ADAPTING TO A MULTI-GENERATIONAL NURSING WORKFORCE

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BACKGROUND

Generational diversity generates a health organization that integrates a healthcare team from the clinical nurse to the executive nurse leader. Healthcare teams are often multi-generational. This multi-generational team diversity has created many opportunities and challenges. These opportunities and challenges arise from the differences found in each generation's worker personality traits, work ethics, values, team membership preferences, job satisfaction expectations, and organizational commitment.

By understanding workers from each of the generations, healthcare organizations can leverage the differences and commonalities to create a satisfying work environment. To prepare and utilize these variations in the nursing workforce, nurse administrators can focus on strategies to integrate these multi-generational differences to create a safe and effective environment for patient care. To meet the challenges and capitalize on opportunities at present and in the future, it is imperative to understand and accommodate the multi-generational workforce.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of multi-generational senior level nursing students who are entering the workforce the next four months. The areas of comparison were the student's perception of the work environment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and personality traits.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are there differences between generation x and y BSN students with respect to intrinsic, extrinsic and general aspects of job satisfaction? If there is a difference, is any of the demographic variables associated with the difference/s?
2. Are there differences between generation x and y BSN students with respect to emotional attachment to the organization?
3. What organizational behaviors are shared by generation x and y BSN students?
4. Is there any difference between generation x and y BSN students with respect to work and life balance and work preferences?
5. What personality traits are different between generation x and y BSN students?

METHODS

Sample, Size, and Sampling Procedure

- The sample of multi-generational students (N=316) was between the ages of 20-67 years of ages
- The sample included 2 baby boomers (0.63%), 34 generation X (10.76%) , 280 generation Y (88.61%)
- The students were a convenient sample from the University of Arkansas, Goldfarb School of Nursing, and Arkansas Tech University during 2018-2019.

Procedure

- A RECAP online survey was developed and administered among students from the participating sites Spring, Summer 2018, Fall, Spring, Summer 2019
- Subjects responded to questions with their perception of the work environment, job satisfaction, & organizational commitment.
- Subjects signed a consent form and remained anonymous.
- Survey was offered for 5 weeks with weekly reminders during the assigned times.
- Surveys were returned via email to Redcap which is located at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Study Design

3 surveys were adapted for the survey deployment to the subjects
Minnesota Job SatisfactionScale-20 questions-access how people feel about the nature of their work and the aspects of the work situation
            Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors
            Likert Scale of 1-5
International Personality Item Pool (IPIP)-10 questions-5 traits evaluated
        Extraversion, agreeability, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect, imagination
**Organizational Commitment Survey-20 questions-Influence of characteristics;**
        Job attitudes, job characteristics, and relationship with co-workers and supervisors

RESULTS

Several research questions guided this study of Adapting to a Multi-Generational Nursing Workforce.

Significant generation differences on single variables (higher value means more satisfied or more strongly agree)
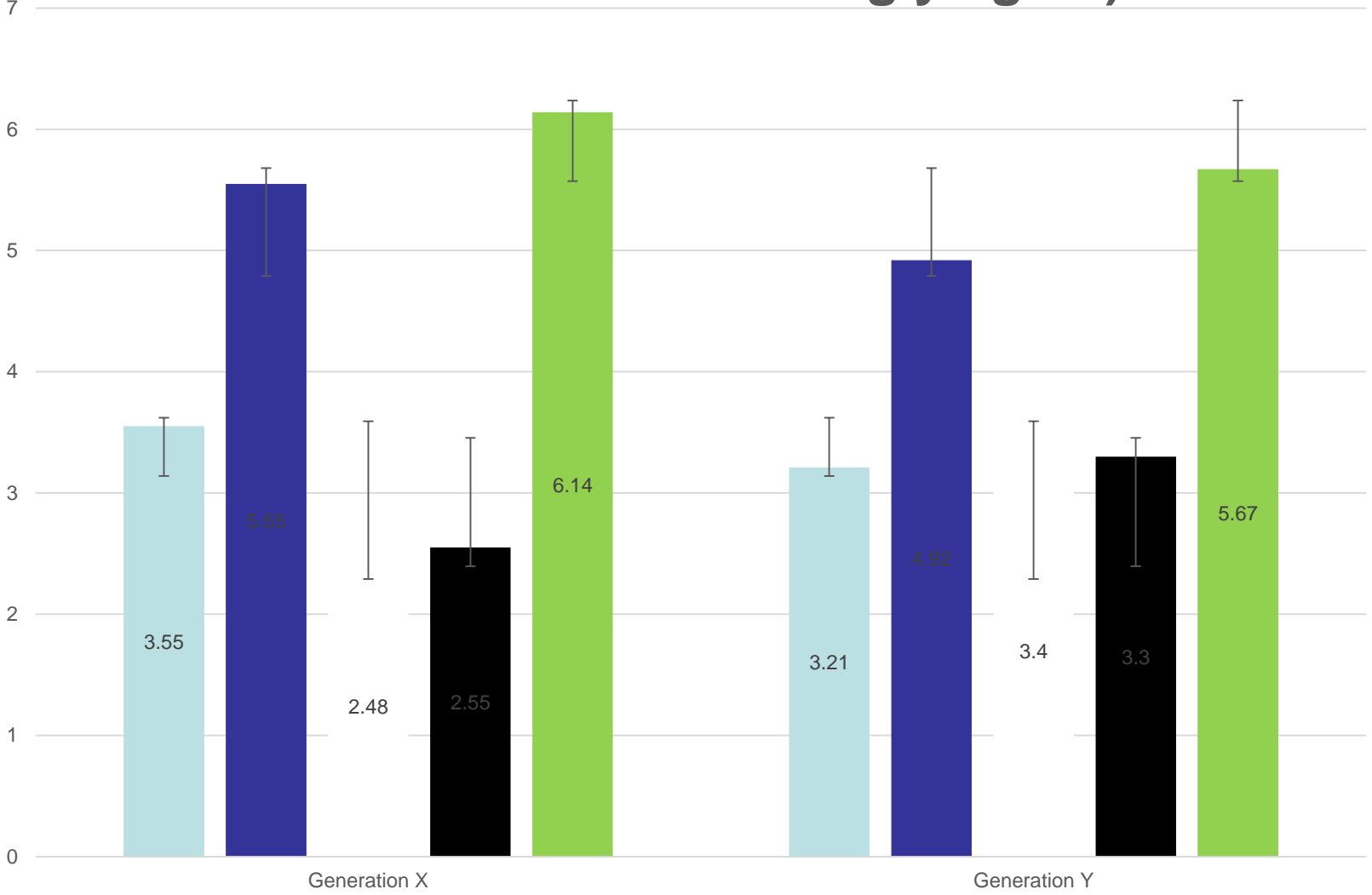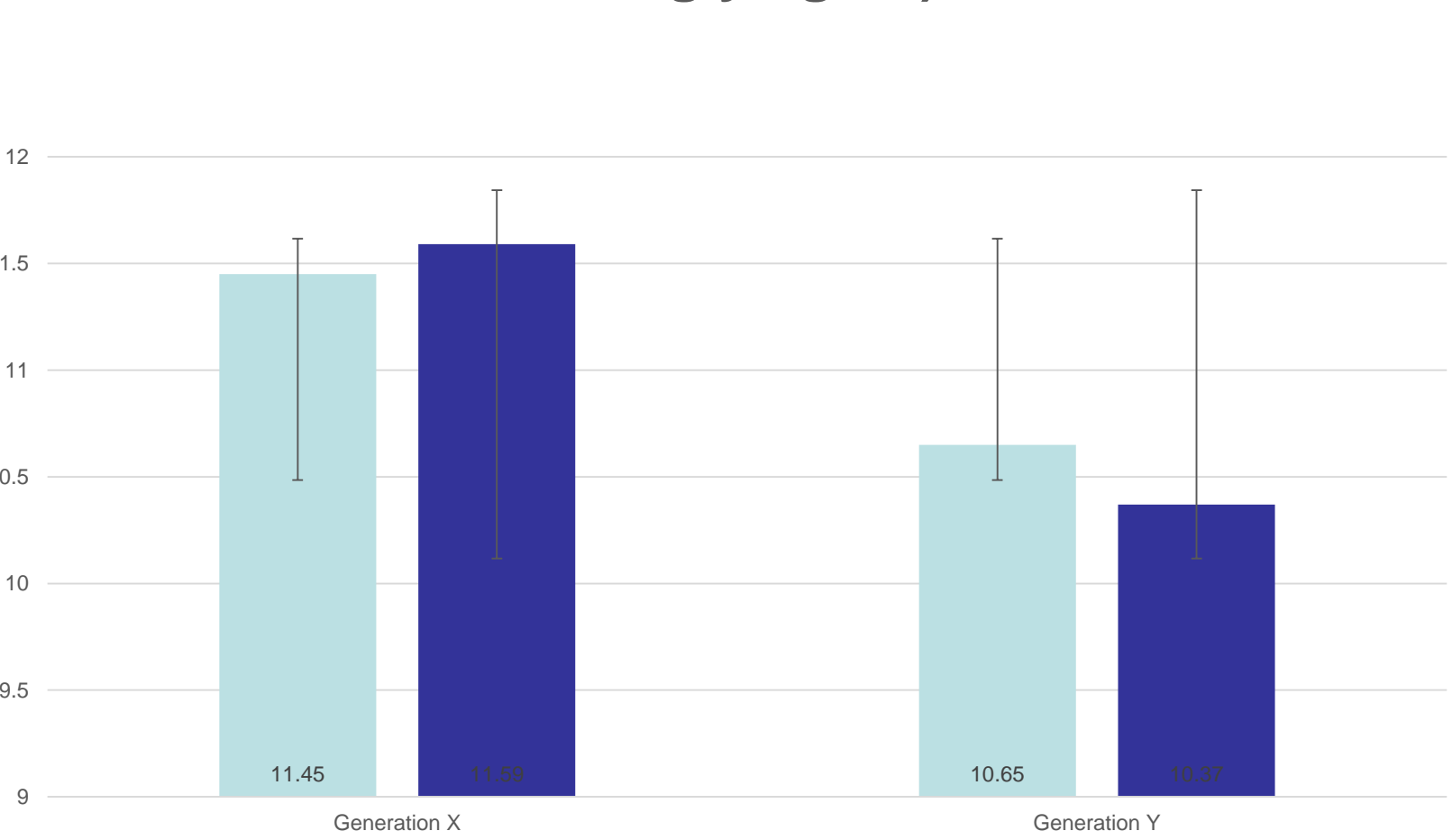

- **The chance to work alone in the job (P=0.03)**
- **Happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization (P=0.05)**
  I see myself as critical, quarrelsome (P=0.00)
- **I see myself as anxious, easily upset (P=0.01)**
- **I see myself as calm, emotionally stable (P=0.01)**

Significant generation differences on personal traits (higher value means more strongly agree)

- **agreeableness (P=0.05)**

Method of Analysis

- Subjects completed demographic data which put them into generations
- Continuous data was presented in mean & standard deviation and categorical data in frequency and percentage
- Two sample t-test compared means of variables associated with perception of the work environment, job satisfaction, personality traits, and organizational commitment
- Two sample t-test compared continuous demographic variables between the generations and chi-square tests for categorical variables
- All statistical tests were two-sided with significance level of 0.05 and performed in SAS 9.4

CONCLUSIONS

The sample size (n=316) was between 20-67 years of age
Significant differences were detected between generations X and Y with regards to
- age and work experience as a licensed full-time or part-time
- but not with regards to race, GPA or gender

Significant difference in job satisfaction variable of
- the chance to work alone on the job
  (p-value 0.00515)

Significant difference in organizational commitment variable of-I would be
- very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization
  (p-value 0.0515)

Significant differences in 3 variables in personality traits
- I see myself as critical, quarrelsome
  (p-value 0.0011)
- I see myself as anxious, easily upset
  (p-value 0.0099)
- I see myself as calm, emotionally stable
  (p-value 0.0152)