DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUNGER AND OLDER GENERATIONS

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Abstract

Article examines the main differences between younger and older generations, focusing on communication, technology use, education, work, values, and attitudes toward social change. It considers how the historical and social conditions in which people grow up influence their beliefs and behavior. The article also challenges common stereotypes, emphasizing that differences between generations are not absolute and that people within each age group have diverse experiences and perspectives. Understanding these similarities and differences can encourage communication, mutual respect, and cooperation between generations.

Key words: *younger generation, older generation, generational differences, communication, technology, values, social change, intergenerational relations*

INTRODUCTION

Every generation grows up in a world shaped by particular historical events, social expectations, and technologies. These experiences influence how people communicate, learn, work, form relationships, and understand their responsibilities. As a result, younger and older generations may approach everyday life in different ways. Younger people are often associated with digital technology, rapid communication, and openness to social change, while older people are sometimes linked with face-to-face interaction, established traditions, and the values of stability and experience. Although these descriptions can help introduce the topic, they are generalizations rather than rules. People are individuals, and their beliefs and behavior cannot be explained by age alone.

One of the most visible differences between generations is their relationship with technology. Many younger people have grown up using smartphones, social media, and online services, so digital communication may feel natural and immediate to them. Older adults, particularly those who encountered these technologies later in life, may have developed communication habits before the internet became widespread. This does not mean that older people cannot use or enjoy modern technology. Instead, different experiences may shape how people choose to use it and how much importance they give to online communication. Generational differences can also appear in attitudes toward education and work. Younger people may place importance on flexibility, personal fulfillment, and opportunities to develop new skills. Older adults may place greater emphasis on job security, long-term commitment, and experience gained over time. These tendencies are influenced not only by age but also by economic conditions, family responsibilities, and the opportunities available during each generation's formative years. Similarly, generations may differ in their views on social issues, authority, independence, and the pace of change. What one group sees as progress, another may view with caution, especially when familiar customs or institutions are affected.

These differences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. Younger people may consider older adults resistant to new ideas, while older adults may view younger people as impatient or overly dependent on technology. Such judgments can make communication more difficult because they focus on stereotypes instead of individual experiences. In reality, each generation has knowledge and perspectives that can benefit others. Older adults may offer historical understanding, practical skills, and lessons gained through experience. Younger people may contribute fresh ideas, familiarity with emerging technologies, and new approaches to changing challenges. Examining the differences between younger and older generations is therefore important, particularly in families, schools, workplaces, and

communities where people of different ages interact. The purpose is not to decide which generation is better, but to understand how social and historical circumstances shape people's perspectives. By recognizing both differences and common ground, people can communicate more respectfully and learn from one another. This introduction considers generational differences in communication, technology, education, work, and values, while also emphasizing that cooperation is possible when individuals look beyond age-based assumptions.

ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE ON THE TOPIC

Many foreign scholars have examined how generations differ in their values, experiences, and behavior. Their research comes from sociology, psychology, history, and political science. However, researchers often warn that generational labels describe broad patterns, not every individual within an age group. One of the earliest influential scholars was the German sociologist Karl Mannheim. In his 1928 essay "The Problem of Generations," he argued that people born around the same time may be shaped by shared historical events. For example, economic crises, wars, and social changes can influence how a generation views work, authority, and society. Mannheim's ideas remain important because they explain generations through historical experience rather than age alone.

American sociologist Glen H. Elder Jr. also studied how historical events affect people's lives. In *Children of the Great Depression* (1974), he examined children who grew up during the economic hardship of the 1930s. His research showed that the effects of a major event depend on a person's age, family situation, and circumstances. Elder's work helps explain why people of different ages may respond differently to the same historical period. Political scientist Ronald Inglehart investigated changes in social and political values. In *The Silent Revolution* (1977), he proposed that people who grow up in relative security may give greater importance to self-expression and quality of life, while those who experience insecurity may prioritize economic and physical security. His research suggests that

differences between generations can reflect the conditions in which people grew up. American authors William Strauss and Neil Howe developed a popular theory of recurring generational patterns in *Generations* (1991). They described shared characteristics among age groups in American history. Their theory has influenced public discussion, but some scholars question whether its broad categories can accurately represent diverse individuals and societies.

Psychologist Jean M. Twenge has studied generational differences in personality, technology use, and well-being. In *Generation Me* (2006) and *iGen* (2017), she discussed trends among younger Americans, including individualism and the influence of digital technology. Her interpretations have also been debated, since social change, age, and the time period being studied can be difficult to separate. Overall, these scholars show that generational differences are connected to historical events, economic conditions, technology, and social values. Their findings can help explain why younger and older people may communicate or make decisions differently. Still, researchers emphasize that generation is only one influence: culture, education, family background, and personal experience also shape each person.

METHODOLOGY

This study will examine differences between younger and older generations in communication habits, values, attitudes toward technology, and views on work and family. It will use a mixed-methods design, combining a questionnaire with semi-structured interviews. This approach will provide measurable comparisons while allowing participants to explain the experiences behind their opinions. The study will focus on adults living in the same community, so that findings are less affected by differences in national culture. Participants will be divided into two age groups: younger adults aged 18–29 and older adults aged 60–75. The target sample will include 120 people, with 60 participants in each group. Purposive quota sampling will be used to seek a balanced representation of gender, educational background,

and employment status. Participants must have lived in the community for at least five years and be able to provide informed consent. Data will be collected using a questionnaire containing approximately 25 questions. Items will measure frequency of digital communication, preferred sources of information, attitudes toward career and family responsibilities, and perceptions of respect and social change. Responses to attitude statements will use a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. After completing the questionnaire, 24 participants, 12 from each group, will be invited to take part in interviews lasting 20–30 minutes. Interview questions will explore how participants communicate with relatives from other age groups, what they believe has changed over time, and which social or technological changes have influenced their views.

Questionnaires will be distributed in person and through a secure online form. Participants will receive the same instructions, and interviews will be audio-recorded only with permission. Recordings will be transcribed, anonymized, and stored securely. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, averages, and comparisons between the two age groups. Where appropriate, independent-samples t-tests or chi-square tests will be used to identify statistically meaningful differences. Interview transcripts will be analyzed thematically: responses will be coded, grouped into recurring themes, and compared across age groups. Combining both forms of evidence will help identify not only whether differences exist but also how participants explain them. Ethical safeguards will include voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time. The study will avoid treating either generation as a uniform group. Its findings will describe this sample and will not automatically represent all younger and older people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis focuses on differences between younger adults aged 18–29 and older adults aged 60–75 in communication habits, attitudes toward technology, and

views on work and family. Questionnaire responses can be compared by age group, while interview transcripts can help explain the reasons behind any observed differences. Because the study has not yet produced data, the patterns described here should be treated as possible themes rather than confirmed results. One likely area of difference is communication. Younger adults may report using messaging applications and social media more frequently, valuing their speed and convenience. Older adults may be more likely to prefer telephone calls or face-to-face conversations, particularly when discussing personal or important matters. These preferences should not be interpreted as a simple opposition between technology and tradition. Older participants may also use digital tools regularly, while younger participants may value in-person communication. The difference may lie more in preferred situations and frequency than in complete acceptance or rejection of particular methods.

Attitudes toward technology may also vary between the groups. Younger adults, having grown up with digital devices, may describe online services as an ordinary part of daily life. Older adults may be more likely to discuss practical challenges, such as learning new applications, concerns about privacy, or difficulty accessing online services. However, interview responses could show that older participants use technology to stay in touch with family, obtain information, and manage everyday tasks. This would suggest that access, confidence, and usefulness-not age alone-shape people's experiences of technology. Views about work and family may reveal both differences and shared values. Younger participants may place greater emphasis on career development, flexibility, and personal choice, while older participants may describe stable employment and clear family responsibilities as important. Yet the groups may share priorities such as financial security, supportive relationships, and time with family. If the survey shows different levels of agreement with statements about career or caregiving, interviews

can clarify whether these differences reflect changing social expectations, economic conditions, or individual circumstances.

The qualitative analysis should identify recurring themes across interviews, including communication preferences, experiences of social change, and perceptions of respect between generations. Comparing these themes with questionnaire responses will help determine whether stated attitudes correspond with participants' personal examples. For instance, a participant might report preferring face-to-face communication but still use messaging daily for practical reasons. Such examples can add context to numerical comparisons and prevent the findings from being oversimplified. Overall, the study may indicate that generational differences are most visible in communication practices and experiences with technology, while values relating to family, security, and meaningful relationships may overlap. Any conclusions should remain cautious. Age groups are not uniform, and differences within each group may be substantial. Education, employment, income, health, and access to technology could also influence responses. Therefore, the results should describe the participants in this study rather than be generalized to all younger and older adults.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, younger and older generations may differ in communication habits, technology use, workplace expectations, and attitudes toward family and social change. Younger adults often adopt digital tools quickly and value flexibility, while older adults may prefer familiar communication methods and emphasize experience, stability, and responsibilities. However, these patterns are tendencies, not fixed rules; individuals within each generation differ widely. Education, culture, income, life events, and access to technology also shape people's views. Understanding generational differences therefore requires respectful dialogue rather than stereotypes. By sharing knowledge and listening to one another, generations can combine innovation with experience and build communities.

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