

THE CRUISE INDUSTRY WORKFORCE CRUNCH – GENERATIONAL CHANGES IN WORK VALUES OF JOB SEEKERS

ABSTRACT

Purpose

In the wake of Covid 19, the cruise industry is experiencing an unprecedented talent management challenge. Extant research suggests a broad range of work values that may attract job candidates to the cruise industry. The purpose of this research is to assess whether there are significant differences in the importance ratings of these work values for the millennials, compared to those of the preceding generation X.

Design/methodology/approach

With the support of a leading recruitment agency we obtained responses to an online survey of 1320 job candidates, of which 830 were millennials. Using a quantitative approach, we asked them to assess the importance of eight work value domains. We ranked these domains for the millennials and for generation X and compared mean importance ratings using t-tests.

Findings

Our results reveal that differences between millennials and generation X in the ranking of the eight work value domains do exist. We did not find support for any systematic differences in terms of “extrinsic” vs. “intrinsic” work values. However, our results show that the importance of “ego-driven” work values (e.g. support, development, compensation, work-life

balance and comfort) is significantly higher for millennials. Conversely, for the more “altruistic” factors there are no significant differences between the two generations.

Originality

Based on a very large sample of job candidates from the cruise industry our results support the predictions of generational theories. We show that differences in work value ratings between generation X and the millennials exist. We also provide a novel perspective on the dimensions along which these differences materialize.

Research paper

Keywords:

Covid 19, cruise industry, millennials, motivation, talent management, work values

INTRODUCTION

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the world economy across many different industries (Foroudi *et al.*, 2021; Kumar *et al.*, 2021; Szczygielski *et al.*, 2022). In the particular context of the hospitality industry, however, it has once more directed the spotlight on the perennial issue of labor scarcity (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2023; Popa *et al.*, 2023).

Hospitality has traditionally been an industry characterized by high turnover among the workforce (Lo and Lamm, 2005). The problem has been so persistent that some researchers have even diagnosed the existence of a “turnover culture” in the industry (Deery and Shaw, 1997, 1999). Turnover is particularly prevalent among young talent. For instance, a survey by Brown *et al.* (2014) showed that within ten years of graduating, more than a quarter of hospitality graduates had left the industry. However, Covid 19 has lifted the labor problem to the next level of difficulty.

The cruise industry, as part of the larger hospitality industry, is deeply affected (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2023; Popa *et al.*, 2023; Radic *et al.*, 2020). Challenging working conditions on cruise ships exacerbate the turnover problem (Sehkaran and Sevcikova, 2011). In fact, the “big quit” (Curtis, 2021) in the wake of the pandemic has put additional pressure on the supply side of the job market. For example, while more than 1.8 million people were employed in the cruise industry in 2019, by 2022 that number had dropped by almost 40% even though cruise passenger volume is forecasted to reach 2019 levels by the end of 2022 (Cruise Line Industry Association, 2021). Of the nearly 600,000 cruise line employees laid off in 2021, nearly 40 percent have not returned to work in the industry, with the lack of job security cited as a primary reason (McGillivray, 2022). The attraction and retention of talent is therefore one of the most important challenges of the industry at this point in time given not only the increased customer demand, but also the fact that 32 additional ships, comprising 68,000 berths, will be launched in 2023 (Cruise Industry News, 2022). In sum, the cruise industry is

facing an unprecedented challenge in recruiting enough employees to staff an ever-greater number of ships and passengers.

As a result of the workforce crunch, the cruise industry is increasingly interested in tapping into the “millennial” generation, whose members were born between 1981 and 1996 (Howe and Strauss, 2009). Attracting and retaining millennials is not only important for the industry, but also a relatively new challenge for its firms given that until now, most of their employees had been from older generations. The industry’s standard employment offers, conditions and recruiting strategies, which were largely developed during previous decades and primarily for baby boomers and, more recently, members of generation X, may not be motivating millennials to seek or accept employment in the cruise industry. Extant research provides some preliminary evidence suggesting that the expectations of the millennial generation with regard to employment conditions and careers differ from the previous generation X (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; Twenge *et al.*, 2010). While it offers first insights into the differences in expectations when recruiting millennials, contemporary research has not yet systematically investigated work values that attract them to a job nor what makes recruitment strategies in the cruise industry effective for this particular talent pool.

Against this backdrop, our study addresses a central research question: Are there any significant differences in the way millennials (as opposed to members of generation X) assess the importance of work values. We analyze data from 1320 cruise industry job candidates who completed a survey of work values and we conclude with a discussion of the main contributions of our research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attraction and retention of employees as a challenge for the cruise industry

The work environment in the hospitality industry is generally characterized as difficult from an employee perspective. Physically demanding work conditions, dissatisfaction with managers and challenging schedules are commonplace (Poulston, 2009). In addition, salary levels are often inadequate compared to other industries (Casado-Díaz and Simón, 2016; Poulston, 2009) and a sizeable gender pay gap puts additional pressure on female employees (Muñoz-Bullón, 2009).

The cruise industry, as part of the larger hospitality sector (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2023; Popa *et al.*, 2023) shares many of these challenges, such as labor scarcity and difficulty to attract talents (Kwok, 2022; Terry, 2011). Working on board a cruise ship seems to have a number of attractive features for job candidates, including the possibility to travel abroad while being paid, the potential for “an attractive lifestyle and having fun at work” (Papathanassis, 2021, p. 2030) the luxury environment and the “implied glamour of a cruise ship” (Gibson, 2008, p. 49). However, in addition to low wages and challenging schedules which are characteristic for the hospitality industry in general, the particular work environment on board a cruise ship also brings with it a number of challenges (Sehkaran and Sevcikova, 2011). Work on board has been described as “liminal” (Matuszewski and Blenkinsopp, 2011, p. 83) in the sense that it is hard to imagine what this environment will look like before actually engaging with it. Strict hierarchy, intense relationships among crew members, and a feeling of being “contained and confined within shipboard environments” (Weaver, 2005, p. 176), make it difficult for employees to balance work and private life (Bolt and Lashley, 2015; Matuszewski and Blenkinsopp, 2011). As a result, they find it difficult to disengage from work and find some privacy (Bolt and Lashley, 2015). Crew members also experience strong social pressure as they need to be constantly available (Radic *et al.*, 2020). In addition, a

majority of crew members cite being away from family as an element that adds to the hardship on board (Bolt and Lashley, 2015), with the result that most crew members experience some bouts of homesickness (Bardelle and Lashley, 2015). Last, but not least, shipboard life has been characterized as a “multinational experience” (Gibson, 2008, p. 43) - an environment that mimics the United Nations, albeit on a smaller scale. Interacting with as many as 50 different nationalities among the workforce creates opportunities for enrichment, but also unique challenges in terms of managing difficult cross-cultural encounters. As a result of these issues, attracting and retaining talented employees in the cruise industry has become one of the industry’s most pressing issues. This suggests a need for further investigation of the factors that can attract talent to this industry.

Person-organization (P-O) fit and work values

An interactionist perspective on human behavior in the workplace suggests that person and environment operate as “joint determinants of individual and organizational outcomes” (Edwards, 1991, p. 283). Research in this tradition has directed attention to the notion of congruence, or “fit”, between employees and the environment in which they work (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996; Schneider, 1987; Terborg, 1981). Person-organization (P-O) fit is most frequently conceptualized as the congruence between individual and organizational values (Kristof, 1996; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001). The key assumption of person-organization fit research is that individuals and organizations are characterized by unique sets of demands and supplies in terms of individual work values and organizational factors. The extent to which these are compatible determines individual outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intention to quit, as well as organizational ones, such as turnover and organizational effectiveness (Chapman *et al.*, 2005).

The notion of work values (Kanchier and Unruh, 1989) occupies a central position in the person-organization fit. Work values refer to the importance that individual employees put on

achieving specific outcomes or end-states in their employment (Mok *et al.*, 1998; Wong and Chung, 2003). Work values can be related to the intrinsic benefits to be derived from an activity, such as a sense of achievement, autonomy or personal growth, or can be related to extrinsic rewards provided by the activity, such as income, security or status (Chen *et al.*, 2000; Elizur and Koslowsky, 2001).

The work values of potential job candidates deserve attention because of their dual impact on the attraction and retention of employees in the cruise industry. On the one hand, work values impact career choice (Mok *et al.*, 1998; White, 2005). Job candidates will feel more attracted to careers and corporate environments in which they perceive that their work values can be met (Rosenberg, 1958). On the other hand, work values also play an important role for the retention of employees. When the experience in a corporate environment is perceived as being aligned with an individual's work values, employees are likely to show stronger organizational commitment and remain with their employer for a longer (Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010; Wong and Liu, 2009). Conversely, when the socialization and sensemaking process in early stages of employment on board (Matuszewski and Blenkinsopp, 2011) reveals to much of a contrast between employees' work values and what the work environment can provide, then rapid disillusionment, disengagement and turnover can be the result. As a result, given that human resources professionals in the cruise industry need to be able to attract and retain substantial numbers of employees, a good understanding of their work values – and how they may have changed over time - is of primary importance.

Generational differences in work values

Research has used the notion of a “generation” to make sense of differences between age groups in society (Pilcher, 1994; Twenge, 2010). Mannheim (1952), the author of seminal work on the topic, argued that generations are composed of two crucial elements: a shared historical context and a unique consciousness formed by significant events during that time. The

experience of growing up during a particular time period influences an individual's beliefs, values, and outlook on the world, which are then shared by others who were born and grew up during that same time period (Egri and Herman, 2000; Strauss and Howe, 1991; Thau and Heflin, 1997). Shifts in history, society, or the economic situation that require new skills, social structures, and changes in values and lifestyles give rise to a new generational consciousness. (Eyerman and Turner, 1998; Laufer and Bengtson, 1974). Cavalli (2004) outlined that such events tend to shape specific characteristics, including common values, opinions, and attitudes mainly during late adolescence and early youth (15-20 years old), which create a generational identity that tends to remain constant over the years (Inglehart, 1977). In a similar vein, more recent research associated with age-based generational identity theory (Joshi *et al.*, 2010; Weeks and Schaffert, 2019) has defined the concept of an age-based generational identity as “membership in an age group that shares collective memories developed during the formative years of life” (Joshi *et al.*, 2010, p. 398).

Two distinct generations have received increasing interest in both academic research (Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Lub *et al.*, 2015; Twenge, 2010) and the popular press (O'Connor, 2018; Tilford, 2018) and there is general consensus about the birth years which define them (Cavalli, 2004; Howe and Strauss, 2009; Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Loveland, 2017; Strauss and Howe, 1991). Generation X includes individuals born between the early 60s and late 70s and the following “millennials” refer to individuals born between the early 80s and the late 90s. Generation X witnessed the emergence of new technologies such as cable TV, digital TV, cell phone, and personal computer (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Through the media, members of generation X were exposed to a lot of violence (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Strauss and Howe, 1991). A growing number of single mothers taught them to be resourceful and independent (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Last but not least, they encountered a lot of

diversity including racial diversity, due to liberalized immigration laws and a larger variety of family constellations.

The millennials, have been described as “digital natives”, as they always had access to the Internet and to cell phones (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). As a result, they are described as a techno-savvy generation (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). They are more educated and more ethnically diverse than past generations (Howe and Strauss, 2009). Finally, as information is available to them instantly (Lancaster and Stillman, 2002) and they are used to verifying information on the Internet (Dorman, 2000) they are realistic about the challenges of modern life.

As the members of generation X and the millennials have clearly been shaped by different socio-cultural contexts and unique disruptive events (Cavalli, 2004; Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Twenge *et al.*, 2010), they should share similar work values within their generation, while there should be differences across generations (Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Twenge *et al.*, 2010; Wey Smola and Sutton, 2002). Therefore, we suggest the following:

Hypothesis 1: There will be significant differences between members of generation X and the millennials with regard to the importance they place on a broad range of work values.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and procedure

Data for this study were collected via a survey of job candidates for a broad range of cruise industry jobs at frontline, supervisory and management levels. Since English proficiency is a key admissions criterion, the survey questionnaire was prepared in English. The actual data collection process was facilitated by a well-known recruitment agency that is active on a worldwide scale and caters specifically to employers in the cruise industry. This agency

operates more than 60 regional employment offices and serves hundreds of vessels from amongst the world's leading cruise lines.

The online survey instrument was forwarded by the agency to the active applicants in their database. Respondents were assured that their responses would remain fully anonymous.

They were also informed that participation in the survey was entirely voluntary and would not have any bearing on the recruitment and selection process in which they were involved and/or a hiring decision by a potential employer.

Completed questionnaires were received from 1,320 candidates. Thirty-two percent of the respondents belonged to generation X and 63% to the millennial generation, with the remaining 5% being either older (baby boomers) or younger (members of generation Z).

Sixteen percent of the respondents were female and 84% were male. Forty-two percent were single (never married) and 50% married or in domestic partnerships. In terms of their highest level of education, 26% had a high school degree, 13% a professional or associate degree and 33% a bachelor's degree. Ninety-four percent had previous work experience in the hospitality industry out of which 81% had previous work experience in the cruise industry. For those with prior work experience, their last position was line employee for 38%, supervisor for 15%, and manager for 18%. Complete demographic information about the sample is summarized in Table 1. We were also able to compare the composition of our sample to that of the workforce of Carnival, the dominant player in the worldwide cruise industry. A comparison shows that the two gender distributions are almost identical and that the geographic distribution in our sample is very closely aligned with the distribution of labor sourcing regions at Carnival (Carnival Corp, 2021).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Measures

The importance of work values was measured with 57 items that mapped on eight fundamental work value domains. CHALLENGE included aspects related to employment in a challenging and interesting work environment (Richardson, 2009; Richardson and Butler, 2012; Wong *et al.*, 2017) or in an organization that is a leader in its field (Ng *et al.*, 2010) ($\alpha = .83$). We regrouped items pertaining to a supportive culture and work relationships (Ng *et al.*, 2010; Richardson, 2009; Richardson and Butler, 2012) as well as supportive leadership (Frye *et al.*, 2020) under SUPPORT ($\alpha = .89$). GIVING includes items focused on the possibility to contribute to society (Richardson, 2009; Richardson and Butler, 2012) and opportunities for meaningful contributions to the world and other people (Papathanassis, 2021) ($\alpha = .82$). AUTONOMY includes items related to autonomy and flexibility at work (Papathanassis, 2021; Richardson, 2009; Richardson and Butler, 2012) as well as empowerment practices (Frye *et al.*, 2020) ($\alpha = .80$). Items referring to starting salary (Ng *et al.*, 2010), compensation and benefits and other economic rewards (Sehkaran and Sevcikova, 2011) as well as rewards over the course of a career (Papathanassis, 2021) constituted the measure for COMPENSATION ($\alpha = .90$). Under DEVELOPMENT, we included items related to training and development opportunities (Ng *et al.*, 2010) as well as possibilities for promotion (Richardson, 2009; Richardson and Butler, 2012) ($\alpha = .82$). Items focusing on reasonable workload (Richardson, 2009; Richardson and Butler, 2012), schedule flexibility, contract length, and social activities (Bardelle and Lashley, 2015) were regrouped under WORK-LIFE BALANCE ($\alpha = .72$). Last but not least, COMFORT was made up of items focusing on life on board (Bardelle and Lashley, 2015) and onboard facilities (Wong *et al.*, 2017) ($\alpha = .90$).

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each item on a 5-point Likert scale with the following response options: 1 = completely unimportant; 2 = of little importance; 3 = moderately important; 4 = important and 5 = very important. A full list of the items is provided in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Analyses

In a first step we assigned generational codes to our data. Generation X was defined as being born between 1965 and 1980, whereas the millennials were defined as being born between 1981 and 1996. Individuals born in 1964 or before (baby boomers) and those born in 1997 or later (generation Z) were excluded from the sample, leaving a total usable sample size of 1254 job candidates (corresponding to 94% of the original sample).

In the next step we computed the arithmetic mean of the items for each work value. We illustrated the ranking of the work values in bar charts. Finally, differences between generation X and the millennial generation were assessed with independent samples *t*-tests using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 27).

RESULTS

A comparison of the ranking of work values illustrates only relatively minor differences between generation X and the millennials. Whereas for generation X, “Challenge”, “Autonomy” and “Support” are the top three values (in descending order of importance), for the millennials, “Support” takes the top spot, followed by “Challenge” and “Autonomy”. The priority ranking based on mean scores obtained for each work value is illustrated in Figure 1.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

To analyze differences in mean scores for each work value between the two generations, we ran independent samples *t*-tests for every factor. The results are summarized in Table 3.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

For “Challenge”, “Autonomy” and “Giving”, the mean differences between generation X and the millenials are not statistically significant (all *p*-values > .05). However, significant differences appear for “Support” ($t = 2.47, p < .05$), “Development” ($t = 4.57, p < .01$), “Compensation” ($t = 2.77, p < .01$), “Work-Life Balance” ($t = 4.17, p < .01$) and “Comfort” ($t = 2.21, p < .05$). For all these factors, the mean score is higher for the millenials than for generation X, indicating that millenials consider them to be significantly more important than their generation X counterparts.

We also conducted some post hoc tests using demographic data as a basis for splitting the sample into subsamples. For instance, we compared those respondents who are married or in a partnership to those who are not in a partnership (i.e. single/divorced/widowed). We then replicated our analyses on these two sub-samples. Results suggest that for both groups, differences in means point in the same direction, with minor differences with regard to the significance level. In a similar analysis we compared a low education (without any completed degree above high school) to a high education (associate degree and above) subsample. As before, the reanalysis of the data suggests a largely similar pattern of differences.

DISCUSSION

In this study we investigated the importance attributed by job candidates in the cruise industry to a range of different work values. We also analyzed differences between candidates belonging to generation X and those belonging to the millennial generation. This study is positioned against the backdrop of a relative paucity in research focused on the cruise industry (Papathanassis and Beckmann, 2011) which “does not resemble the increasing size and impact of the sector” (Papathanassis, 2021, p. 2029). From our results, a range of interesting implications for research and practice can be derived. We discuss these in more detail in the following sections.

Implications for research

The first general implication of our study concerns the validity of generational theories. While generational theory and age-based generational identity theory predict a relative homogeneity in work values among individuals belonging to the same generation – and, conversely, marked differences between generations – there is relatively little empirical research to back up this assertion. In our study we apply generational theories to predict differences in work values for the specific case of generation X compared to the millennial generation and in the specific context of the cruise industry. We find empirical support for the prediction of significantly different importance ratings for the different work values in our investigation, providing support for the theoretical notion of value differences advanced by generational theories.

Our second implication concerns the more specific question of generational differences between generation X and the millennial generation. Existing research on this question is not only sparse but also inconclusive. While several studies (e.g. Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; Glass, 2007) highlight differences in work values between these generations, other studies, for instance Acar (2014), did not find any significant differences. Relying on a very large cruise

industry sample with a demographic composition that is very close to the workforce demographic in the industry, we find significant differences on a number of important work values, thereby confirming that a generational gap exists.

A third implication of our findings provides a more differentiated and fine-grained understanding of the categories of work values on which these generational differences play out. One of these issues concerns the contrast between more extrinsically and more intrinsically oriented work values. While several previous studies (e.g. Glass, 2007; Gursoy *et al.*, 2008; Twenge *et al.*, 2010) suggested that generation X might be more driven by extrinsically oriented values (including compensation and work-life balance) whereas the millennials place more emphasis on intrinsic work values that are directly related to the nature of their work (including freedom, autonomy and feedback at work), our results suggest a slightly different picture. Millennials indeed expect more supervisory support and feedback, however they also have higher expectations than generation X when it comes to the purely extrinsic values of compensation, work-life balance and comfort.

Last, but not least, the results of our study add an additional twist to a more in-depth understanding of the categories of work values for which members of generation X and the millennials differ by highlighting the contrasting results for “ego-driven” vs. “altruistic” work values. In fact, our results show a consistent pattern. For the millennials, the more “ego-driven” factors from which employees benefit directly and personally (e.g. support, development, compensation, work-life balance and comfort) obtain significantly higher importance ratings than from the preceding generation X. This is consistent with earlier results suggesting that the millennials place more emphasis on status- and freedom-related work values than previous generations (e.g. Cennamo and Gardner, 2008), demand employment flexibility as a way of achieving work-life balance (Maxwell, 2005) and are more motivated by job content and career development than members of generation X (Lub

et al., 2015). It also aligns well with the findings of Glass (2007), suggesting that millennials expect detail-oriented instructions and constant feedback, those by Johns (2003) who found that millennials want clear directions and managerial support, as well as those by Gursoy *et al.* (2008) who conclude that millennials tend to work more effectively when provided with strong directions. Conversely, for the more “altruistic” factors, which would require stronger involvement at work and/or may lead to benefits for third parties (challenge, autonomy and giving) our results suggest that there are no significant inter-generational differences. This is to some extent contradictory with findings suggesting that, compared to generation X, the millennials are on the lookout for more intellectual challenge (Brown, 2004) and more challenging and meaningful tasks that help to achieve high career goals (Baruch, 2004).

Implications for practice

The results of our research suggest a number of practical measures for cruise industry firms to embrace if they desire to improve their chances of successfully engaging with, recruiting and retaining shipboard employees who belong to the millennial generation. These suggestions are particularly relevant in this “post-pandemic” era given that most, if not all, sectors of the hospitality industry are struggling to staff their businesses with line-level and supervisory employees. That is, cruise lines must not only “up their game” because their industry is struggling to recruit employees, but because an additional challenge for them is the improved employment conditions and compensation being offered from other sectors of the hospitality industry. In other words, the competition for talent has intensified and the cruise industry must adapt accordingly. We thus provide several practical recommendations. First in line are changes related to the human resources infrastructure. Cruise industry employers will have to invest in better training and development programs to allow for improved career development opportunities. Salaries will have to be readjusted and should be more tightly coupled with continuous performance feedback. In a similar vein, cruise line HR

departments will have to up their game with regard to leadership development. The millennials' expectations of more feedback and support implies a need for fostering a more supportive leadership culture. This could also be supported by a stronger focus on diversity and inclusion in the selection of leaders. A more diverse and inclusive leadership team is likely to be better suited to providing supportive leadership to the typically highly diverse workforce on board a cruise ship.

An important lever from the organizational side is scheduling. The length of engagement for all employees could be adjusted without impact to the compensation of employees, allowing them to spend less time on board the ship and more time with their families, thereby improving work-life balance. In addition, cruise ships are becoming more and more digitalized, with AI and technology allowing new opportunities to create values for guests but also for staff (Buhalis *et al.*, 2022). On the one hand, these advances may contribute to creating better comfort for employees through improved connections with the outside world. On the other hand, digitalization will also impact employees' daily activities and possibly shift the competencies that are required to work on board. This trend exacerbates the need for attracting sufficiently qualified personnel to cruise industry jobs. Last but not least, cruise lines should also reconsider infrastructure investment to enhance comfort on board. The needs of millennial employees should be taken into account for the design of employee accommodation and public spaces when building or refurbishing ships.

Limitations and directions for future research

Like all empirical investigations, our research has a certain number of limitations. The categories and items used to assess work values were derived from a thorough literature review, combined with the input of a cruise industry expert committee. However, this provides no guarantee that the list of values is comprehensive and free from overlap.

Furthermore, given the impact that Covid-19 has had on the potential employees in the cruise

industry, especially with regards to millennials, such factors may also have changed over time. Future research may therefore consider revising these categories on the basis of an exploratory factor analysis. While our sample is on the large side, it is dominated by line and supervisory employees, with only a smaller proportion of managerial roles. In combination with the fact that the recruitment agency that facilitated the data collection focuses exclusively on the upmarket segments of the cruise industry this may limit the generalizability of our results for managerial employees and for other segments of the industry. On the positive side, our sample has a broad representation of different functional areas on board a cruise ship. Also, since we focus on generational differences, the generational background of respondents is likely to play a more important role than their management level or the industry segment they work in.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Demographic variable	Categories	Count	Percent
Generation	Baby boomers	33	2.5 %
	Gen X	424	32.1 %
	Millennials (Gen Y)	830	62.9 %
	Gen Z	33	2.5 %
Gender	Female	207	15.7 %
	Male	1110	84.1 %
	Other	3	0.2 %
Marital status	Single	557	42.2 %
	Married or partnership	662	50.2 %
	Separated or divorced	82	6.2 %
	Other	19	1.4 %
Geographic origin	Africa	96	7.3%
	Americas		
	Caribbean	14	1.1%
	Central America	18	1.4%
	North America	29	2.2%
	South America	54	4.1%
	Asia		
	Central & South Asia	275	20.8%
	Northeastern Asia	10	0.8%
	Southeastern Asia	492	37.3%
	Australia & Oceania	3	0.2%
	Europe		
	Eastern Europe	174	13.2%
Northern Europe	4	0.3%	
Southern Europe	113	8.6%	
Western Europe	38	2.9%	
Education	Some high school	76	5.8 %
	High school degree	340	25.8 %
	Some college credit	188	14.2 %
	Professional degree	57	4.3 %
	Associate degree	115	8.7 %
	Bachelor's	440	33.3 %
	Master's	101	7.7 %

	Doctorate	3	0.2 %
Prior work experience	In hospitality	1240	53.3 %
	In the cruise industry	1005	43.2 %
	Neither	80	3.4 %
Position	Line employee	500	49.8 %
	Supervisor	194	19.3 %
	Manager	240	23.9 %
	Executive team	71	7.1 %

Table 1 – Sample demographics

Table by authors

Work values	Items
CHALLENGE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in a vibrant/challenging environment 2. Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking 3. The organization both values and makes use of your creativity 4. The organization produces high-quality products and services 5. The organization produces innovative products and services 6. Pride to work for the organization
SUPPORT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Having a good relationship with your colleagues 8. Having a good relationship with your superiors 9. Supportive and encouraging colleagues 10. Happy work environment 11. Working in an organization that values diversity and inclusion and is empowering minorities 12. Organization is an equal opportunity employer 13. Being connected to the organization through social networks on and off duty 14. Acceptance and belonging 15. Feeling genuinely valued and appreciated by colleagues, supervisors and the organization 16. Working for an organization that takes the safety and security of its employees seriously 17. Work in a multicultural environment and build relationships with colleagues from other countries
GIVING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Humanitarian organization – gives back to society 19. Opportunity to teach others what you have learned 20. The organization is customer-orientated 21. Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organization 22. Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organization
AUTONOMY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Empowerment to make decisions 24. Contributing to the organizations development with clear communication and feedback (express ideas, raise questions and concerns) 25. Necessary resources, tools and facilities are readily available to allow employees to perform 26. Comprehensive onboard practices to help new employees find their feet and equip them to meet expectations
COMPENSATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. An above average basic salary 28. An attractive overall compensation package 29. Full year coverage for social security contributions (medical insurance) on and off the ship 30. Loyalty payment for every year or contract with the organization 31. Organization contributes to pension plan 32. Performance Bonus and / or stock options 33. Comprehensive privilege options onboard 34. An extensive recognition program that acknowledges milestone and top performers 35. Ability for family members to sail onboard for free or at a special rate
DEVELOPMENT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 36. Opportunity to apply what was learned in college/university 37. Gaining career-enhancing experience 38. Clear path for professional development opportunities 39. Working for an organization that sponsors a comprehensive training and development program 40. Opportunity to travel and visit other countries and experience new cultures 41. Good promotion opportunities within the organization

WORK-LIFE BALANCE	42. Flexibility of the onboard work schedule (work-life balance) 43. Organization driven employee wellness and mental health program 44. Being able to work onboard with a life partner having similar contract joining and leaving dates 45. Length of contract and vacation
COMFORT	46. Travel class for joining and repatriation flights 47. Having a single accommodation 48. Variety of employee food offering and dietary options (vegan, vegetarian, religious) 49. Access to guest dining facilities 50. Availability of an interactive TV system with a movie library and live TV channels in multiple languages 51. Free access to high bandwidth internet 52. Availability of dedicated employee recreational spaces (Employee Bar, Sundeck, Pool) 53. Access to exercise facilities such as a gym or fitness center 54. Dedicated employee smoking or vaping area 55. Frequency of onboard social events for employees 56. Shoreside events and excursions for employees organized by the company 57. Stylish and comfortable uniform that is fitting well

Table 2 – Items used for the measurement of work values

Table by authors

MOTIVATOR	MILLENNIALS			GENERATION X			DIFFERENCES		
	n	mean	sd	n	mean	sd	mean difference	t	p-value
CHALLENGE	830	4.60	0.51	424	4.59	0.49	0.00	0.02	0.99
AUTONOMY	830	4.59	0.50	424	4.54	0.52	0.05	1.57	0.11
SUPPORT	830	4.61	0.48	424	4.54	0.48	0.07	2.47	0.01 *
GIVING	830	4.50	0.56	424	4.45	0.51	0.05	1.44	0.16
DEVELOPMENT	830	4.45	0.53	424	4.30	0.56	0.15	4.57	0.00 **
COMPENSATION	830	4.33	0.63	424	4.22	0.65	0.11	2.77	0.01 **
WORK-LIFE BALANCE	830	4.23	0.71	424	4.06	0.70	0.17	4.17	0.00 **
COMFORT	830	3.77	0.78	424	3.67	0.76	0.10	2.21	0.03 *

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Table 3 – Mean differences in importance attached to work values between Generation X and Millennials

Table by authors

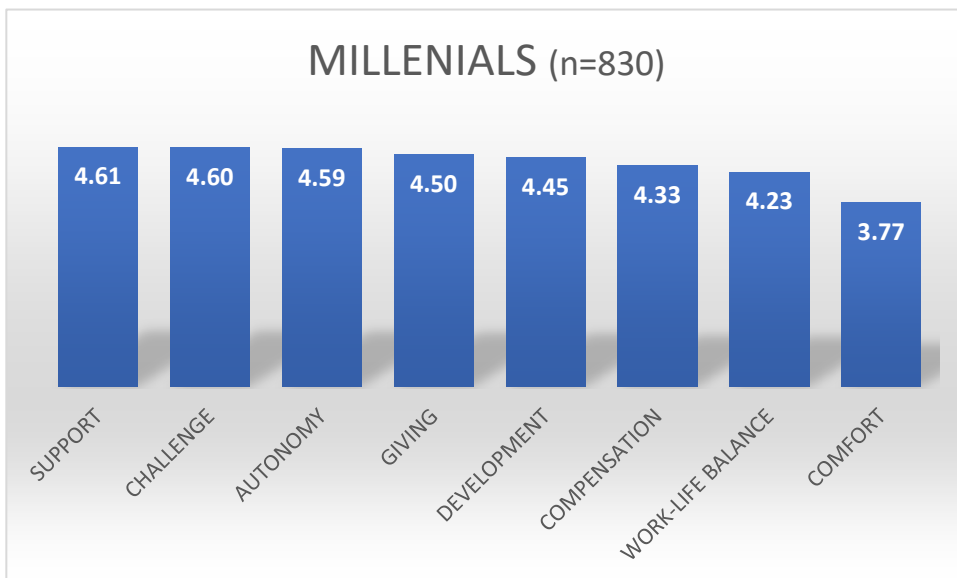
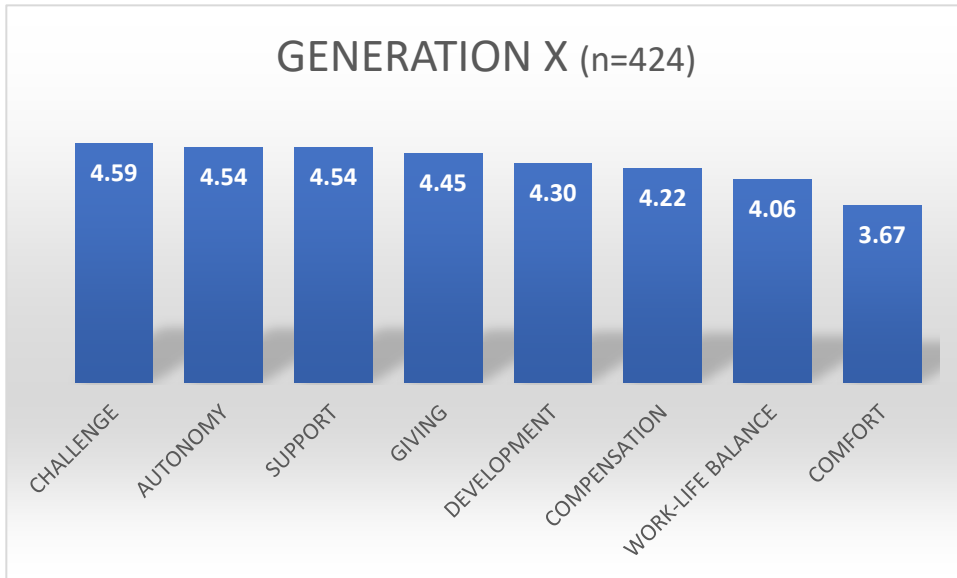


Figure 1 – Ranking of work values for Generation X and Millennials

Figure by authors