

**Examining the Perceptions of Baby Boomers' vs. the Realities Surrounding
Entitlement in Generation Y Workers**

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Abstract

The Baby Boomer generation, traditionally defined as those individuals whom are born post World-War II, are beginning to near the end of their careers and are close to commencing their retirement (Slyker, K. 2011). As the Baby Boomer generation is the largest demographic cohort currently held within the labour market a peculiar change is occurring within organizations today; Generation Y is beginning to confront these Baby Boomers across all industries (Slyker, K. 2011).

The study seeks to examine the perceptions that Baby Boomers have on Generation Y entering the labour market; with the specific focus on the issue of “entitlement” within organizations. This study has two measurements, first was the actual average level of entitlement felt by individuals within Generation Y and second, how individuals within the Baby Boomer generation perceived Generation Y’s entitlement. We had a total response rate of 156 Generation Y individuals completing a paper questionnaire and 105 Baby Boomers completing their respective questionnaire.

The results demonstrate that Baby Boomers on average viewed Generation Y to be more entitled than their actual levels of entitlement. These results suggest new ways of increasing productivity within organizations by addressing the clash of perception versus reality surrounding entitlement within Generation Y. Future research can examine the actual entitlement felt by individuals within the Baby

Boomer generation for a more fundamental understanding of the differences surrounding the issue of entitlement.

Introduction

The Baby Boomer generation has enjoyed the post-war economic prosperity frequently viewed as the “Golden Age of Capitalism” (Marglin, A., & Schor, J, 2000). This era has allowed for continuous GDP growth across all OECD members, relatively low-unemployment rates, and real income growth for all social classes; this was arguably achieved by the adoption and implementation of Keynesian economic policies (Marglin, A., & Schor, J, 2000). Generation Y is currently entering the labour market in a recessionary economy with a much more globally competitive labor market (Giang, V., & Groth, A, 2011). With stagnated GDP growth since the 2008 financial meltdown, long-term unemployment, and sovereign debt reaching increasingly dangerous levels, it shouldn’t be difficult for one to differentiate the economic climate of the two generations (Giang, V., & Groth, A, 2011).

Today’s economic climate in Western nations requires that prospective Generation Y employees have more white collar skills-based training, education, and experience (Giang, V., & Groth, A, 2011). Due to generational differences fostered through these social and economic differences, various perceptions of entitlement occur between generational clashes. Entitlement is defined as *“traits and expectations that are considered to exceed what is “normal” according to established social norms and have the capacity to negatively impact others”* (Fisk, 2009). Academics, economists, and

psychologists have demonstrated some previous evidence that Generation Y is defined as an “entitled” generation (Alexander, C., & Sysko, J, 2011). With Baby Boomers comprising the majority of the current labour market, we strive to obtain a better-rounded view of the perceptions they hold of the emerging generation. In order to determine if the Baby Boomers’ perceptions of the new generation are grounded in reality, we will compare their perceptions with actual levels of entitlement in Generation Y. This will ultimately allow us to displace any misperceptions and establish recommendations for increasing synergy between these two generations on the organizational level.

Literature Review

A Brief Overview of Entitlement within Generation Y

There are many stereotypes and various possible misconceptions expressed by the Baby Boomer generation towards the new “millennial” generation entering the workforce today (Alexander, C., & Sysko, J, 2011). Since the Post-World War II economic era, the baby boomer (BB) generation encompassed the majority of the labour force. A belief frequently held by the Baby Boomer generation is that Generation Y suffers from an overinflated sense of entitlement (Alexander, C., & Sysko, J, 2011). In this study, we will examine entitlement implicitly within the generation and the common stereotypical belief that is frequently fostered by media outlets and therefore is a common societal belief that has never before been examined in the literature. These outlets claim that Generation Y are more entitled than previous generations but also claim that there is not enough evidence to support their thoughts. Entitlement is a guarantee of access to specific benefits

based on established rights. These “rights” are in of themselves a form entitlement derived from various socio-economical, ethical and social principles surrounding different cultures. Harvey defines psychological entitlement as “a stable tendency toward inflated self-perceptions and unjustifiable expectations regarding praise, rewards and other positive outcomes” (Harvey, 2009). While Fisk presents a definition of “excessive” entitlement that is closely related to our study; her definition explicitly defines entitlement as “traits which exceed what would be considered normative according to prevailing social allocation rules and that when acted upon, may negatively impact others” (Fisk, 2009). Therefore, within the context of our study, entitlement is a trait that reflects a “dignified” personality profile. That is, a profile that is generally fostered by inaccurate perceptions of one’s self – which is formulated due to a distorted view of reality. This type of personality profile has demands that exceed what would be considered normative according to dominant (previously established) social allocation rules. Therefore, the personality profile is primarily driven by a higher sense of self, leading to an entitled “disorder” (Fisk, 2009).

Baby Boomers in particular seem to have a stronger belief that Generation Y is especially entitled. For example, in the article “Perception vs. Reality: 10 Truths about the generation Y Workforce” written by Randall Hansen, Ph.D expresses certain perceptions and beliefs held by baby boomers and whether they were correct (Randall, 2008). Some of the perceptions that were presented were that Generation Y has been perceived as being both spoiled and entitled (Randall, 2008). Followed by Generation Y being self-centered, having unrealistic expectations,

having “very little respect” for authority, expressing no loyalty to employers, and not committed to their work (Randall, 2008).

This topic is important to discuss as it examines whether Generation Y does have an enhanced sense of entitlement, and if the stereotype that is portrayed is holding to a valid or invalid belief. The topic is essential in determining better patterns of communication and personal interactions between the two generations as they are currently beginning to converge in the labour market. The constructs that will facilitate examining the issue of entitlement in Generation Y are: psychological traits, behaviours, and career expectations.

An Overview of Entitlement Constructs

Traits

When dealing with specific “traits” that encompass entitlement there are various possibilities for definitions. In many professional studies there has been a clear consensus of some traits that are self-explanatory in why they elicit entitlement in an individual.

In a 2009 study conducted by Alexander & Sysko, they explored some possible antecedents that illustrate a sense of entitlement (Alexander, C., & Sysko, J, 2011). The first psychological trait that was pertinent was the trait of selfishness. This trait not only exhibits the self-interests of Generation Y but also their need to negotiate in order to obtain self-gratification. Related to selfishness are the traits discussed in Trzesniewsk, Donnellan & Robin’s study of narcissism and self-enhancement (Trzesniewsk, 2008). Narcissism is another form of selfishness since it “attributes include a grandiose sense of importance, a preoccupation with power and success,

exhibition, arrogance, exploitativeness and a sense of entitlement” (Trzesniewsk, 2008). These thoughts of importance and preoccupation with oneself illustrate not only selfishness but also self-enhancement. It was explained that self-enhancement is “the tendency to hold unrealistically positive beliefs about the self” (Trzesniewsk, Donnellan & Robins, 2008, pg. 182). All of these selfish traits that have been presented illustrated entitlement in Generation Y because they deal with what is best for them and how can they get what they want when they want it.

Another important trait illustrated by Alexander & Sysko was cynicism. This trait deals with a lack of trust in social and government institutions, skepticism in the information they are given, and placing greater importance on subjective and personal experiences. This kind of thought process illustrates entitlement because Generation Y is showing that they are not able to trust anyone but themselves. A selfish thought process is also characteristic of entitlement because this generation has a hard time taking what others have to say as the final verdict. Entitlement is illustrated when Generation Y is unable to take “no” for an answer, or accept that something may not be going their way at that point in time. Feeling entitled to a certain outcome is just as negative for a workplace as is entitlement concerning monetary compensation, benefits or work-life balance.

One of the most important aspects of entitlement is illustrated through the self-serving attribution tendencies of Generation Y. This was explored by, Harvey, in the 2009 study “Understanding and Managing Workplace Entitlement” (Harvey, 2009). This study referred to psychological entitlement, which is “a stable tendency

toward inflated self-perceptions and unjustifiable expectations regarding praise, rewards and other positive outcomes” (Harvey, pg. 52). This branch of entitlement relates to Gen Y when they illustrate this self-serving attribution tendency in order to properly credit themselves in their own mind. They often credit themselves when an outcome is more positive and blame more external factors when the outcome is negative. This highly relates to the cynicism found to be prominent in Gen Y in the 2009 study conducted by Alexander and Sysko. Generation Y has exemplified instances of cynicism in the self-serving attribution theory, which in turn exhibits selfishness that serves best to Gen Y and what they feel they deserve.

General Behaviours

Developing a thorough understanding of the behaviours linked with entitlement is important in furthering our knowledge of entitlement and the associated outcomes. The literature suggests that a variety of behaviours have been associated with entitlement in individuals at the workplace level.

Much of the literature suggests that behaviours surrounding entitlement are retaliatory in nature. The article “Sabotage in the Workplace: The Role of Organizational Injustice”, posited that it is common for entitled individuals who feel that their current organization has treated them unfairly in some regard end up engaging in behaviours to specifically harm the organization in some form (Ambrose et Al, 2002). Retaliatory behaviours are found when an individual is entitled and therefore is an action to consider and be aware of when studying the behaviours of Generation Y that suggests they are entitled. Such behaviour was found to be consistent with Generation Y workers in a study by Alexander and Sysko

(2011). The study presented findings that Generation Y, compared to previous generations, was more likely to leave a firm after one year of being hired. In these cases, leaving the company was not only due to perceived unfairness but also due to the entitled individuals sense of deservingness.

The article "Understanding and Managing Workplace Entitlement" also touched on retaliatory behaviour (Harvey, 2009). Harvey suggested that there exists an element of "political behaviour" which consists of acts such as spreading rumors and purposely sabotaging other co-workers in order to advance ones own personal interests (ie: getting a promotion or pay raise). This behaviour is seen as abusive and may include insulting a co-worker in some regard to advance one's own position. Such behaviour is thought to be the result of frustration with the organization due to the entitled individual having a perceived feeling of injustice (for example, in the case of not receiving a promotion) (Harvey, 2009). The result of this study shows a direct positive relationship between entitlement and political behaviour as well as frustration of the entitled worker and co-worker abuse (Harvey, 2009). The concept of frustration is clearly important in understanding if an individual exhibits entitlement and is critical to establishing a relationship between Generation Y and entitlement.

In the article "I want it all and I want it now!" an examination of the etiology, expression, and escalation of excessive employee entitlement (Fisk, 2009) found that feelings of entitlement promoted counterproductive work behaviours (CWB's). These behaviours were voluntary acts conducted by the entitled individual that could include slow paced work or wasting recourse that the organization provides

to the worker as well as political behaviours and abuse to coworkers. The article provided additional insight, showing that the behaviours that come with entitlement often coexist, and in many cases multiple behaviours present themselves; it is not usually an isolated behaviour. Fisk suggests the four conflict factors that individuals possessing entitlement and CWB's engage in are: production, property, political, and personal deviance (Fisk, 2009). Further stating that it is the attitude of the entitled person that would predict their behaviour: if the entitled person felt they were being treated unjustly, it would negatively affect the four factors above. Conversely, if they felt they were receiving well-deserved benefits and being treated fairly, those same factors would be positively affected (Fisk, 2009).

Overall, the behaviours presented by entitled individuals are generally negative in nature and are usually harmful to the organization or their co-workers, further aggravated by the fact that the entitled person usually presents multiple behaviours affecting different breadths of the organization.

Career Expectations

Generation Y appears to have a different set of values and expectations compared to the generations that have preceded them due to difference in career stage as well as changing nature of the labour market due to changing technology and educational requirements (Wong et Al, 2008). Therefore, as Generation Y enters the work force, it is important for both employers and job-seekers to know what this generation's career expectations are. For Generation Y it is helpful to understand how managers and future co-workers of other generations may perceive them and for employers it is useful to know what Generation Y expects in a

job. Currently, Generation Y workers are in high demand as many baby boomers are retiring and job positions need to be filled.

The literature provided examples of what Generation Y generally expects when looking for job positions. When it comes to what Generation Y must have in order to accept a job offer, in the Wendover (2004) study, "Understanding the new Generation", determined that the "the most frequently-mentioned non-negotiable related to the job was "opportunity for growth/training" followed by desire to "work directly with people on a daily basis," "promotion opportunities " "variety in my job," and "teamwork" (Wendover, 2004). The trend here shows that that Generation Y invest a lot of interest in their work as well as in the people they are working with, in an organization. However, in contrast, Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons (2010) found that "Millennials placed the greatest importance on individualistic aspects of a job." As mentioned on page 288; "The Millennials identified opportunity for advancement as a top priority, which confirmed their ambitious and impatient nature, and also had elevated expectations for rapid promotions and pay increases." Interestingly, the authors found it may be that Generation Y do in fact have some realistic expectations in regards to the type of job they select and in their starting pay level (Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010).

While the literature above supports, in part, the expectation of Generation Y, there is also an abundance of literature that suggests Generation Y's expectations are too great when it comes to their first job. In a study by Hershatter & Epstein (2010), it was found that, "while much of the recent research touts the millennial worker's loyalty, teamwork and commitment to corporate mission, there is

substantial data to suggest that the same worker is twice as likely to leave a company within one year of hire” (Hershatler & Epstein, 2010). Traits such as loyalty and teamwork are definitely useful in the workforce but at the same time, a high turnover rate for Generation Y is not something employers will want to have to worry about when attempting to replace the “more loyal” baby boomers. Wendover (2004) also goes on to say “work and the job itself do not excite many of the members of this cohort. They work so they can pay their debts and buy things.” (p. 67). This indicates that the employee has little personal tie to the company, and further supports the fact that it is more likely for them to up and leave an organization within one year, as opposed to other generations who seemed to enjoy what they were doing on the job. Not only do they believe they’re just working for the money, but “this group genuinely believes that they should be able to multi-task-staying connected to their personal lives while working.” (p 68.) A final and very important finding by Wendover was that “Because they expect fun on the job, Millennials are surprised when they are expected to start at the bottom and work their way up. They want to make important decisions right away.” (p.68). This could be where entitlement originates, in the fact that Generation Y believes they deserve more, sooner.

Is Generation Y an entitled generation?

Our literature review has indicated that Generation Y has high career expectations because they feel they are entitled to more and will react with counterproductive work behaviour if these expectations are not met. From previous research it is uncertain whether Generation Y is an entitled generation, although

from the studies presented it is clear there is a general belief that the untested theory is true. With our research, it is intended that the finding will show a clear link between Generation Y and entitlement. It is expected to show that Generation Y is indeed entitled as this is most commonly the idea presented in the majority of studies done on Generation Y in the workplace.

Methodology

Participants

Since we are examining two different groups of individuals we had two very separate demographic groups participating in this study. Generation Y individuals born between the early 1980s to the late 1990s were asked to complete a short anonymous survey as were Baby Boomer participants whom were born between the mid-1940s to the mid 1960s.

Measures

For the purpose of collecting data from both Generation Y as well as baby boomer respondents, we chose to use confidential respondent-completed (paper-based) questionnaires. These questionnaires consisted of a different format for both groups of respondents because we had to account for the difference in perspective between Generation Y and Baby Boomers in framing our question sets. The expectations that were explored in the Generation Y questionnaire were designed to obtain a view of whether or not the individual was entitled or not in their expectations for their future workplace endeavors. The questions on the Baby Boomer survey largely measured their perceptions of whether Generation Y exhibited traits and behaviors' associated with entitlement but also asked baby

boomers to forecast what they expect Generation Y would expect from their early careers.

The following are some examples of questions which we've derived from the Baby Boomer paper-based surveys:

- What do you think new educated Generation Y graduates are most willing to sacrifice when looking to obtaining a position?
- What is the maximum amount of time an educated Generation Y worker would expect to work a position before receiving a compensation raise?
- What is the maximum amount of time an educated Generation Y worker would expect to work in a position before receiving a promotion?

The following are some examples of questions which we've derived from the Generation Y paper-based surveys:

- As a new graduate, what are you most willing to sacrifice when obtaining a position?
- When you start a new job, what is the maximum amount of time you expect to work in that position before receiving a compensation raise?
- When you start a new job in a company for which you have not previously worked, what is the maximum amount of time you expect to work in that position before receiving a promotion?

We utilized both the multiple choice and 5 point scale (1= 'strongly agree', 5= 'strongly disagree') in order to measure psychological entitlement. We discovered

that by using Campbell's 9-item measure of psychological entitlement, (see Appendix) we were able to develop a well-rounded set of questions in order to proceed with proper findings and implications. Both types of questions were used in both separate surveys so that a sense of clarity and unbiased results could be obtained.

Procedures

The survey itself was administered to a variety of individuals. The Generation Y individuals consisted mainly of university-educated students and Baby Boomers were largely surveyed from more public venues such as office buildings of some larger companies. It was communicated to the participant that the survey was completely confidential and that they could choose to terminate at any time. Another important aspect communicated before the participant began the survey was the informed consent form that was presented at the beginning of the survey. This paper not only explained all ethical considerations but also gave the individual the option to obtain results if they wished to view the outcome of the research.

Once the information from both set of respondents was obtained we used the average group response and specific response numbers in order to draw conclusions. These conclusions are regarding both: (a) the perceptions of Baby Boomers, and (b) the actual attitudes of Generation Y regarding entitlement. This study primarily was descriptive research and we are therefore simply comparing the data. We utilized the Generation Y responses as the "base" averages of entitlement felt by the generation and then compared that to the average Baby Boomer responses. With the use of both of these techniques we were able to gather

not only a consensus of each generation but we were also able to obtain more specific results that can be linked to certain age, gender or other aspects of the individual that were expressed through the survey questions.

Results (Baby Boomers)

| Question (Baby Boomers) n=105 | Results (Highest Response Rate) |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Q: What do you think new educated Generation Y graduates are most willing to sacrifice when looking to obtaining a position? | Job Stability (n=49) 46.6% |
| Q: What do you believe is the most important aspect that attracts young workers to a job? | Salary (n=82) 78.0% |
| Q: What is the maximum amount of time an educated Generation Y worker would expect to work in a position before receiving a promotion? | 1.5 – 2 years (n = 46) 43.8% |
| Q: What is the maximum amount of time an educated Generation Y worker would expect to work a position before receiving a compensation raise? | 1.5 – 2 years (n=53) 50.4% |
| Q: On a scale of 1 – 5 predict how you feel the economic climate (on average – In Canada) will be for the careers of Generation Y (Year 2010 to Year 2020)? | Neutral (n=40) 38.0% |
| Q: Generation Y employees do not add any more value to an organization than older generation employees (over 30 years of age) | Agree (n=49) 46.6% |
| Q: Generation Y employees expect to work from the bottom up when it comes to joining a new company | Neutral (n=57) 54.2% |
| Q: Generation Y employees exhibit dedication and hard work on the job | Agree (n=45) 42.8% |
| Q: Generation Y employees expect too much from their organization | Neutral (n=33) 31.4% |
| Q: Generation Y employees can learn a lot from my generation | Agree (n=63) 60.0% |

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| Q: There is little to no difference between my workplace attitudes and the attitudes of Generation Y employees | Disagree (n=53) 50.4% |
| Q: Generation Y employees experience great frustration when their initial expectations on the job are not met | Agree (n=65) 61.9% |
| Q: Generation Y employees do not have to work as hard for success as I did when I was their age | Disagree (n=60) 57.1% |
| Q: Generation Y employees have unrealistic expectations when entering the workforce (expect unrealistic compensation, benefits, job security, promotions) | Agree (n=56) 53.3% |
| Q: A survey conducted by careerbuilder.com reports that hiring managers believe that Generation Y workers have a stronger sense of entitlement than older workers. | Agree (n=66) 62.8% |
| Q: Generation Y graduates have more opportunities than the un-educated Generation Y population solely due to their level of post-secondary education? | Strongly Agree (n=49) 46.6% |
| Q: Generation Y graduates have an exaggerated positive self-perception | Agree (n=50) 47.6% |

Results (Generation Y)

| Question (Generation Y) n=156 | Results (Highest Response Rate) |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Q: When you start a new job in a company for which you have not previously worked, what is the maximum amount of time you expect to work in that position before receiving a promotion? | 7 months – 1 year (n=36) 23.0% |
| Q: When you start a new job, what is the maximum amount of time you expect to work in that position before receiving a compensation raise? | 1 – 1.5 years (n=55) 35.2% |
| Q: What is the most important attribute when looking for a job after graduation? | Work-Life Balance (n=42) 26.9% |

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| Q: As a new graduate, what are you most willing to sacrifice when obtaining a position? | Benefits (n=37) 23.7% |
| Q: On a scale of 1 – 5 predict how you feel the economic climate (on average – In Canada) will be for the careers of your generation (Year 2010 to Year 2020) | Neutral (n=65) 41.6% |
| Q: Strong work ethic (ie: going above and beyond your job description) is the key to success in an organization. | Agree (n=65) 41.6% |
| Q: If I work more hours than my job requires on a weekly basis (ie: working 50 hrs/week when the contract states 40 hrs/week), I expect a bonus or reward for my additional effort | Agree (n=50) 32.0% |
| Q: I am not overly concerned about success in the workplace | Strongly Disagree (n=49) 31.4% |
| Q: I see myself as a good leader | Agree (n=62) 39.7% |
| Q: I don't mind following the orders of my direct superiors | Agree (n=57) 36.5% |
| Q: It makes little difference to me whether I am a leader in my organization or not | Disagree (n=53) 33.9% |
| Q: There is a lot I can learn from my co-workers | Agree (n=54) 34.6% |
| Q: If a co-worker got a promotion I thought I deserved, I would voice my concerns to my supervisor | Neutral (n=59) 37.8% |
| Q: Leadership is a quality that takes along time to develop | Agree (n=54) 34.6% |
| Q: In considering a job, I would be willing to accept a job that is not my ideal position | Agree (n=55) 35.2% |
| Q: I honestly feel that I am just more deserving than others | Neutral (n=46) 29.4% |
| Q: If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the first lifeboat | Neutral (n=44) 28.2% |

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| Q: I demand the best because I'm worth it | Neutral (n=54) 34.6% |
| Q: I do not necessarily deserve special treatment | Neutral (n=57) 36.5% |
| Q: People like me deserve an extra break now and then | Neutral (n=55) 35.2% |
| Q: If things don't go my way, I am likely to become frustrated | Agree (n=48) 30.7% |

Discussions

Does generation Y actually live up to the baby boomer's perceptions and exhibit characteristics of entitlement and unrealistic work expectations in the workplace? In regards to this study and survey, it seems that although Generation Y does exhibit certain traits of entitlement, they are much less entitled than how Baby Boomers perceive them to be and have much more modest views on work expectations than perceived.

As expected, results indicate that the Baby Boomer generation places the well-known stereotype of "entitlement" on Generation Y. The fact that baby boomers have this perception could be for a variety of reasons. The Baby Boomer generation grew up in a different time, a time of dramatic social change where opportunities, privileges, and the technologies we have today did not exist. Most had to work hard, make sacrifices and take what they could get when it came to entering the workforce. Years later, they see the new generation starting their careers and perceive them to exhibit unrealistic, spoiled, and a narcissistic view of themselves and their job expectations. They believe Generation Y expects the best,

right away because they see themselves as deserving. However, as the findings indicated these perceptions are indeed false or inconclusive. Not to say Generation Y has no traits of entitlement whatsoever, but the perceived level of entitlement the Baby Boomers have of Generation Y is very much inflated as results indicate.

In regards to job frustration, the majority of Generation Y respondents did indicate that they would feel great frustration if expectations on the job were not met. Perhaps the agreeableness of this statement according to the Generation Y respondents could be attributed to the fact that people generally do get frustrated when things don't go their way. It is partially dependant on the nature of the person who is frustrated, not necessarily the nature of the generation as a whole. This instance of job frustration in Generation Y however was one of the only displays of entitlement from the Generation Y respondents.

Generation Y not only produced results contrary to baby boomer's expectations concerning job expectations but also with respect to Campbell's *9-item Measure of Psychological Entitlement* questions. As stated in results, findings were neutral on average which indicates that Generation Y does not exhibit an inflated sense of entitlement. Perhaps this could be as a result of participants guessing what exactly the survey was looking to measure and acting on the social desirability factor? There is also the fact that possibly Generation Y is simply misconceived as the entitled generation by those in other generations since they are showing that they do not have an inflated sense of self-perception on average.

Perhaps somewhat surprising was Generation Y's modest responses in regards to unrealistic work expectations. In many senses of the word, Generation Y

is privileged, especially compared to generations of the past. Generation Y, as a whole, has grown up with more opportunity. From education becoming increasingly more and more important and accessible in today's society, to having closer relationships with their families and not to mention all the technological resources available to them, it is understandable that Generation Y could have potential unrealistic expectations about the workplace in the sense that they may feel they have earned the right to be selective. Results indicate that this is not the case however for the majority of the generation. Generation Y's humble and realistic expectations with respect to both financial and status advancements in the workplace can help to start to disprove the stereotype of entitlement.

Limitations and Conclusions:

The study of perceptions of entitlement in Generation Y from Baby Boomers as well as the actuality of entitlement in shown in Generation Y was able to show that there is some significant relationships within these constructs. This study was able to enhance our understanding on this subject. Our study did have limitations that under other circumstances may have enhanced our findings or changed them altogether. These limitations could also be taken into consideration for future research and used to enhance other studies done on this subject.

A limitation that was found during our research was the amount of time devoted to this study. This study was performed in a few short months, but with more time it may have lead to different results, as well it could have been even more comparative and produced even more significant results if there was a longitudinal study done to compare the current economic conditions with those in other years,

to grasp how the economy shapes the views from Baby Boomers as well as the attitudes of Generation Y. Perhaps the reason the Generation Y that we were able to survey in this study were not found to be as entitled as initially predicted was because current economic times are not at their greatest. It may be possible that Generation Y changes their expectations of their future in the work place in response to economic variations. The only way to find if this concept is what caused the expectations that Generation Y possessed is to study Generation Y over time, and over different economic settings.

Another issue that may have occurred is that the answers reflect what is socially accepted and desired. Generation Y may have answered certain questions inaccurately because they felt that there was a more desirable answer than that of what was actually honest to them. For example a question that was included in our survey, "If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the first lifeboat." this question has a rather obvious socially desirable answer and may have been answered in accordance to what is expected not of how the participant actually feels. In addition to this, we surveyed Generation Y and Baby Boomers in a relatively small geographical area. This may have had an impact on the results as different cultures may have different views on the issue. The only way to test this would be to have a bigger sample of participants from a wider variety of areas.

Overall, the study was very informative. It showed that Baby Boomers feel that Generation Y is an entitled generation, as well it showed that Generation Y is more realistic about what to expect when they enter the workforce than what we predicted but also experience great frustration when things don't turn out the way

they had expected. The study provided information on a subject that hasn't had as much research done in the past; it provided great ideas for future research on this subject. As well it helped contribute to our overall understanding of Generation Y in the workplace and how realistic their expectations are.

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Appendix

Campbell's 9-Item Measure of Psychological Entitlement

NOTE: Participants were asked to respond indicating the degree to which they agree or disagree with the following statements on a scale of 1-5.

- (1) I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others.
- (2) Great things should come to me.
- (3) If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the *first* lifeboat!
- (4) I demand the best because I'm worth it.
- (5) I do not necessarily deserve special treatment.
- (6) I deserve more things in my life.
- (7) People like me deserve an extra break now and then.
- (8) Things should go my way.
- (9) I feel entitled to more of everything.

Source: Campbell, K., Banacci, A., Shelton, J., Exline, J., Bushman, B. (2004). Psychological Entitlement: Interpersonal consequences and validation of a self-report measure. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 83(1), 29-45.