Conveying the Message:
Building Relationships in a Varied Team

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***A*bstract:** It is of great importance for the management environment to acknowledge and understand networking practices and diversity issues. To ensure effective teamwork and a stable working environment networking needs to be enhanced and supported. To understand networking in a culturally diverse environment the networking practices were investigated at a Gauteng mine. Data was collected from Kusasalethu mine employees, one of the mines of the third largest Gold producer in South Africa. The respondents were chosen by making use of probability, systematic proportionate stratified sampling. A total of 289 questionnaires were completed which constituted a 100% response rate. One difference identified in the findings indicated that Caucasian Baby Boomers make use of telephones when networking more often than African Generation X'ers. In view of the results it is recommended, among other things, that preferences with regard to network mediums be noted, as such awareness may lead to more effective networking / communication within businesses. Effective communication may lead to a more stable and more cohesive working environment.

JEL Classifications: J21, J24, P21

Keywords: culture; diversity; generation; networking; practices

Abbreviations: ANOVA - Analysis of Variance, BB - Baby Boomers, Cauc – Caucasian, Gen X - Generation X, MSA - Kaiser's Measure of Sample Adequacy, SAS - Statistical Analysis System

1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem and Importance

The mining industry in South Africa is one of the most important sources of much needed job creation, foreign investment and international trade. Mining is reported to have created more than one million jobs indirectly or directly and contributes around 18% to the GDP (Kearney, 2012). It stimulates the local economy and creates opportunities for other industries and spin-offs. In more recent years the mining industry in South Africa has been struggling with a number of challenges, such as the global economic crisis, poor or under-developed infrastructure to support operations, power cost pressures, challenges in maintaining and acquiring the specialised skills needed, since the South African experienced labour has been headhunted by international businesses. This lead to the further pressure of increased labour costs of 9% (Boegman & Rossouw 2012, p.13).

This mine as with any mine or international business employing a variety of skilled people and from diverse backgrounds to complete a project, networking and internal communication becomes

extremely important to work in an efficient and proficient way. In this Harmony Gold Mining Co. Ltd. owned mine projects of over millions of dollars, employed 5,756 employees and contractors and produced 180,334oz of gold in 2011. Recently the South African mining industry had been shaken by violent and constant strikes. The Kusasalethu mine has also been mentioned as having a troubled history (Stoddard, 2013) with miscommunication and violence or dangerous behaviour amongst employees. This makes the importance of knowing how to build relationships in this environment to build a stronger team and to enhance productivity.

1.2 Background and Overview of Previous Research

Networking is a term usually used to refer to establishing effective relationships (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt 2007, p. 277). Networking entails the establishment of effective relationships from inside and outside the business; it entails people talking to one another, sharing ideas, information and resources (Baker 2000, p. 13). Although reflections on the notion of network analysis can be found in writings dating as far back as the ancient Greeks, the actual development of the field began in the 1930's in different traditional fields that functioned separately.

The volume of social network research in management has increased radically in recent years (Borgatti & Foster 2003, p. 991). Some authors such as Johanson and Mattsson (1988), Powell (1991), Håkansson and Johanson (1993), Lazerson (1993), Krackhardt and Hanson (1993), Sorensen (1996), Skyrme (1999), Friedman (2000) and Barabási (2002) share their research interest by indicating the importance of network building in today's knowledge economy. Many researchers (Toeman 1949, p. 255; Borgatti 1997; Hallinan 1999; Chen & Yang 2010, p. 233) of the social network idea have admitted that the psychiatrist Moreno is the founder of the social network, as his sociogram proposed in 1943 inspired a great deal research over a number of decades to follow. Some of the major research streams in business network scholarship include social capital, embeddedness, network businesses (Ritter, 1999), board interlocks, joint ventures and inter-business alliances, knowledge management, social cognition and group processes (Borgatti & Foster 2003, p. 993).

Cultural diversity and orientation influence a group's communication networks which, in turn, influence group performance. Therefore businesses employing cross-cultural groups should recognise that certain characteristics of such groups may impede or encourage communication and information flows (Khorram, Vora & Dakhli, 2010). Because networks are based on people's backgrounds, the necessity of understanding the link between networking and diversity is mounting (Mamman, Kamoche & Bakuwa, 2012, p.285).

Workforce diversity acknowledges the reality of visible and invisible differences among people, mainly age, gender, marital status, social status, disability, sexual orientation, religion, personality, ethnicity and culture (Shen, Chanda, D'Netto & Monga, 2009, p. 235). As more managers are realising the challenges that arise when managing diverse work environments, the modern manager must question old assumptions about how diverse people work together. In this modern age, it is important to understand diversity issues on all levels of management. Taken together, cultures and generations are groups of people with similarities; from here it is argued that, communication is a basic necessity in such groups. Of importance is that the way in which people communicate in these groups is not random (Wheelan, 1994, pp. 27-29). Therefore, networking practices (particularly mediums used when networking) as part of this larger system of communication need to be studied in order to gain insights about the different ways in which diverse cultures and generations in South Africa can be managed. This research offers a unique view of diverse cultures and age groups and sheds some light in their networking practices.

Studies (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Mannheim, 1970; House & Javidan, 2004; Codrington, 2008; Moulton, 2009) have been conducted on the subjects of culture and generation, but little attention has been paid to culture and generation as a combination of diversity characteristics. With

a view to understand the broadness of diversity more fully, one needs to ascertain what diversity is and why it is important. Diversity refers to any aspect relevant to an individual that creates or reinforces a perception that the person is different from another individual (De Janasz, Dowd & Schneider, 2012, pp. 105-106).

Dimensions of diversity such as ethnic heritage, race, work style, communication style, language, religion and geographic location, fall within the broader umbrella of culture. Diversity dimensions such as age, mental / physical abilities and characteristics, sexual orientation, family status, education, military experience, work experience, income and business role and level, fall within the definition of generation as the era in which a person was born; a person's generational age influences and predicts these dimensions.

1.3 Networking

As society has become increasingly diverse and communication among members of international cultures is becoming more frequent, the need to appreciate diversity and to understand how people in other cultures view their world has also increased (Kendall, 2008, p. 74). Researchers (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 2009, p. 280) have begun to draw upon sociological theory and cognitive anthropology with a view to apply a social network approach to culture; such an approach emphasises the underlying structures of relations rather than the content of ceremonies and rituals. The majority of the work that has examined the effects of workforce diversity, rather than the effects of diversity initiatives, is therefore clearly underpinned by social identity theory (Becker, Ullrich & Van Dick, 2012). Social identity theory states that individuals will be attracted to groups that will enhance their self-esteem; it follows that individuals will be less attracted to groups that they perceive to be potentially esteem-damaging (Davidson & Fielden, 2003, p. 142). Culture and communication are inseparable because culture dictates who talks to whom, about what and how; therefore, culture can be seen as the foundation of communication (Staeheli, 2003, p. 168).

1.4 Diversity

Demographic characteristics are suggested to influence social dynamics and in turn various business outcomes (Bellou, 2009, p. 810). Some people think of diversity in terms of a single dimension (De Janasz et al., 2012, p. 105). This is one of the main stumbling blocks on the way to effective diversity management (Özbilgin & Tatll, 2008, p. 27). Diversity within a business means having a range of differences among the people in the business; such differences might relate to aspects such as gender, ethnic origin and disability (Daniels & Macdonald, 2005, p. 1; Bedwell, Wildman, Diazgranados, Salazar, Kramer & Salas, 2012, p. 145). Membership to such groups may have profound influence on individual's perceptions, attitudes and performance (Bellou, 2009, p. 810). Two terms that can be highlighted from the dimensions of diversity are *culture* and *generation.*

1.5 Culture

Culture refers to shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings attached to significant events that result from the common experience of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations (House & Javidan, 2004, p. 15). Culture includes the knowledge, language, values, customs and material objects that are passed from person to person, from one generation to the next in a human group in society (Kendall, 2008, p. 73). Culture also encapsulates the values, beliefs, behaviour and material objects that together form a people's way of life (Macionis, 2007, p. 60).

South Africa has a rich history of people in interaction, starting with the first inhabitants of Africa followed by immigrants who entered the country as early as 1652 - from the Netherlands, France, Germany and eventually Britain – followed by the age of colonialism (Van Aswegen, 1982, p. 392). Colonialism therefore brought different cultures to South Africa and can be said to have initiated

South Africa's cultural diversity. The term "rainbow nation", as used by former president Nelson Mandela, describes South African society as a mixture of cultures (Schultz, 2003, p. 133).

Without disregarding the value of international research in business behaviour, there is a need to develop a leadership perspective that will reflect South Africa's uniqueness (Werner, 2003, p. 196). Both Afrocentric collectivistic and Eurocentric individualistic cultural values are understood to be represented in South African businesses (Moulton, 2009, p. 4). The concept of "Ubuntu" is probably the most popular Southern African idea, meaning *we are what we are through our interaction with others* (Werner, 2003, pp. 196-197). There is a need to better understand how the values and beliefs of Africans can be incorporated into Western-based management practices (Sartorius, Merino & Carmichael, 2011, p. 1965).

1.6 Generation

In recent years, there has been a belief that important inter-generational differences exist among workers and that these differences provide challenges to managers in effectively managing their workforce (Benson & Brown, 2011, p. 1843). A generation is a social location that has the potential to affect an individual's consciousness in much the same way as social class or culture does. The generations to which individuals belong are indicative of the era in which they were born, and their worldviews are developed and influenced by this era (Codrington, 2008, pp. 2-3). Generational theory is sometimes considered as controversial; however, there are plenty of hard evidence and ongoing research to show that a generational approach to understanding society and groups is scientifically acceptable and well-grounded in sound social science (Codrington, 2008, p. 3). Historically, philosophers who have attempted to describe generational theory include Comte, Littre, Stuart Mill, Romelin, Lorenz, Dilthey and Durkheim (Codrington, 2008, p. 4). The anthropologist Mead (1934, p. 3), referenced generational theory, particularly showing examples in her contentious study of the Polynesian cultures. The first serious modern scholar to investigate the phenomenon of generational values development, and attempt to explain this phenomenon was Mannheim (1970, p. 378). Mannheim explained that a generation is a social location that has the potential to affect an individual's consciousness in much the same way as social class or culture.

Although generations have existed since recorded humanity, the slow pace of life in previous eras meant that the differences between generations have not been as dramatic and as overt as they are today; this is because the advent of the industrial era impacted massively on the pace of life (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004, pp. 11-12). Each generation has preferences in terms of what they choose to wear, how they choose to communicate and where they choose to work. According to Taylor (2005, p. 1922), young workers possess work motivations and other work attitudes that are different from their older counterparts. Having a workforce comprised of different generations can clearly lead to misunderstandings and conflict. As a consequence, the challenge for management is to foster a climate of respect for all generational groups present (Benson & Brown, 2011, p. 1859). Studying generations will provide a much-needed perspective on pressing problems because such a study will assist towards explaining the underlying problematic of intergenerational relations (Jansen, 1975, p. x). The living generations in the South African workplace at the moment are the *silent generation, the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X* and *Generation Y* (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004, p. 19).

The South African *Silent Generation* was born between the years 1930 and 1949, making them approximately 62 to 81 years old. The South African *Baby Boomer* generation was born between the years 1950 and 1969, making them approximately 42 to 61 years old. The South African *Generation X* was born between the years 1970 and 1989, making them approximately 22 to 41 years old. Representatives of South Africa's *Generation Y* were born between the years 1990 and 2005, making them approximately 6 to 21 years old. Although no employees under the age of 18 years will necessarily be found within the workplace, the earliest age at which individuals start to work is 18 years (Codrington, 2008, pp. 5-9). One more generation can be distinguished; this

youngest generation is called *Generation Net* and people from this generation were born from the year 2006 onwards (Gatherer & Craig, 2010, p. 89).

It is not surprising that America has led the *generational way*, as it does in so many other ways, with different countries following - some up to fifteen years behind it (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2004, p. 18). It is important to note that generational theory does not claim to be able to explain the individual actions of individuals, nor to be able to predict an individual's behaviour, but combined with personality profiles as well as an understanding of gender, culture, religion and race it can be a very helpful additional "layer" of analysis of people's behaviour drivers (Codrington, 2008, p. 15). Therefore, generational theory is a sociological, rather than psychological theory.

The goal of this research was to investigate the networking practices of the diverse cultural and age groups represented at a Gauteng mine.

The objectives for this article are to define diverse groups in terms of cultural and generational differences and to identify the differences in networking practices among the diverse groups at a Gauteng mine. **Therefore we have investigated the following overarching hypotheses:**

> *H1: If there are any differences between the networking practices of different cultural groups.*

> *H2: If there are any differences between the networking practices of different generational groups.*

2. Method

Descriptive research was conducted, because the objectives identified for the study relate to the purpose of descriptive research (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2002, p. 107). Primary data was collected for a specific purpose. Quantitative research by means of self-completion questionnaires was used.

2.1 Sampling Procedure

Probability, systematic proportionate stratified sampling was chosen for the study to draw conclusions about the population's characteristics. Information about the characteristics of the population was available, therefore systematic and stratified sampling methods were possible.

2.1.1 Sample size

The population of the study included the workers from the Gauteng mine that was chosen. Kusasalethu mine is one of the mines belonging to the Harmony mine group. Kusasalethu mine has a total of 4987 employees. Kusasalethu does not only employ South African citizens; for the study the foreign workers were excluded, leaving a total of 3634 South African employees. From the total of 3634 South African employees, 3360 are African, 270 are Caucasian and 4 coloured. Indian / Asian employees are not represented in the population and the coloured employees are too few to be representative. Therefore, the study focused on African and Caucasian employees only.

To calculate the sample size where a proportion needs to be estimated, n will be the wanted sample size to calculate the population percentage (π) within $d\%$, with a probability of 0.95. If π cannot be calculated beforehand then a safe sample size to take is calculated by using equation 1 (Barnett, 1974, p. 35). In equation (1), n is the sample size, N is the population and d is the percentage within which probability is estimated. To calculate n, $N = 1046$, d $= 5$ and $d^2 = 25$.

Equation 1: Sample size

$$n \geq \frac{N}{1 + \frac{Nd^2}{10000}}$$

Therefore n is allowed to be equal to or larger than 289. It was decided to make use of a sampling size of 289. A self-completion questionnaire was compiled and used.

2.1.2   Precision Testing

Construct validity was used to test personality characteristics (for instance preference of communication method) (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997, p. 113). In order to determine construct validity, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted. Kaiser's measure of sample adequacy (MSA) was used to determine whether a factor analysis was appropriate. Cronbach alpha coefficients could not be calculated. Constructs consisting out of more than one item, construct validity was determined while single items' content validity was used to ensure validity. Content validity was determined through expert judgement of knowledgeable researchers, literature research and grounding.

2.1.3   Scale and measuring instrument

The measuring instrument that was used consisted of a self-completion questionnaire with three sections. The first section consisted of demographic questions to compile a profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, home language and level of education. The second section consisted of questions on the respondents' networking behaviour. Previous research by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Mannheim (1970), Borgatti (1997), Misner and Morgan (2000), Borgatti and Foster (2003), House and Javidan (2004), Codrington (2008), Özbilgin and Tattl (2008), De Janasz *et al.* (2009); and Kilduff and Krackhardt (2009) were consulted. Question 2.1 to 2.8 consisted of questions relating to their networking behaviour, such as how much they value networking; who they include and what mediums they use to network. The third section consisted of questions (question 3.1 to 3.6) on actual social interaction and personal perceptions on inter-cultural networking, such as the frequency of networking and reasons to engage with others from different cultural backgrounds.

2.1.4   Measures and Covariates

The statistical analysis was conducted by using the software program Statistical Analysis System (SAS) and included the following Descriptive statistics calculations: Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients, frequency distributions, central tendency and variability.

Inferential statistics were used to make generalisations about the population. Cohen's d-value was used in order to determine the practical significance. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between the four independent groups studied (Zikmund & Babin, 2010, p. 573). The one-way ANOVA, done with SAS, was used. A p-value is the exact probability of obtaining a computed test statistic that is due to chance. The smaller the p-value, the smaller the probability that the observed result occurred by chance (McDaniel & Gates, 2005, p. 487). The study used a 0.05 level of significance and therefore $p \leq 0.05$ is regarded as statistically significant. Statistical significance does not necessarily imply that the result is important in practice (Ellis & Steyn, 2003 p. 51). Practical significance was determined by Cohen's effect size or d-value (Steyn, 1999, p. 3). Cohen's d-value was used throughout the study to interpret results. A large effect size ($d \geq 0.8$) indicates a finding that is of practical significance, a medium effect size ($d = 0.5$) indicates a finding that could be substantial and a small effect size ($d = 0.2$) indicates that there is no difference and therefore the answers are the same (Cohen, 1988, p. 223).

3. Results

The respondents came from diversified backgrounds as illustrated in Table 1 that provides an overview of the profile of the respondents.

Table 1. Sample profile of respondents

Demographic variables		Total n=289	
		F	**%**
Gender	Female	59	20.56
	Male	228	79.44
The year you were born (Age group)	1970-1989 (22-41 years)	183	63.76
	1950-1969 (42-61 years)	104	36.24
Major cultural group	African	236	81.94
	Caucasian	52	18.06
Home language	Afrikaans	41	14.39
	English	12	4.21
	isiNdebele	3	1.05
	isiXhosa	67	23.51
	isiZulu	13	4.56
	Sepedi	15	5.26
	Sesotho	66	23.16
	Setswana	40	14.04
	siSwati	4	1.40
	Tshivenda	10	3.51
	Xitsonga	14	4.91
Highest level of education	Grade 12 / Diploma / Certificate	255	88.54
	Bachelors degree	22	7.64
	Honours degree	6	2.08
	Master's degree or PhD	5	1.74

The results were analysed on the basis of four independent groups because the differences in terms of networking practices between these groups were studied. Table 2 illustrates the four groups with their respective culture and generation.

Table 2. Four independent groups

Culture	Generation	Group	Total n=289
African	Generation X	1: African Gen X'ers	161
African	Baby Boomer	2: African BB	78
Caucasian	Generation X	3: Caucasian Gen X'ers	26
Caucasian	Baby Boomer	4: Caucasian BB	24

Many similarities could be identified between the four independent groups (African Generation X'ers, African Baby Boomer, Caucasian Generation X'ers and Caucasian Baby Boomers). Nevertheless, differences also exist - as proved by the rejection of the first null-hypothesis. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists between the four independent groups studied. A p-value is the exact probability of getting a computed test statistic that is due to chance. The study used a 0.05 level of significance and therefore $p \leq 0.05$ to be statistically significant (Ellis & Steyn, 2003, p. 51). Cohen's d-value was used throughout the study to interpret results. Table 3 indicates the effect sizes (d-values) and p-values that are statistically significant for the four independent groups. From table 3, it is clear that medium effect sizes were obtained between the four independent groups for four questions, indicating statistically significant p-values.

Table 3. P-values yielded by ANOVA and effect sizes

Factors	Group	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	p- value: ANOVA	Comparisons significant at the 0.05 level*	d-value (1) African Gen X	(2) African BB	(3) Cauc Gen X	(4) Cauc BB
Q2N5N3 Network medium: Tele-phone	(1) African Gen X	2.73	1.09	156		4-1	-	0.11	0.24	0.54^{Δ}
	(2) African BB	2.85	0.91	27			0.11	-	0.14	0.52^{Δ}
	(3) Cauc Gen X	2.99	0.97	79			0.24	0.14	-	0.34
	(4) Cauc BB	3.23	0.90	25	0.04*		0.54^{Δ}	0.52^{Δ}	0.34	-
Q2N5N4 Network medium: E-mail	(1) African Gen X	2.41	1.11	153		2-1	-	0.60^{Δ}	0.06	0.40
	(2) African BB	3.12	1.18	26			0.60^{Δ}	-	0.54^{Δ}	0.20
	(3) Cauc Gen X	2.48	1.04	79			0.06	0.54^{Δ}	-	0.34
	(4) Cauc BB	2.88	1.15	24	0.01*		0.40	0.20	0.34	-
Q2N5N5 Network medium: One-on-one face-to-face	(1) African Gen X	3.04	0.96	154		4-1 4-3	-	0.19	0.04	0.57^{Δ}
	(2) African BB	3.22	0.80	27			0.19	-	0.22	0.45
	(3) Cauc Gen X	3.00	1.03	77			0.04	0.22	-	0.57^{Δ}
	(4) Cauc BB	3.58	0.72	24	0.05*		0.57^{Δ}	0.45	0.57^{Δ}	-
Factor 5 Effective practices: Relation towards people	(1) African Gen X	3.20	0.62	155		Specific differences could not be detected by Tukey's test.	-	0.35	0.11	0.38
	(2) African BB	2.98	0.63	27			0.35	-	0.46	0.02
	(3) Cauc Gen X	3.27	0.57	79			0.11	0.46	-	0.53^{Δ}
	(4) Cauc BB	2.96	0.53	25	0.04*		0.38	0.02	0.53^{Δ}	-

* Tukey's comparison statistical significant at the 0.05 level

$^{\Delta}$ Medium practical effect and noticeable with the naked eye

3.1 Network Medium: Telephone

Through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a *p*-value of 0.04 was obtained for telephone. A *p*-value smaller than 0.05 is considered as sufficient evidence that the result is statistically significant (Ellis & Steyn, 2003, p. 51). The significant comparisons are between group 1 and group 4. The effect size (*d*-value) obtained is 0.54, indicating a medium effect according to Cohen (1988, p. 223).

A mean of 2.73 was obtained for African Generation X'ers (group 1) while a mean of 3.23 was obtained for Caucasian Baby Boomers (group 4). Therefore, African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers regarding the use of the telephone as network medium. Caucasian Baby Boomers use the telephone as network medium more often than African Generation X'ers do.

3.2 Network Medium: E-mail

Through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a p-value of 0.01 was obtained for e-mail. A p-value smaller than 0.05 is considered as sufficient evidence that the result is statistically significant (Ellis & Steyn, 2003, p. 51). Significant comparisons can be made between group 1 and group 2. The effect size (d-value) obtained is 0.60, indicating a medium effect according to Cohen (1988, p. 223).

African Generation X'ers (group 1) obtained a mean of 2.41 and African Baby boomers (group 2) a mean of 3.12. Therefore, African Generation X'ers differ statistically significant with a medium effect size from African Baby Boomers regarding the use of e-mail as network medium. African Generation X'ers make less use of e-mail as network medium than African Baby Boomers do.

3.3 Network Medium: One-on-One Face-to-Face

Through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a p-value of 0.05 was obtained for one-on-one face-to-face. A p-value smaller than 0.05 is considered as sufficient evidence that the result is statistically significant (Ellis & Steyn, 2003, p. 51). Significant comparisons can be made between group 1 and group 4 and also between group 3 and group 4. The effect size / d-value obtained is 0.57 for groups 1 and 4, indicating a medium effect according to Cohen (1988, p. 223). The effect size (d-value) obtained is 0.57 for groups 3 and 4, indicating a medium effect according to Cohen (1988, p. 223).

African Generation X'ers (group 1) obtained a mean of 3.04, Caucasian Generation X'ers (group 3) a mean of 3.00 and Caucasian Baby Boomers (group 4) a mean of 3.58. Therefore, African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers regarding the use of one-on-one face-to-face manners of networking. Caucasian Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly from Caucasian Baby Boomers regarding the use of one-on-one face-to-face manners of networking. Caucasian Baby Boomers make more use of one-on-one face-to-face manners of networking than African Generation X'ers and Caucasian Generation X'ers do.

Main finding A: African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers on the use of the telephone as medium when networking.

Main finding B: African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from African Baby Boomers in terms of using e-mail as medium when networking.

Main finding C: African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers in terms of networking on a one-on-one face-to-face manner.

Main finding D: Caucasian Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers in terms of networking on a one-on-one face-to-face manner.

The results of this study suggest that there are indeed differences with regards to mediums used when networking. The results relate to the hypotheses as follow:

(1) H_0: $\mu_{Np:African\ Generation\ X'ers} = \mu_{Np:African\ Baby\ Boomers} = \mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Generation\ X'ers} = \mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Baby\ Boomers}$

H_a: There is somewhere a difference between African Generation X'ers, African Baby Boomers, Caucasian Generation X'ers and Caucasian Baby Boomers **with regard to networking practices.**

As a result of main finding A (African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers on the use of the telephone as medium when networking), the first null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Therefore, there is somewhere a difference between African Generation X'ers, African Baby Boomers, Caucasian Generation X'ers and Caucasian Baby Boomers with regard to networking practices.

(2) H_0: $\mu_{Np:African\ Generation\ X'ers} = \mu_{Np:African\ Baby\ Boomers}$

H_a: $\mu_{Np:African\ Generation\ X'ers} \neq \mu_{Np:African\ Baby\ Boomers}$

As a result of main finding B (African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from African Baby Boomers on the use of e-mail as medium when networking) the second null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is consequently accepted.

(3) H_0: $\mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Generation\ X'ers} = \mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Baby\ Boomers}$

H_a: $\mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Generation\ X'ers} \neq \mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Baby\ Boomers}$

As a result of main finding D (Caucasian Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers when networking on a one-on-one face-to-face manner) the third null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

(4) H_0: $\mu_{Np:African\ Generation\ X'ers} = \mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Baby\ Boomers}$

H_a: $\mu_{Np:African\ Generation\ X'ers} \neq \mu_{Np:Caucasian\ Baby\ Boomers}$

As a result of main finding A (African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers on the use of the telephone as medium when networking) and main finding C (African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers when networking on a one-on-one face-to-face manner), the fourth null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

4. Discussion

African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers regarding the use of the telephone as medium when networking (Main finding A). African Baby Boomers make use of telephones when networking more often than African Generation X'ers do. This finding concurs with the statement by Macionis (2007, p. 175) that networks are based on people's backgrounds, hobbies, views and personal interests. Codrington and Grant-Marshall (2004, p. 3) explain that shared experiences and times have bounded people to cohorts whom have similar attitudes, values and expectations. As a result of main finding A (African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers regarding using the telephone as medium when networking) and main finding C (African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers with regards to networking in a one-on-one face-to-face manner), the fourth null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is a difference

between African Generation X'ers and Caucasian Baby Boomers with regards to networking practices.

African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from African Baby Boomers regarding the use of **e-mail** as medium when networking (Main finding B). African Generation X'ers were inclined to use e-mail rarely as a medium when networking. A statistically significant difference was obtained between African Generation X'ers and African Baby Boomers, indicating that African Baby Boomers use e-mails when networking more frequently as compared to Generation X'ers who indicated that they use e-mail rarely as network medium. As a result of main finding B (African Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from African Baby Boomers regarding using e-mail as medium when networking) the second null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. **Therefore, there is a difference between African Generation X'ers and African Baby Boomers with regards to networking practices.**

African Generation X'ers and Caucasian Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers when networking in a **one-on-one face-to-face**, referring to a one-on-one meeting, manner (Main finding D). Kovaleski (2008, p. 27) explains that younger generations do not enjoy having meetings in the same manner than older generations and that the way in which meetings are held needs to be reconsidered. A 25 year longitudinal study conducted in South Africa (Codrington, 2008, p. 12) also found that age / generation is a much more powerful predictor of attitude and values than race / culture was. The finding is also similar to that of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) as adapted by Robbins et al. (2007, p. 34) that African South Africans view the group as more important than the individual. As a result of main finding D (Caucasian Generation X'ers differ statistically significantly with a medium effect size from Caucasian Baby Boomers when networking on a one-on-one face-to-face manner), the third null-hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. **Therefore, there is a difference between Caucasian Generation X'ers and Caucasian Baby Boomers with regards to networking practices.**

In view of the findings of the study, managers should note that differences between diverse cultures and generations do indeed exist (rejection of first null-hypothesis). The following recommendations regarding networking practices among diverse cultural and generational groups can be made:

Generation theory explains that the era in which a person was born, affects the development of their worldview and value systems (Codrington, 2008, p. 2). It was found in the current study that the most significant differences exist between **African Generation X'ers** and **Caucasian Baby Boomers**. Therefore, conflict between these two groups of employees needs to be handled cautiously to ensure that effective solutions to potential problems are found. Conflict, in this context, may refer to differences in organising meetings or preferences towards communicating.

Networking is such an integral part of everyday life that many individuals do not realise that they are networking (Misner & Morgan, 2000, p. 25). Networks are based on people's backgrounds, hobbies, views and personal interests (Macionis, 2007, p. 175). In this study, a number of differences concerning mediums used when networking were found, which in turn my influence the ways in which communication takes place. Generation X'ers prefer informal meetings with a broad idea of what to expect, while Baby Boomers prefer traditional boardroom meetings as these were conducted in the past.

Preferences with regard to network mediums should be noted, as this awareness may lead to more effective networking / communication within businesses. Also, the **approach to meetings** should be reviewed for each group because this study found differences existed in terms of preferences concerning Generation X'ers and Baby Boomers.

There are limitations to the current study. Firstly, the study only included two cultural groups, namely African and Caucasian South Africans. This was the case because the other cultural groups were underrepresented within the Gauteng mine used in the study. Secondly, the study only included two generational groups, namely Generation X'ers and Baby Boomers, as the other generational groups were also underrepresented in this mine. Thirdly, the study did not take gender differences into account; also, the majority of respondents (79.44%) included in the study was male.

Acknowledgments

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