Generation Gap in Pakistan: Antecedents and Effects

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Abstract

Generation gap is an anticipated difference between genesis/propagation. This study aims to explore perceptions of the people regarding the generation gap and further explores the reasons for this gap. The research is significant as far the ethnographic landscape of Pakistani society is concerned as it draws an explicit picture of people's perception regarding the concept of Generation gap and its causes and effects. The research is qualitative in nature phenomenological approach was used. Through inductive methods the perceptions of the participant were recorded through interviews and group discussions. Data is collected via interviews and thematic approach was adopted. The research reveals the people's perception about the generation gap in Pakistan and the possible reasons for this gap. The results show that Pakistani society is suffering from this issue and technology, life style, civilization, language and festivals are the key factors to cause the generation gap in the society. In order to avoid or lessen that generation gap the understanding of technological shift, cultural changes and societal life style needs to be understood. The transformation in cultural and traditional practices is obvious over time due to the exposure to cutting-edge technology and ideological views however, it is recommended that what changes are for the benefit of the society and what we need to preserve among different generations should be understood.

Keywords: *generation gap, Pakistani society, culture, civilization, perception*

Introduction

Generation gap is a difference in opinion of one generation to another generation. Now a day's generation gap is a perceived gap between generations like (child's perception is different from his parents and grandparents). The sociological theory of a generation gap came to light in the 1960s, when the younger generation (later known

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as baby boomers) seemed to go against everything their parents had previously believed in term of music, values, governmental and political values. Sociologists now refer to "generation gap" as "institutional age segregation". Sociologists have divided the lifespan into three different levels: childhood, midlife and retirement. Usually when any of these age groups is engaged in its primary activity the individual members are physically isolated from people of other generation, with little interaction across age barriers except at the nuclear family level. There are several ways to make distinction between generations. For example, names are given to major groups (baby boomers, Gen X etc.) and each generation sets its own trends and has its own cultural impact. George Orwell is known to have said that every generation consider itself intelligent that wiser than the next generation (Vasilescu, 2011). This epigram seems to hold true for our times as well. The nature of the dichotomy can be studied with regards to two areas- the communication gap and the cultural differences. The communication gap signifies both different modes of communication used as well as different preferences in use of language e.g. millennial have a penchant for using technology – a tendency uncommon in previous generations. Cultural differences ensue from different ideals, threats and goals that each generation may have. It signifies a sense of 'other nesses that one generation may have in relation to the others.

Generation Gap is an emerging issue in Pakistan. The western society is already taken by this problem. Pakistan has been away from such issues but in recent years generation gap is increasing rapidly in Pakistan. So, it is important to know significant, problems and after effects on our society. Due to generation gap the children are drawn away from their parents. They don't discuss their problem with parents, communicate less, and interact less than they used to do. This led to uncomfortable circumstances. Previous studies showed that there are some steps which can help in minimizing the gap between young and old generation. The younger should spend more time with their elder to understand their mindset. The way they think, understand, and react to any saturation. Understand the way they look to the society, respect their decision &listen to what they say. These steps will help to minimize the generation gap. If these steps are not taken then the gap will increase and no one will care about their elder. The families will be damaged, the parents would not care about their children after some age. The gap is increased by the advancement in technology, language, culture, lifestyle, mindset, etc. So, it is important to control the gap issue or Pakistan would become like the other countries of western society. This study reveals that the people's

perception about the generation gap and further explores the reasons for this gap.

Generation Gap in Pakistan

No nation in the world can live in the isolation and they are reliant on one another directly or indirectly similarly, generation gap has influenced and is influencing the Pakistani nation from many dimensions. It has greatly influenced the way of living, culture, norms, values and religious principles of Pakistani nation. Being a Muslim country all the activities of the people of Pakistan are at large guided by the religion, Islam and religion is something which is considered to be closer to the nature. Islam is considered to be the complete way of life, gives the direction in all the affairs of life. Since the generation gap is inspired from the west and there is a great divide between the Pakistani nation and the west therefore, generation gap has infiltrated into culture and society of Pakistan. People in Pakistan are going against the nature which has infected the whole society. The spirit of generation gap is to work smarty and quickly without any consideration of people around one's self (Omer &Jabeen 2015). It believes in self-sufficiency and being more materialistic, which is against the preaching of religion, Islam. Islam believes in utilitarianism and brotherhood, it guides to consider surroundings and promotes the culture of corporate social responsibility (CSR). One of the very important things which is missing in the today's world is the spiritual satisfaction of the people and CSR is one of the key factors for the spiritual satisfaction of an individual (Jan et. al, 2014).

Although rare research in Pakistani perspective has been conducted (Rahman & Azhar, 2011) on generation gap. However, it was based on consumer preferences and choices. Besides, it was quantitative in nature. Hence, the present research study fills the gap through conducting the study has based on the issue of generation gap in Pakistan to explore various dimensions like, culture, society, norms, values, religion and political views etc.

Literature Review

The Generation gap is defined as the disparity in ethics and manners among generations, particularly the difference between the parents and their younger ones. All these variations originate from the young ones and old people who fail to understand each other as their experiences are different, their beliefs, lifestyles, and activities are different from each other. Furthermore, the generation gap also known as generational gap may be assumed as the variation of the beliefs between two generation regarding opinions, political views, or

principles. In the modern era the generation gap, over and over again is considered to be a superficial breach between parents and their young ones (Mendez, 2008). Furthermore, a generational gap is a distinction of opinions among one generation and another concerning politics, beliefs or values. In today's practice, it is often refers to a perceived gap between younger people and their parents or grandparents; few people also refer it to the age gap. Previous researches, specifically in sociology and psychology, have focused on the generational gap as it affects the society in various ways Brunswick (1970), Keniston (1969) and Glenn (1976). Mannheim (2013) in his study, explains the generation gap by putting forth some questions like; has anyone ever felt that humans older than you are difficult to understand? Have you ever experienced that a youngster just doesn't follow what you say? You may have experienced that it is easy to coordinate with those closer to your age rather than people who are younger or older than you.

It is often observed and felt that older people are hard to understand as compare to younger ones. Or, younger people are also sometime take longer time to understand new things. Whereas, it is easier to connect with people who are same in age than of those who are older or younger than you. This phenomenon refers to the generation gap. Mannheim (1935), an early sociologist, studied and portrayed the transition of the youth into their adulthood and studied that how the generations factors can distinguish them from one another, in the social situations, home and areas (like clubs, churches, youth centers, and senior centers). Sociological theory was first came in 1960s regarding a generation gap, when the younger generation (later on called as baby boomers) seemed to contradict their parents in every social and psychological aspect (likely the Silent Generation) had earlier believed in terms of values, music, beliefs, political and governmental views as well as cultural tastes. In today's researches sociologists now refer it as "institutional age segregation" instead of "generation gap". Usually, when any of these age groups is engaged in its primary activity, the individual members are physically isolated from people of other generations, with little interaction across age barriers except at the nuclear family level. It was also argued by the Erik& Erikson (1964) and Bettelheim (1962) that the major job and challenge of youth is finding his/her unique identity within the culture, finding one's place in society. But the task become very difficult as today's society are much different from the old day's societies, today there are various special problems of defining the society in which to find a place. Today the elders are also not considered to be the best source of guidance in the society as their information is not considered to be fit and accurate by younger people in the society.

Brunswick (1970) agreed to the viewpoint that there is much generational gap between the younger and older people in the society, and it is not only because of the age differences but also because of the external situation which is faced by today's youth. The gap is also not distributed uniformly among all the younger members of the society. Some people of the society follow the footprint of their elders or parents. As it was evident from the research work of Lubell (1968) and Yankelovich (1969) that people of the working class and those younger which have definite career goals in harmony with their parents are usually following their parents' values and thoughts and are not differ a lot. Further, in contrast to these, there are two types of groups in the society who seeks to discontinue their elders' beliefs, thoughts and behaviors by finding whole new way of social life. First those who doesn't think that the happiness and satisfaction in the materialistic life and other those who are struggling to improve their quality of life by entering in whole new social class.

Yankelovich (1969) asked both youth and parents in his study about their impressions of who was the more optimistic about the future – parent or child? About half of the youth considered that their parents are less optimistic about the future and consider themselves to be more optimistic about the future. Whereas only 38 percent of parents thought that their children were more optimistic than they were. Only few young people considered their parents more optimistic than they. It was also argued that very few parents were aware about the differences between their and their child's values.

Some researchers used the word interchangeable with aging gap and found different reasons for the differences between the generations. Dowd (1979), while studying the effect of different variables on the generation gaps, he has found in his study that aging is not inevitably associated with the increase in rigidness of attitude and conservatism. The social change effect both youth and older generation in various ways, but the intensity may differ. Few changes in the society put its pervasive effects on everyone regardless of young or old. Another study found that aging is not the only factor that changes the social and psychological structure of the society but other various factors also play their role.

Generation gap is the focus of interest for western researchers especially form sociology and marketing perspectives where sociological study and brand preferences are areas of attention (Macky, K., Gardner, D., & Forsyth, S. (2008). Substantial research was conducted regarding the causes and effects of generation gap in work place where the attitudes and values of different age group have been compared (Becton, Walker, & Farmer, 2014; Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010 ; Lester, Standifer, Schultz & Windsor, 2012; Real,

Mitnick & Maloney, 2010). Generation gap has an effect on the training and learning as young and old people show different response to learning (Connor, H., Shaw, S., & Fairhurst, D. (2008). Similarly, psychological contract affected by the generation gap as its breach or commitment has leads to different behaviours (Connor, Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008; Patalano, 2008). Psychological contract and commitment with organisation ultimately leads to talent management and retention. Hence, for different generation talent management and retention is a challenge for HR (Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Korn, 2010). Researchers investigated the concept from the perspective of hospitality (Zopiatis, Krambia-Kapardis & Varnavas, 2012) Leadership (Edge, 2014) and work family conflict (Beutell, 2013). All the research studies are in quantitative in nature. hence, the literature is deficient that researches conducted are quantitative and conducted in western context. Besides, those studies are mainly based on organizational beahviour perspectives. Hence, the present study aims to fill the gap in literature and extend the body of knowledge of this concept.

Methodology
Research design

The research is qualitative in nature and is based on phenomenological approach and is used with thematic approach.

Respondents' details
Interviews were conducted from different group of people of the society. PhD students and Professors were taken from academic's side, old aged people are selected to know their views about today's generation, different religious professionals are taken to have religious view of the issue and students of college were taken for collecting younger's' view of the issue.

Interview instrument

Self-administered and semi structure interviews were conducted to collect the data. The basic aim of the interviews was to collect the views of these groups about the generation gap issue that how they perceive the generation gap, and what are the possible reasons for this gap. Five questions were asked form the respondents based on the themes developed.

Thematic approach

Thematic approach was adopted and different themes were developed such as technology as source of generation gap, life style of

people, language, customs and traditions, festivals and civilization. The questions were asked on the bases of those themes.

Results & Discussion
The following table shows the demographics of the respondents.

Table:1

	F	Percentage
PhD students	14	16.7
University Professors	08	9.5
Old aged people	21	25
Religious people	13	15.5
Young people	28	33.3
N=	84	

The results of the interviews show that 90% of total respondents were agree to observe generation gap in the Pakistan. Detailed interviews were conducted from the respondents with the average time of interview is 16 minutes. The results of the interviews were summarized to have a better understanding of the reasons of the generation gap in Pakistan. The following factors were found to be the responsible for generation gap.

Technology is a Source of Generation Gap
     It is now largely taken for granted that one must be connected and available to peers at all times via cell, instant messaging, and other forms of contact). Even as continues to be popular during homework sessions in front of the computer, cell phones have become a ubiquitous accessory – one that many young people describe as an extension of themselves as they coordinate the activities of their daily lives– many celebrate these practices, and many wonders about them, but few doubts that young people's technological lives have changed significantly in the past few years. And through all of this change, at least one thing seems to remain the same: young people experience the technology in their lives much differently than their parents do, and this can be a source of tension in family life. Parents respond to parent/teen conflict in ways that reflect their general orientation to parental authority. Most parents strive to be authoritative (warm, boundary-setting, encouraging of autonomy, but those who engage in authoritarian parenting are less comfortable with and often punish teen autonomy, and those who are permissive (and to some extent those who are neglectful or uninvolved) seek to avoid conflicts between parents and teens.

Lifestyle brings Generation Gap

Not only the attitude towards different options but also the day-to-day lifestyle varies to a large extent for people from different age groups as well. This ranges from preference mass media to smoking behavior and many others. We found that that the younger adults were less interested in watching religious channels rather they mostly preferred sports channel to other alternatives. The middle-aged adults, however, watched news channels the most while the older aged preferred religious channels more than anything else. This behavior is derived from the fact that TV channels would keep the younger generations updated with the latest information and help in their job ultimately resulting in generation gap.

Language and customs vary from generation to generation

It is undoubtedly true that culture and tradition that are both the backbone of a country which has changed from generation to generation. Perhaps, the principle argument is the technology that has formed on integral part of everyone's life. From a technological perspective, people who live in this situation are more likely to benefit from new ways of communication, to extent that they would aware of others cultures and customs. Another point to make is that immigration to abroad. Nowadays, the people who move to another country for studying or living are increased. Since they are compelled to adapt themselves to the rules and customs of the country they are living. Notwithstanding children who live in foreign country should learned the mother's tongue from an early age, but this matter not observed by same parents and they are trying to utilize the language of the foreign country.

Festivals Change from Generation to Generation

It is commonly believed that cultures and beliefs have been changing with every generation. However, a number of reasons can be attributes to this continuous evolution. Some of them include change in lifestyle and career-oriented mindset of recent generations. To begin with, the main reason behind this trend is that people these days do not want to live in joint families with elder people rather than getting converted into nuclear families. In other word, grandparents are the one who can inculcate the right beliefs and customs to their grandchildren because the current generation might not know the importance of family values are all about. Therefore, children do not get opportunity to learn about old traditions and cultures from their grandparents. For instance, the young generation these days rarely find time to visit their grandparents and neighbors at festivals. They totally

depend on phone to convey the wishes rather than personally paying a visit.

Civilization Change from Generation to Generation

There is a shift in civilization and customs in different eras. In ancient time, there was no mode of communication between different tribes and all the beliefs and practices used to be local and were followed by the next generation in the same way. But now with the usage of the internet, people from different societies or countries are closely connected and are heavily influenced by each other's culture. For instance, there is a significant change in the dressing style of Indian people from the past few decades due to the influence of western societies and in modern time, the young generation prefers western attire than a traditional ethnic one. In addition to this, philosophical ideas also drive a change in customs. For instance, in an earlier time, the majority of people were illiterate and farming was the common practice but with the passage of time, people become educated and learnt different skills to work in different areas, such as medical, engineering and art. Therefore, the aforementioned factors drive a change in traditional values.

Some changes in myths are necessary and are acceptable for development, such as misconceptions associated with religion. Slaughtering of animals is a prime example, which our ancestors associated with the happiness of God but in the current time, it has been prevented with the enforcement of animal rights by considering it as a brutal treatment with animals. On the other hand, the historical culture of many countries is being exploited by western culture over time. As the young generation has a sketchy knowledge about the historical culture and mere respect for the ethical values followed by their elders. Therefore, there is a need to preserve it with the help of media, such as advertisements and movies. Parents can also play a vital role to teach their children the importance of the ancient culture.

To conclude, the transformation in cultural and traditional practices is obvious over time due to the exposure to cutting-edge technology and ideological views but there is a need to understand what changes are for the benefit of the society and what we need to preserve among different generations.

Conclusion

Generation gap is an anticipated difference between genesis/propagation. This study aims to explore perceptions of the people regarding the generation gap and further explores the reasons for this gap. The research has a value so far, the ethnographic landscape of Pakistani society is concerned as it draws an explicit picture of people's perception regarding the concept of Generation gap

and its causes and effects. Bringing up rear, generation gap is the colossal dilemma of Pakistan as it motivates the atrocious aftermaths. It should be swamped from our association. Between two generations, it causes chaos and also imports difference in notion and movements. Language, slang, technology are the dawns used to analyze this generation gap issue. This should be eradicated from our association but as far as we know it is impractical and challenging. The generation gap is the result of cultural differences, technological change, language and festivals. Hence, these factors should be taken into account while dealing with the issue of Generation Gap.

There are some suggestions which can not only reduce the broaden gap in society as well as in workplace;

    i.   Focus on similarities is the key to reduce the gap. As it would help the generations to think and focus on the similar and identical things that would help each other to understand. It can be ideas, thoughts or articulation of concepts.

    ii.   Openness in communication can leads to bridge up the gap between generations. Communication can help the group members of different generations to understand discuss and share their views.

    iii.   Giving values to seniors and showing humbleness to junior can be the most effective way through which both different generations can be bring closer. As such gestures can be soothing and positive.

    iv.   It is the responsibility of both generations to lessen the gap as it is not favorable for any of them. As seniors have the experience, wisdom, tacit knowledge and knowledge while youth has the energy, zeal and passion. Hence, it is the responsibility of both to provide space to each other for acceptance.

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