged through open discussion, liberty, participation and understanding each other.

*“An opportunity to explain my viewpoint would definitely help to bridge the gap (Dyad 2, Subordinate 2).”*

Dyad 3 participants specified many factors that may reduce the gap between two generations. These factors could be discussion, participative approach, freedom of expression and provision of numerous opportunities.

*“The new generation does not take their assignments seriously. Through discussion, guidance, and participative approach, we may help to resolve the conflicts (Dyad 3, Supervisor 3).”*

Dyad 4 also resulted many factors against this sub theme. The participants responded that a fair chance of expression, solid justification of view, free discussion, listening and understanding each other could help in reduction of conflicts that may arise between these generations.

*“By listening to them, understanding them and if they are at mistake then by guiding them, this gap can be bridge (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4).”*

Sub theme – Factors leading to Conflict:

Dyad 1 participants recorded many factors that lead to conflict. Some of them were directions of the boss to conduct a task, misunderstanding, taking the directions of boss too personal, wrong interpretation of a direction. All these factors cause conflict in the workplace.

*“It could be due to interpretation. Sometimes, I take something as personal that may cause conflicts (Dyad 1, Subordinate 2).”*

The dyad 2 participants recognized many factors that lead to conflict at workplace. Some of them do not give due respect to each other in the workplace, difference of opinion, misunderstanding etc. which lead to conflict.

*“It could be multiple reasons. It could be due to a misunderstanding. It could be due to hierarchy. It could be less flexibility (Dyad 2, Subordinate 1).”*

Dyad 3 findings showed that there are many factors that may help in bridging the conflict between two generations. Likewise, there are some factors that generate confusion among the employees. These factors could be weak acceptance of technology, rigidness to conduct a task as per already set pattern and differences in way of thinking.

*“It could be due to their own working style. Sometimes, boss does not like to get an idea from his junior (Dyad 3, Subordinate 2).”*

It was found that the participants of dyad 4 try to resolve the conflicts through discussion. But some subordinates just compromise and follow the instructions of their boss to avoid conflicts.

*“I try to understand the subordinates’ expectations and provide an opportunity to freely discuss the matter with me. It is resolved by the mutual efforts (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4).”*

Sub theme – Resolution of Conflict:

The participants of dyad 1 were asked if a conflict arises among them who tries to resolve it. Whether it is subordinate or supervisor? The researchers observed a mixed response on this sub theme that could be concluded as that everyone tries at his own level to resolve conflicting situations.

The findings of dyad 2 represented that conflicts are resolved at the workplace by mutual efforts. It was also found that to resolve such situations, a compromise is required either at supervisory level or subordinate level.

*“Mutual efforts help to reach an agreement. The resolution occurs only when there are mutual contributions (Dyad 2, Supervisor 2).”*

The findings of dyad 3 indicated that people have more focus on avoiding a conflict than resolution. If it arises at workplace, the subordinates usually compromise to solve a matter.

*“Generally, I follow the instructions of my supervisor to remove such issues (Dyad 3, Subordinate 2).”*

Like other dyads, dyad 4 participants also discussed many factors that cause conflicts. Some of them are behavioral issues, differences in way of thinking, differences in carrying out an activity etc.

### **5.3 Theme 3: Culture of Mutual Respect**

The findings of theme 3 depicted that by fostering the culture of mutual respect diminishes the generational conflict between these two generations. The sub themes developed for main theme 3 are decreasing trend of respect in young people, Factors helping to foster a culture of mutual respect, Factors making young people disrespectful and Impact of fostering a culture of mutual respect.

Sub theme – Decreasing Trend of Respect in Young People:

The participants of the dyad 1 expressed that they were observing a decline in respect by the young generation.

*“Yes, I see respect element is decreasing day by day. Like in old days, subordinate use to get stand in respect of elders but now all employees are considered equal, and no formal stand up is given to any colleague (Dyad 1, Subordinate 2).”*



Although the subordinates of dyad 1 identified a decline in the respect by the new generation but at the same time, the supervisor of this dyad had a different opinion. They were in a view that all younger people are not exhibiting disrespect to their elders. There are some other reasons which are deteriorating our societal norms.

*“It depends. All five fingers are not equal. Similarly, all young employees are not disrespectful (Dyad 1, Supervisor 1).”*

The participants of dyad 2 showed similar responses on decreasing trend of respect in new generation as the participants of dyad 1 did. They were accepting that element of respect is decreasing but it cannot be associated with all young people.

*“True but not in every case (Dyad 2, Subordinate 3).”*

Dyad 3 showed mixed responses on decrease in respect element by the new generation. Some of them supported this view but on the other side, some were showing disagreement to this statement. However, the supervisor of dyad 3 clearly indicated a decline in respect element by the generation Z.

*“The young employees are very emotional. Therefore, I agree that element of respect is decreasing in them (Dyad 3, Supervisor 3).”*

Dyad 4 also showed a mixed response. The respondents were not observing a decrease in respect by the new generation explicitly.

*“No, I don't think so (Dyad 4, Subordinate 1).”*

Sub theme – Factors helping to Foster a Culture of Mutual Respect:

Most of the participants in dyad 1 were in view that respect is a give and take relation. If people do respect others, in return they get the respect. Further, open discussion, participative approach, listening to others, helping others are the factors that help in creating a culture of mutual respect.

*“Participative approach, immediate removal of misunderstandings and open discussion may help to create a culture of mutual respect (Dyad 1, Subordinate 3).”*

The responses of dyad 2 participants on identifying the factors of mutual respect were found similar to dyad 1. They also expressed that openness, freedom, flexibility, and participative approach may help in fostering a culture of mutual respect.

*“Respect is always earned by giving respect. Action and reaction have a direct relation. If we give respect to others then they would give respect to us (Dyad 2, Supervisor 2).”*

Dyad 3 showed an overlap between generation Y and Z was observed in this sub theme. The respondents from both generations were in view that appreciation of innovative ideas, good working relations, and participatory approach are the key factors that promote the culture of mutual respect.

*“It is a simple formula. Do respect and have respect. (Dyad 3, Subordinate 2)”*

The participants of dyad 4 exhibited similar findings on this sub theme as suggested by the participants of dyad 1, 2 and 3.

*“Discussion, teamwork, listening the issues of subordinates and try to resolve them; may help to create a culture of mutual respect (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4).”*

Sub theme – Factors making Young People Disrespectful:

The respondents in dyad 1 identified the factors that are hampering the moral values of our new generation. Most of them were in view that family values and social media play a vital role in shaping the moral values and ethics in society.

*“The family brought up and social media, both have a significant role in forming the behavior of an individual. The trends of social media irrespective of nature whether it is good or bad; are followed blindly by young people. Social media monitoring is particularly important to diminish the disrespectful attitude of an individual (Dyad 1, Subordinate 1).”*

Most of the respondents in dyad 2 were considering that the social media is playing a negative role that is shackling the moral values of young people. One of them also responded that parents losing control over their children is another reason for lessening the development of good behaviors.

*“One reason is flow of information on social media that is uncontrollable. The uncontrolled information is causing a behavioral change in the new generation (Dyad 2, Subordinate 1).”*

Dyad 3 respondents considered that the family set up, culture, better opportunities, easy access to the information are some factors that are dropping our cultural norms in the young generation.

*“The young employees are not disrespectful. They want equal status. They are impatient and want instant gratification which makes them disrespectful in front of older generation (Dyad 3, Subordinate 2).”*

Dyad 4 findings indicated that thinking style of generation Z is different from the older generations. They express their opinions with the others in an incredibly open way that makes them disrespectful in the eyes of older generations.

*“It is the attitude of the young employees. They are impatient and emotional. They do not spend much of their time thinking. They are spontaneous. (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4)”*

Sub theme – Impact of Fostering a Culture of Mutual Respect:

When the respondents of dyad 1 were asked about the impact of mutual respect in the organization, all of them were found assertive that creating a culture of mutual respect works well.

*“Yes, being a supervisor, I always take care of respect. That’s why whenever conflicts arise, I prefer to discuss the matter with my subordinates before deciding (Dyad 1, Supervisor 1).”*

Likewise dyad 1, the participants of dyad 2 showed an agreement that culture of mutual respect may work and reduces the conflicts at workplace.

*“Yes, if we respect each other, then people at workplace may keep their differences aside (Dyad 2, Subordinate 1).”*

An overlap in the findings of dyad 1, 2 and 3 was found because all of the respondents endorsed that a culture of mutual respect would definitely work to minimize the rift between the two generations.

*“Yes. It would work (Dyad 3, Subordinate 1).”*

Like other dyads, an agreement was observed between the participants of dyad 4 on this sub theme. All participants were found to be supportive of a culture of mutual respect.

*“Yes, off course. If there is some conflict, then by discussion we can resolve it. At work, we have to set aside our personal preferences. Our aim is to get the job done. (Dyad 4, Supervisor 4).”*

## **6. Discussion**

This qualitative study explored the intergenerational conflict between the employees of generation Y and Z due to differences in their working values. This study further investigated the role of creating a culture of mutual respect at the workplace in dropping the conflicts between the two generations. The analysis in the form of dyads represented attention grabbing results by highlighting a dynamic relation between the supervisor of generation Y and subordinates of generation Z. Through framework matrix method in NVivo, summaries of dyads were created which allowed a clear understanding of conflict between the two generations and impact of fostering a culture of mutual respect on the generational conflict. The results of the dyads indicated that working values of both generations are slightly different from each other that leads to a conflict among them. These results correspond with the research of (Sattar et al., 2023) who found the causes of intergenerational conflict between parents and child. Similarly, the subordinates from generation Z were found eager to have a working environment that is flexible, friendly and creates more opportunities for them. Lina Dameria et al. (2022) in their study also found the similar working values of generation Z. However, while analyzing the findings of this study, the researchers experienced that in Pakistan, both employees whether they belong to generation Y or Z, they have shown an incline towards the job security which could be due to high un-employment, political instability, and poor economic conditions of the country. In the study, the summaries of dyads were

analyzed by describing sub themes against three main themes i.e. Work Values, Intergenerational conflict and fostering a culture of mutual respect. The dyadic approach emphasized some overlaps and contrast between the two generations in sub themes. The researchers reported differences in working values of both generations (Halim et al., 2021), however, the findings of the study indicated that both the supervisors and subordinates were inclined towards the participative approach at work place and both generations emphasized on the meaningfulness of the assignment. Moreover, the factors that help in bridging the gap between the two generations were also representing the similarities in the views. The researcher found that appreciation, open discussion, encouragement, freedom of expression and participative approach are the key factors to resolve a conflict. On the other hand, the contrast results were observed between the dyadic relations against the sub theme “efforts to resolve the conflicts” as the supervisors were in view that they put efforts to resolve the conflicts while the subordinates were showing that they try to avoid the conflicts by following the directions of their superiors. The researchers admitted that fostering a culture of mutual respect helps in curbing the conflicts (Tingvold & Munkejord, 2021). Similarly, the results of this study indicated that employees of both generations were strongly recommending the creation of such culture in the organizations where everyone is treated in a respectful way. The researcher observed maximum overlaps under this theme and found that both generations were motivated to foster a culture of mutual respect at the workplace.

## **8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this qualitative study presents a novel exploration into the dynamics of intergenerational conflict between generation Y and Z by highlighting the efficacy of fostering a culture of mutual respect as a means of mitigating such conflicts. Through the application of thematic analysis to dyadic data using the framework matrix method, this research provides valuable insights into the divergent working values of both generational cohorts. The findings affirm the significant role played by a culture of mutual respect in lessening generational conflict. This emphasizes the importance of cultivating environments where individuals from different generations feel valued, understood, and appreciated and create a harmonious relation at the workplace.

## **Limitations and Way Forward**

This study has several strengths as Framework Matrix Method in NVivo 14 is used to perform the dyadic analysis to explore and compare the dyads. There are very limited qualitative studies which have been conducted in dyadic form to explore the thematic analysis (Collaco et al., 2021). Further, the attitudes of generation Z at the workplace are a dilemma these days and require immediate attention. The dyadic study helps to understand deeply the intergenerational conflicts between the generation Y and Z and the role of creating a mutual respect culture to minimizing the generational gap. The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of cognitive dissonance theory by applying it to the context of intergenerational conflict resolution. The findings of the study contribute to the ongoing development of generational theory by shedding light on effective strategies for managing intergenerational conflicts in the workplace. In terms of practical implications, this study provides a platform for knowledge exchange and skill transfer, promotes

intergenerational learning and synergy through creating a culture of mutual respect. The findings of the study provide practical insights to the organizations to address the generational conflict at the workplace by developing new organizational policies and practices. This study has several limitations too. The first limitation is about the data as data is collected from a single organization while generation Z is entering as a new workforce in many industries. Secondly, the hierarchal structure of the selected organization was strong and may affect the responses of the subordinates. In future, data from multiple industries may be considered and specifically from freelancing organizations and telecom industry where hierarchal structure is weak. The design of the current study is cross sectional. The longitudinal design of the same study may improve the findings.

## References

- Aggarwal, A., Sadhna, P., Gupta, S., Mittal, A., & Rastogi, S. (2022). Gen Z entering the workforce: Restructuring HR policies and practices for fostering task performance and organizational commitment. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 22(3). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2535>
- Alteneiji, E. (2020). Exploring Intergenerational Value Changes Across Three Generations of Emirati Women Using Focused Ethnography [University of San Diego]. <https://doi.org/10.22371/07.2020.035>
- Appelbaum, S. H., Bhardwaj, A., Goodyear, M., Gong, T., Sudha, A. B., & Wei, P. (2022). A Study of Generational Conflicts in the Workplace. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 7(2), 7–15. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2022.7.2.1311>
- Aronson, E. (1969). The Theory of Cognitive Dissonance: A Current Perspective. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 4, 1–34). Elsevier. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60075-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60075-1)
- Bannon, S. M., Grunberg, V. A., Reichman, M., Popok, P. J., Traeger, L., Dickerson, B. C., & Vranceanu, A.-M. (2021). Thematic Analysis of Dyadic Coping in Couples with Young-Onset Dementia. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(4), e216111. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.6111>
- Bogueva, D., & Marinova, D. (2022). Australian Generation Z and the Nexus between Climate Change and Alternative Proteins. *Animals*, 12(19), 2512. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani12192512>
- Bulut, S. (2021). Generation Z and its Perception of Work through Habits, Motivations, Expectations Preferences, and Work Ethics. *Psychology and Psychotherapy Research Study*, 4(4). <https://doi.org/10.31031/PPRS.2020.04.000593>

- Butakova, L. O. (2022). Words with Value Semantics in the Language Consciousness of Generation «Y» Representatives. *RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics*, 13(4), 937–955. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2299-2022-13-4-937-955>
- Byrne, D. (2022). A worked example of Braun and Clarke’s approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, 56(3), 1391–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y>
- Chayal, V., Goel, A., Chandel, R., & Shivhare, G. (2021). Assessing the views of generation X faculty about generation Y medical students: A questionnaire-based study. *International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health*, 8(4), 1656. <https://doi.org/10.18203/2394-6040.ijcmph20210989>
- Classen, A. (2022). Self-Control, Rationality, Ethics, and Mutual Respect: A Dominican Poet Addresses His Audience and Calls Them to Reason. *Alman Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi - Studien Zur Deutschen Sprache Und Literatur*, 47, 1–25.
- Collaco, N., Wagland, R., & et. al. (2021). *Using the Framework Method for the Analysis of Qualitative Dyadic Data in Health Research*. 3(8), 1555–1564. <https://doi.org/doi/10.1177/10497323211011599>
- Dobrowolski, Z., Drozdowski, G., & Panait, M. (2022). Understanding the Impact of Generation Z on Risk Management—A Preliminary Views on Values, Competencies, and Ethics of Generation Z in Public Administration. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(7), 3868. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19073868>
- Foronda, C. (2020). A Theory of Cultural Humility. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 31(1), 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659619875184>
- Halim, F. W., Abdul Aziz, S. F., & Inn, G. X. (2021). Comparing Demanded Work Values, and the Relationship between Work Values Congruence and Organizational Commitment between the Gen-X and Gen-Y Employees in Klang Valley, Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 11(3), Pages 77-93. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v11-i3/10808>
- Holzer, B. M., Ramuz, O., Minder, C. E., & Zimmerli, L. (2022). Motivation and personality factors of Generation Z high school students aspiring to study human medicine. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 31. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-03099-4>
- Hui, L., Qun, W., Nazir, S., Mengyu, Z., Asadullah, M. A., & Khadim, S. (2021). Organizational identification perceptions and millennials’ creativity: Testing the mediating role of work engagement and the moderating role of work values. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 24(5), 1653–1678. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-04-2020-0165>
- Jackson, K. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo* (3rd edition). SAGE Publications.

- Janssen, D., & Carradini, S. (2021). Generation Z Workplace Communication Habits and Expectations. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 64(2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2021.3069288>
- Jr, C. E. (2020). *Values Congruence and Organizational Commitment among the Multiple Generations in The Workforce: Toward A Better Understanding of Generational Differences*.
- Kautish, P., Hameed, S., Kour, P., & Walia, S. (2022). Career beliefs, self-efficacy and VUCA skills: A study among generation Z female students of tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 30, 100340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100340>
- Lina Dameria, S., Parama, S., & Nia, M. (2022). *Conflict of Generational Gap in the Workplace: 7th Sriwijaya Economics, Accounting, and Business Conference (SEABC 2021), Palembang, Indonesia*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.220304.048>
- Liu, Y., Bellibaş, M. Ş., & Gümüş, S. (2021). The Effect of Instructional Leadership and Distributed Leadership on Teacher Self-efficacy and Job Satisfaction: Mediating Roles of Supportive School Culture and Teacher Collaboration. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(3), 430–453. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220910438>
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). *Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars*. 8(3).
- Milfont, T. L., Zubielevitch, E., Milojev, P., & Sibley, C. G. (2021). Ten-year panel data confirm generation gap, but climate beliefs increase at similar rates across ages. *Nature Communications*, 12(1), 4038. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-24245-y>
- Sattar, T., Imdadullah, M., Bashir, F., & Arshad, F. (2023). Underlying Causes of Intergenerational Conflict between Parent-Child Age Bands in Multan City, Pakistan: A Comparative Study. *Review of Applied Management and Social Sciences*, 6(1), 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.47067/ramss.v6i1.303>
- Tingvold, L., & Munkejord, M. C. (2021). Shared goals, communication and mutual respect in multicultural staff teams: A relational coordination perspective. *Nursing Open*, 8(2), 957–965. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.704>
- Vásquez-Fernández, A., Shuñaqui Sangama, M., Ahenakew, C., Pérez Pinedo, M., Sebastián Lizardo, R., Canayo Otto, J., & Kozak, R. A. (2021). From “mutual respect” to “intercultural respect”: Collaborating with Ashenininka and Yine Peoples in the Peruvian Amazon. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 53(1), 127–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07329113.2021.1889791>