

To Study the Conflict between three Generations of Men and Women

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Abstract

Background: Relevant literature had found that older people are consistently more opposed than younger people to change and to nonconformity, unless their own economic well-being is involved. However, differences in values between generations, looked at globally, and may be considerably greater than when differences between parent and child in the same family are examined. Student share many values with their parents, but differ considerably from the moral values of their parents' generation. Thus, a generation gap or at least a substantial generational difference can exist without assuming discontinuity of values between parents and their children.

Thus, the purpose of the present study was to measure perception about the causes and probable solutions to generation gap.

Methods: The sample consisted of 15 girls, aged 10 to 20 years, their mothers, and their maternal grandmothers (nani). 15 boys aged 10 to 20 years, their fathers and paternal grandfathers (dada). Questionnaire on Generation Gap was used to measure the generation gap among the sample.

Conclusion: The results of the study indicated that 47% of women sample (girls, mothers, and grandmothers) and 42% of male sample (boys, fathers, grandfathers) showed the generational conflict. Thus the problem of generation gap exists and can be solved in a wide variety of ways. Occupational therapists role is to resolve conflicts, improve relationships and Building peace in relationships.

Keywords: *Conflict, Generation Gap, Generations, Occupational Therapy.*

Introduction

Throughout history when aberrant social phenomena are observed, a variety of explanations

are proposed. For example, in the 1960s, social, behavioral, and political generational differences were used to explain the presumed incongruence in values and attitudes between parents and their adolescent children. This "generation gap" was heavily researched in the 1960s and 1970s¹. Generation differences were observable in societal movements or changes².

The post-World War II "Baby Boom" resulted in large numbers of adolescents and young adults in the 1960s and 1970s³. Youth in the 1950s generally conformed to social expectations. Few differences

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in expectations between parents and children were readily evident during this time period. Early in the 1960s parent and adolescent beliefs were relatively similar concerning social behavior and expectations.

These shared views did not last and a gap developed between the older and younger generation as time progressed into the 1970s. Coincidentally, society made dramatic shifts during the 1960s. During this decade segregation was abolished and the feminist movement produced more equal rights for women. Social awareness led to changes in political ideology. More liberal political views led to legislation concerning health, safety, and environmentalism³. Televisions became more accessible and youth culture thrived with rock and roll music and drive in movies.

The generation gap was manifest in the movement away from rigid societal rules⁴. Youth during the 1960s and 1970s participated in movements for free speech on college campuses and were active in war protests.

These emerging youth phenomena during the 1960s and 1970s were explained academically by the concept of the “generation gap.” However, research seeking to increase our understanding of these generational differences waned following the 1970s because many research studies indicated that the gap was small or insignificant⁴. For example, Jacobsen and colleagues’ (1975) results indicated much more agreement between parents and adolescents than expected in their generation gap research. They concluded that the generation gap may not be a universal phenomenon. However, Acock and Bengston (1980) proposed that the wrong questions were being asked about the generation gap, “Rather than ask, ‘To what extent is the generation gap real?’ we ask, ‘Where is the reality of the generation gap?’⁵.

Age & differences of age are among the most basic and crucial aspects of human life and human destiny. The differences of age termed as generation plays a crucial role in human life as it leads to generation gap or *generational gap* which is a difference of opinions between one generation and another regarding beliefs, politics, or values. This was noticed way back in the 1960s leading to the beginning of its study in the form of a sociological theory of generation gap⁶.

According to sociological theory, each generation faces different historical events, culture, economic challenges and exposure, which shape their perception and mind set. Therefore when two different generations interact there is bound to be arguments and difference of opinion termed as generation gap⁷.

Thus whenever there is a contrast in the exposure and experiences of generations more so in the 21st century where because of the technological revolution the younger generation is exposed to a globalized world they are prone to challenging their own traditional lifestyle, culture, value systems etc which is not appreciated by the older generation further aggravating the conflict within generations. Further these conflicts are the consequence of urbanization, industrialization and family mobility which is more prevalent in the current century³.

Another explanation is the one given by Erickson who stated that the older generation is in the generativity stage where they want to propagate their value system to the newer generation who are seeking independence and autonomy leading to a clash⁸. To aggravate the situation 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. This physical separation of the young and old has resulted in a lack of consistent intergenerational contact and growth

of misperceptions and misunderstandings between the young and old⁹ which is further accentuated by technological development specially the Internet age.

Thus the rapidly changing world, technological and scientific discoveries impact the lifestyle and thought processes of different generations thereby increasing the chasm between generations never seen in the past. Thus the problem of generation gap is here to stay leading to severe consequences therefore probable solutions need to be ascertained.

The area of generation gap has received wide spread curiosity leading to a lot of research in this area bringing out its possible causes and solutions. A study conducted on a sample consisting of both adolescents and elder generation found the existence of generation gap with the main reasons being lack of understanding and communication between them. In today's world technology hampers the interactions between generations¹⁰. In a research conducted on 1000 people belonging to four different generations it was found that each generation differed on the quality and quantity of technology use which effected their experiences and expectations leading to generation gap¹¹. This view was endorsed by an American study which found 79% of the sample agreed to the existence of generation gap and the main difference was with regards to use of technology, value system and type of music¹². Another study identified several areas where there was a difference of opinion among generations namely opinion on global warming, offshore drilling, nuclear power, childhood vaccines, untested medicine use laboratory test on animals and evolution¹³. Thus there seems to be enough evidence for the existence of generation gap, which needs to be resolved.

When this question was pursued through research, perceptions of parental attitudes (not actual parent attitudes) were surprisingly strong predictors of late-adolescents' self reported attitudes. Acock and

Bengston (1980) concluded that the generation gap is real when perceived differences exist.

The relationship quality of individuation is negotiated by parents and adolescents even into young adulthood. This framework fits nicely with the extension of adolescent perspective¹⁴. Many of the developmental tasks that were thought to be accomplished in the teenage years are not being accomplished until late adolescence (18-25 years old)¹⁵.

More people between the ages of 18-25 are living at home or moving home after moving out, remaining financially dependent on parents, and marrying at older ages than in earlier decades¹⁶. It is also true that more people in this age group are enrolling in higher education. The percentage of high school graduates who immediately enroll in two- or four-year educational institutions has increased between the years 1975 (51%) and 2009 (70%). However, today's parents are taking a more active role in their children's education than previous generations^{17,18}. Parents are involved in their children's decision process in choosing an institution, paying for tuition, providing a support system, and parents continue to be an active influence in their child's decision-making while attending school¹⁸. It appears that late adolescents are becoming independent in some areas of their lives, but are continuing to rely on their parents for a variety of resources¹⁶.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the present study is to find the conflict between three Generations of men and women.

The objective are:-

Ø To determine the existence of generation gap between three Generations of adolescent girls & boys and their parents and grandparents.

Ø To measure perception about the causes and probable solutions to generation gap.

Methodology

· **STUDY DESIGN** – Survey

· **SAMPLE SIZE** – The sample consisted of 15 girls, aged 10 to 20 years, their mothers, and their maternal grandmothers (nani). 15 boys aged 10 to 20 years, their fathers and paternal grandfathers (dada).

· **SOURCE OF STUDY** –Community

· **POPULATION** – Indian Population

· **SAMPLING METHOD** –Convenience

· **INCLUSION CRITERIA** – Adolescent girls having their mothers and their maternal grandmothers (nani) alive will only be a part of the study. Similarly, boys having their fathers and paternal grandfathers (dada) alive will only be a part of the study.

· **EXCLUSION CRITERIA** –

4. Adolescent diagnosed with any psychiatric condition.

5. Adolescent having a medical condition of long-term nature (epilepsy, and others)

· **WITHDRAWAL CRITERIA** –

1. Adolescents and /or their parents or grandparents not willing to participate.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Ø Questionnaire on Generation Gap.

The questionnaire is related to the study of the conflict between generations.

It consists of 19 Questions in total. Q1 to Q14 were Questions related to Conflict among Generations and Generation Gap. Q15 to Q19 were Questions related

to social and demographic data. The respondents were asked to give an answer to each question by circling the number that fits their choice. When multiple answers are allowed, please make it clear to them. When three answers were required, respondents were asked to choose three such possibilities. Researcher was asked to make oneself clear enough to the respondents when they are required to give Yes/No answers and ask them to expand in case of a Yes answer.

· **ENVIRONMENT** –A disturbance free environment for the participants while filling the questionnaire.

· **PARTICIPANTS** –

The study was carried out in the South District Community of Delhi. The objectives of study were explained to all the girls and boys and their mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers. All of them were requested to participate. A brief introduction about the objectives of the study was given to all the participants. Confidentiality was assured. A total of 15 girls and 15 boys participated in the study.

The participants in this study were a sample of convenience, predominantly recruited through personal and professional networks. The sample included a total of 90 participants which included 30 adolescents (15 girls along with their mothers and grandmothers, 15 boys along with their fathers and grandfathers). All the participants were of Indian origin. The participants were selected on the basis of an inclusion criterion.

Prior to data collection, the purpose of the study was described, and consent was obtained. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

· **PROCEDURE**–

The study was presented to the participants as an investigation of conflicts and generation gap among

the three generation population. Consent forms were distributed. Questionnaire was distributed. All respondents completed the questionnaire on an anonymous and voluntary basis. All questionnaires took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Questionnaire was administered by the researcher. Researcher selected respondents by means of personal contacts, but were instructed to exclude members of their own families. All respondents were given written and verbal instructions and were asked to answer all items as they felt, without regard to what they believed a socially approved response would be. Respondents remained anonymous, except to the person administering the questionnaire; each person completed her/his questionnaire before having the

opportunity to discuss the nature of the survey or any specific items with other family members.

Data Analysis

1. Complete data was gathered in the form of a master chart on Microsoft Excel 2010.
2. Descriptive analysis included percentages, Graphs and Pie Charts.

Percentage Analysis

A total of 15 girls along with their mother and maternal grandmother (nani) and 15 boys along with their father and paternal grandfather (dada) participated in the study.

1. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1: Table showing participants Characteristics

Demographics	Age (in yrs)	Frequency	Percentage%
Boys(15) & Girls(15)	10-15 yrs	13	43%
	16-20 yrs	17	57%
Mothers	33-40 yrs	06	40%
	41-46 yrs	09	60%
Fathers	36-40 yrs	05	33%
	41-50 yrs	06	40%
	51-55 yrs	04	27%
Maternal Grandmother	60-65 yrs	07	47%
	66-70 yrs	08	53%
Parental Grandfather	60-65 yrs	09	60%
	66-70 yrs	06	40%

2. RESIDENTIAL BACKGROUND

Out of 30 families in total, 87% of the families were living in urban areas and only 13% were living in rural areas.

3. EDUCATIONAL STATUS/ OCCUPATION

Most of the mothers were employed (N = 10) 66% and have done the university education. The educational status of most of the maternal grandmother were till secondary school (N =11) and most of them were unemployed.

All the fathers of teenagers were employed and most of them had pursued university education (N =12). Most of the grandfathers were retired and pursued university education (N =9).

4. CONFLICTS BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Our result indicated that 47% of women sample (girls, mothers, and grandmothers) and 42% of male sample (boys, fathers, grandfathers) showed the generational conflict.

5. REASONS FOR GENERAL DISPUTES

Table 2: Table showing Reasons for general disputes in Men and Women sample

	Boys	Fathers	Grand Fathers
Lack of respect	05(33%)	05(33%)	06(41%)
Intolerance	04(27%)	03(20%)	05(33%)
Abuse	03(20%)	02(34%)	02(13%)
Different perspective	03(20%)	05(33%)	02(13%)

	Girls	Mothers	Grand Mothers
Lack of respect	03(20%)	06(40%)	07(47%)
Intolerance	05(33%)	02(13%)	04(27%)
Abuse	02(13%)	03(20%)	03(20%)
Different perspective	05(33%)	04(27%)	01(6%)

For most of the girl’s intolerance (33%) and for most of the mothers (40%) and grandmothers (47%) lack of respect was the main reason for conflict. Among men sample lack of respect (41%) and intolerance (33%) was the main reason for disputes.

6. REASONS FOR CONFLICTS

Among the men and women samples values (47%) and rejecting the old ways of life (60%) found to be the major reason for conflicts.

7. GENERATION GAP IS MOSTLY FOUND BETWEEN

Table 3: Table showing presence of generation gap in Women and Men sample

	Women	Men
Teenagers and their parents	23%	28%
Teenagers and grandparents	47%	31%
Parents and Grandparents	30%	41%

8. AREAS WHERE GENERATION GAP IS EXPERIENCED

For women samples generation gap is mostly experienced during cultural events, life style, fashion and personal values. For men samples mostly generation gap was found at work place, life style pattern and economic.

9. HOW GENERATION GAP CAN BE LOWERED/ LESSEND/ DIMINISHED

For girls (80%) generation gap can be lowered

by discussing problems in schools and for mothers (47%) and grandmothers (47%) it can be resolved by Meeting/ Assemblies/ Advice/ Models and dialogues between generations. For most of the men samples, fathers and grandfathers generation gap can be lowered by dialogues between generations (53%) and for boys (60%) generation gap can be lowered by problems to be discussed in schools.

10. HOW DIFFICULT IS TO WORK IN TEAM WITH YOUNGSTERS/ ELDERLY

Table 4: Table showing how difficult is to work in team with youngsters/elderly in Men and Women sample

Girls	Mothers	Grand Mothers
To great extent N = 8 (53%)	To small extent N = 7 (47%)	To small extent N = 9 (60%)

Boys	Fathers	Grand Fathers
To great extent N = 7 (47%)	To small extent N = 7 (47%)	To small extent N = 6 (40%)

11. HOW DIFFICULT IT IS FOR YOU TO ACCEPT YOUNG PEOPLE/ ELDERLY PEOPLE IDEAS.

For most of the grandfathers and grandmothers it was easy to accept the ideas (47%) as compared to girls (40%), boys (40%), Fathers (40%) and mothers (33%).

12. WHO SUFFERS THE MOST FROM A CONFLICT BETWEEN GENERATIONS?

For most of the teenagers (60%) believed that young are suffered most from conflicts and according to parents & grandparents both generations (80%) suffer the most from conflicts between generations.

Discussion

This study was set out to find the conflict between three Generations of men and women. The sample included a total of 90 participants which included 30 adolescents in the age group of 10-20 years (15 girls along with their mothers and grandmothers, 15 boys along with their fathers and grandfathers). All the participants were of Indian origin.

Questionnaire on Generation Gap was used to measure perception about the causes and probable solutions to generation gap. The study was done to determine the existence of generation gap between three Generations of adolescent girls & boys and their parents and grandparents.

Indian culture is collectivistic culture where family ties are very important as in majority of the cases people of different generations live together under the same roof giving the problem of generation gap high significance. Therefore the findings of this study are very crucial for understanding the intricacies of interaction between generations.

The results of the study indicated that 47% of women sample (girls, mothers, and grandmothers) and 42% of male sample (boys, fathers, grandfathers) showed the generational conflict. For most of the girl's intolerance (33%) and for most of the mothers (40%) and grandmothers (47%) lack of respect was the main reason for conflict. Among men sample lack of respect (41%) and intolerance (33%) were the main reason for disputes.

Most of the Men and Women (80%) agreed that it was a social problem. The positive aspect was that 90% agreed that problems due to generation gap could be lessened.

The main reasons for generation gap were the rejection of old ways by younger generation (60%), Intolerance to each other's ideas (33%), older values replacing newer values (47%) and differences in perception (33%). Majority of the respondents (90%) agreed that problems arising from generation gap could be lessened.

For girls (80%) generation gap can be lowered by discussing problems in schools and for mothers (47%) and grandmothers (47%), it can be resolved by Meeting/ Assemblies/ Advice/ Models and dialogues between generations. For most of the men samples, fathers and grandfathers generation gap can be lowered by dialogues between generations (53%) and for boys (60%) generation gap can be lowered by problems to be discussed in schools.

Most of the mothers were employed (N = 10) 66% and have done the university education. The educational status of most of the maternal grandmother were till secondary school (N =11) and most of them were unemployed. All the fathers of teenagers were employed and most of them had pursued university education (N =12). Most of the grandfathers were retired and pursued university education (N =9).

The higher the educational level, the more liberal an individual is in political views and in attitudes towards Children and the more secular he/she is in his/her orientation^{10,19}.

The main reason for generations drawing further apart is technological inventions because of which there is lack of face-to-face communication within the generations so the highest rated solution is a dialogue between generations²⁰⁻²³. Also when it comes to generation gap there are very few role models therefore small movies or anecdotes can prove very helpful this highlights the role of mass media in solving social problems. Educational institutes should encourage discussion and dialogue where the younger generation can air their concerns and be advised on how to respect and get well with the elder generation²⁴⁻²⁵.

Generation gap is here to stay and as the world undergoes tremendous upheavals and scientific discoveries the chasm between generations is going to widen further therefore the need of the hour is to formulate probable solutions to tackle the same.

Limitation

4. Sample was taken from only one specific area which cannot be generalized to other settings.
5. Sample size was small, therefore results could not be generalised to masses.
6. No Intervention was given.

Recommendations

5. Further studies with a larger sample size (people from all over the country).
6. Scales with more reliability can be used for better results.
7. Study was a survey. The design can be changed

to pre-post experimental design or comparative so that results can be seen with distinction.

8. A module for tackling generation gap based upon the findings of the study should be devised.
9. Further studies are needed to give intervention to these subjects.

FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

Relationships are an important aspect of our well being and who we are. OT is also concerned with the well being of others, social participation, self-esteem, sense of belonging, safety, and opportunities for self-determination. Hence, Occupational therapy should be used to resolve conflicts, improve relationships and Building peace in relationships.

Occupational therapy seeks to improve

- The well being of others
- Social Participation
- Self Esteem
- Sense of belonging
- Meaningful occupations
- Mental and emotional health

Many of the challenges people face stem from relationships with others. Without meaningful and harmonious relationships, it can be challenging for people to improve their quality of life.

The very nature of occupational therapy is being client centred and holistic. This may include our values, beliefs, spirituality, physical functions, and physical structures. This may include assisting others with compensatory strategies or environmental modifications to overcome depression or treatment plans to increase social participation. Occupational

Therapist's ultimate goal is to meet other's individualized needs and makes life more purposeful.

Conclusion

The results indicated that 47% of women sample (girls, mothers, and grandmothers) and 42% of male sample (boys, fathers, grandfathers) showed the generational conflict. Thus the problem of generation gap exists and can be solved in a wide variety of ways. Occupational therapists role is to resolve conflicts, improve relationships and Building peace in relationships. This will help all the three generations understand each other.

Conflict of Interest: The authors report no conflict of interest in this study.

Ethical Clearance: Verbal and written consent were obtained from all participants.

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