Chapter 12

Challenge of Millennials in Project Management:
Insights on Attitudes and Perceptions of Generation Y in Software Development Projects

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ABSTRACT

The need for understanding Generation Y employees' attitudes and expectations that considerably differed from previous generations had been a focus of researchers in the last decades. IT industry and specifically software industry had been among the most popular employment areas of Generation Y professionals and hence Generation Y Software Developers constitutes the majority of the work force in the software industry. As known, software development is a project-based business where the project management methodologies and principles are utilized. Similar to other project based works, the effectiveness of human resources management and team development is the determinant of project success in software development. Therefore, to effectively manage and to adapt appropriate approaches for leading the project teams which include Generation Y software professionals, managers and leaders prior in need to understand their perspective. In this context, research aims to understand the expectations and attitudes of Generation Y Software Developer

professionals in projects. The research is structured in two parts reflecting these dual aims. The first part of the research addresses the expectations of Y generation employees from project management and project environment in software development projects. The second part of the research explores the attitudes of Y generation Employees in software development project teams. Survey is conducted with the participation of 113 Generation Y Software Professionals who are employed in major software companies in Turkey. Basic concepts that are explored in the study are expectations from working environment, expectations from project type and content, leadership, motivation factors, challenges faced, perceptions on generation conflicts and the attitudes of Generation Y professionals towards project-based work and work environments. Software industry is dominated by project based management methods, perceptions and attitudes of Generation Y in projects are expected to provide practical guidelines to policy makers and HR professionals in developing solutions and tools for improving motivations and effectiveness of Generation Y employees.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advent of the twenty-first century is that highly performing employees may have better employment opportunities in other organizations. Their experience, skills and abilities are appreciated by their companies but they are not prepared to give the workers what they really desire, so they decide to leave in spite of the time spent and the knowledge they have acquired in that company. While not subscribing to the popular notion of generational differences, found that each generation reported themselves as less optimistic than the previous generation. They suggest that managers will have to deal with a group of increasingly negative and possibly cynical employees and noted that it is important to provide younger generations with challenges in workplace. Project managers managing a multigenerational team must be aware of the expectations, motivations, perceptions and attitudes of their team members, because it presents a serious challenge in dealing with a project team comprising of people with differing attitudes and approaches toward project outcomes. Generational conflicts or differences also may require an effective emotion management, which is defined as a significant trend in today's workplace (Liu & Jason, 2016).

The term, Generation Y, was first coined in 1993 by Advertising Age as the last generation to be born entirely in the twentieth century (Reed 2007; Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009). Generation Y is also known as Echo Boomers, the Millennium Generation, Generation Next (Durkin 2008), the Net Generation (Tyler, 2008) and Generation Why? (Reed 2007). Millennials as a group are more like-minded than other generations (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010). From a psychological perspective, Generation Y demonstrates higher self-esteem, personal

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