EMPIRICALLY-BASED HRM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGING MULTIGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

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Abstract

Purpose

The study examined the profile of Generation Y employees from their managers’ perspective in the non-Western context of Bangladesh, a country with the eighth largest population in the world (163,654,860), with a median age of 23.6 years. We also investigated challenges that arise when integrating members of the fast-growing Generation Y workforce with managers from different generations.

Design

We used a purposive sampling approach to conduct 22 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with Baby Boomer and Generation X bank managers who were responsible for managing Generation Y employees.

Findings

Generation Y employees displayed strengths in three key skills that set them apart in the workplace. Members of Generation Y were perceived to be more technologically competent, were perceived to have stronger teamwork ability, and were perceived to have more effective communication skills. In addition, three major workplace attitudes differentiated the Generation Y employees from previous generations. They preferred a more inclusive style of management, expected quick promotions, and showed less loyalty to their organisation.

Practical implications

We suggest that managers may have to adjust their management style to accommodate the Generation Y desire for an inclusive style of management. In addition, we suggest that Generation X managers would generally make better mentors for Generation Y. We also discuss implications that address how to structure development opportunities and promote commitment from Generation Y employees. Given the dearth of empirical research on generations in South Asia, this is a pioneering study that contributes to a greater understanding of the emerging Generation Y workforce in this important region.

Introduction
Today’s globalized workforce consists of multiple generations where Generation Y is the newest entrant (Macon & Artley, 2009; Solnet & Kralj, 2010). Born between 1981 and 1999 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), Generation Y makes up 25.5% of the world’s population (US Census Bureau, 2009). The largest Generation Y cohort lives in India, with approximately half a billion members (Puybaraud, 2010). Generation Y numbers 200 million in China (Puybaraud, 2010), 80 million in the US (US Census Bureau, 2012).

Management consultants, business-oriented publications and the popular press have been urging employers to accept that Generation Y is distinct from previous generational cohorts, and that appropriate strategies are required to keep this generation motivated and happy to remain with an organisation (Barnes, 2009; Real, Mitnick & Maloney, 2010). Researchers argue that perceptions of Generation Y and their employment needs are frequently based on popular literature in newspapers and business magazines (Parry & Urwin, 2011; Treuren & Anderson, 2010). Lack of systematic empirical research has led to unconfirmed and sometimes contradictory perceptions of Generation Y (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010; Wong et al., 2008). Hence, there is a growing call for systematic research on Generation Y for these reasons and because proportionately they will come to make up the largest segment of the future workforce (Twenge, 2006).

As organisations increasingly face challenges in attracting and retaining a talented workforce (McDonnell, 2011), gaining a thorough knowledge of Generation Ys’ workplace expectations will enable more effective management of this new generation in a fiercely competitive business environment. Being the newest addition to the workforce, Generation Y needs to be profiled systematically so that they can contribute optimally in the modern work environment, which includes the need to work in teams composed of not only Generation Y employees but also by Baby Boomers and Generation X employees. By understanding the characteristics of the newest entrant in the corporate workforce, organisations have the opportunity to leverage this generation’s performance.

The purpose of this study is to explore the profile of Generation Y from their managers’ perspective in the non-Western context of Bangladesh, a country with the eighth largest population in the world (163,654,860), with a median age of 23.6 years (CIA, 2013), which is a major textile producer and low cost garment manufacturing hub. In the absence of any scholarly work on generations in Bangladesh, this is a pioneering study in the South Asian
context that contributes to a greater understanding of the emerging Generation Y workforce.
In this exploratory study, the following research questions are explored: (1) What is the profile of Generation Y business graduates in Bangladesh from their manager’s perspective, and (2) how does the Bangladeshi Generation Y profile compare with the Western profile?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generations in the Workplace

A generational cohort is defined as a group of people born in the same time span and who experience similar historical and social events while entering young adulthood (Ryder, 1965). Individuals of each generation are born, commence school, enter the workforce, bear children, and retire at around the same time and age (Kowske et al., 2010). Families, educational institutions, laws of the country, values and traditions, wars, economic changes, political ideologies, technological innovations and social upheavals accustom a new generation to the society into which they were born (Kowske et al., 2010; Noble & Schewe, 2003). The shared experiences of these same age cohorts unconsciously shape their values, attitudes, personality, feelings towards authority and organisation, outlook on life and work experiences (Cogin, 2012; Ryder, 1965; Strauss & Howe, 1991). These values, work styles, thought patterns, attitudes, personalities, feelings towards authority and organisation and cultural mores are shaped by each age cohort’s collective experiences, which usually result in distinctive variations in world views between the generations (Kowske et al., 2010; McGuire et al., 2007; Munro, 2009). Social researchers in the West have identified four generational cohorts born and raised in the twentieth century: Veterans or Traditionalists (born 1900–1945), Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980) and Generation Y (1981–1999) (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). Whilst there is debate regarding the exact delineation of generational boundaries and the number of years each generation encompasses (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Gursoy et al., 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002), each generation usually lasts approximately two decades (Gursoy et al., 2008).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Organisational researchers have begun to establish that Generation Y differs from previous generations in terms of workplace attitudes (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; McGuire et al., 2007;
Twenge et al., 2010). However, studies have reported contradictory findings regarding Generation Y’s workplace characteristics. For example, according to Solnet and Kralj (2010), Generation Y employees showed lower job satisfaction and lower job engagement. In contrast, Kowske and colleagues (2010) reported from their investigation of over 18 years of 115,044 American employees that attitudes toward work among Generation Ys differed significantly from other generations. Their study recorded that Generation Y showed higher levels of overall company and job satisfaction, satisfaction with job security, recognition, career development and advancement. However, the study also found that Generation Ys showed similar levels of satisfaction regarding pay and benefits and the job and turnover intentions. Research has also shown that Generation Y employees are less loyal to their organisation, with one in four workers aged 20-24 changing jobs in any given year. This age group is three times more likely to change jobs than Generation X workers aged 45-54 (Anderson, 2013).

**Generation Y in a Non-Western Context**

Whilst the commonly used generational classifications of Generation Y, Generation X, Baby Boomers and Veterans arose in the US, other societies, like Britain, Australia and New Zealand have also adopted them. To date, most data on Generation Y has been gathered in Western nations (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Dries et al., 2008; Ng et al., 2010; Wong et al., 2008). A gap exists in profiling Generation Y in the non-Western context. A review of the literature shows that there has been little investigation of generational cohorts, much less Generation Y specifically, in the non-Western context (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Kowske et al., 2010; Lamm & Meeks, 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2008).

Scholarly works on Generation Y in the non-Western context have only recently emerged (Chen & Chiu, 2010; Kueh & Voon, 2007; Li & Nimmon, 2008; Pugsley & Sima, 2010; Rahman & Azhar, 2011; Yi et al., 2010), amongst which is some comparative work between Western and non-Western Generation Y (Egri & Ralston 2004; Uy et al. 2008). Moreover, of the limited number of empirical works that have been conducted on Generation Y, a substantial number of them are published in the field of marketing (e.g. Kueh & Voon, 2007; Ling et al., 2011; Rahman & Azhar, 2011) rather than in management. Of the few Asian Generation Y studies that have been conducted, most have concentrated on China (Chen & Chiu, 2010; Pugsley & Sima, 2010; Yi et al., 2010), with few in South East Asia (Kueh & Voon, 2007; Ling et al., 2011). These studies have noted that Generation Y appear to diverge culturally from the older populations in
their respective countries (Agarwala, 2008; Cao, 2009; Parker et al., 2009; Ramamoorthy et al., 2005; Shah, 2009; Zhang et al., 2003). However, the focus of these studies has mainly been on identifying cultural viewpoints and divergences with time rather than generational differences.

METHODS

Due to the paucity of research in non-western contexts, this study adopted the Western generational cohort names and defining years (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). The current workforce in the Bangladesh research context is comprised mostly of three cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, with a few Veterans. Managers typically belong to the Veteran, Baby Boomer and Generation X cohorts, but in our sample of bank managers, there were no Veterans.

Sample

Purposive sampling best suited the research scope as it included individuals who had the desired characteristics or experiences (Creswell, 2008). Moreover, the sample included institutions that were considered “information rich” because of the way that private commercial banks increasingly employ Generation Y business graduates. Twenty-two bank managers from three private commercial banks were interviewed; eighteen were male and four were female. The majority (17) belonged to Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), whereas five were Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964). The length of the managers’ banking careers ranged from 4 to 18 years, with a mean of 10.2 years tenure. Except for several managers (mainly Generation X), all had worked in other types of organisations as well for some years, however only their years of experience in banking have been considered here.

Procedure

Face-to-face, semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth interviews were conducted with 22 bank managers. The interview data were coded in two steps. In the open coding phase, line-by-line coding was performed in order to explore theoretical possibilities and establish analytical directions by comparing data (Charmaz, 2006). Constant comparison, a core feature of grounded theory was applied from the beginning of coding until the end. Responses to the questions were compared to one another to find similarities and dissimilarities (Charmaz,
2006; Holton, 2007). In the focused coding phase, theoretical categories were developed by identifying the most significant or frequent codes in open coding (Charmaz, 2006). Through the iterative process of open coding and focused coding, a profile of Bangladeshi Generation Y bank employees emerged from the manager interviewees’ perceptions.

DISCUSSION
Bangladeshi bank managers identified six attributes of Generation Y employees that differentiated them from older generations (see Table 2 below). Generation Y displayed strengths in three key skills that set them apart in the workplace in a positive way. Generation Y were perceived to be more technologically competent, had stronger teamwork ability and more effective communication skills. Both Baby Boomer and Generation X managers viewed these distinctive Generation Y skill sets as strengths that add value in the contemporary globalised commercial workplace. In addition, three major workplace attitudes differentiated the Bangladeshi Generation Y employees from previous generations. They preferred a more inclusive style of management, expected quick promotions, and showed less loyalty to their organisation.

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**Generation Y’s Competencies**

*Technological skills* Generation Y’s competency and orientation towards technology was widely recognised by both Generation X and Baby Boomer managers. Generation Y are considered to be more technologically literate than the previous two generations in Bangladesh. All participants observed that Generation Y is the first generation to use personal computers, cell phones, laptops, video games and other technology at a younger age than Bangladeshi Generation X and Baby Boomers. Talking about the computer skills of Generation Y, several interviewees noted that this generation benefitted from having been introduced to computers at an earlier stage in their lives.
I think technological advancement for sure has changed the psyche of the new generation. When I was in university I remember all the students of our class were taken to the “computer lab in a big line’ just to “see the computer’ which was bought by our university. But now a three year old kid knows how to use a computer. (Baby Boomer male manager, interviewee 17)

Similarities exist between the Bangladeshi context and findings in the West with regard to Generation Y’s level of technological competence. Western Generation Ys are also reportedly digitally connected 24/7 to entertainment and contacts, being constantly “wired and plugged” (Arhin & Johnson-Mallard, 2003; Eisner, 2005; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Tapscott, 1998; Wong et al., 2008). Pugsley and Sima (2010) also found the Chinese Generation Y to be technologically savvy. In ways similar to the Western Generation Y, the non-Western Generation Ys are attached to online social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

**Communication skills** Most interviewees considered communication to be Generation Y’s strongest skill. According to their managers, Generation Y possess excellent skills in oral, written, non-verbal and interpersonal communication. Managers looked for this ability when they recruited or promoted staff. They also identified that having a good command over language and communication builds and conveys self-confidence, and assists in teamwork, professionalism and networking.

*Generation Y are not shy, but more confident. Their confidence reflects in their communication.* (Generation X female manager, interviewee 14)

Researchers have observed that increasingly, employers in different parts of the world are emphasising interpersonal communication skills (Halfhill & Nielsen, 2007). Managers were of the opinion that employees’ interpersonal communication skill helped in their interactions with customers. They believed that customer satisfaction depended on employees understanding their needs and serving them accordingly.

*The interpersonal relationship between [Generation Y] employees and customers is very important given that a bank is a service oriented organisation.*
I have seen some employees have created such wonderful rapport with clients that if she or he is absent; a client will wait for her/his return if possible.

(Generation X male bank manager, interviewee 4)

Bank managers believed that interpersonal relationships with co-workers were extremely important, and noted how Generation Ys treated their colleagues. The behaviour with their colleagues was perceived as an extension of their interpersonal communication ability.

**Teamwork skills** Generation X and Baby Boomer managers considered that Generation Y is more adept in teamwork than previous generations, a skill valued and admired by these managers. In the present Bangladeshi banking environment, teamwork is an important aspect of work. Several bank managers considered Generation Y’s ability to work as part of a team to be one of the most important skills that these young employees bring to the workforce:

When I evaluate an employee, one of the factors that I use is teamwork capacity as it is becoming an essential skill in banks. (Generation X female manager interviewee 14)

I notice how good a team player someone is... I watch whether my team members have the ‘spirit to work in teams or spoil the environment’. I have seen in my experience that Generation Y are better team players...because they work in teams for projects and assignments at the university and are comfortable in working with the opposite gender. (Generation X female manager, interviewee 19)

Teamwork has been recognised to be vital in the modern work environment (Abdullah et al., 2011; Stewart & Barrick, 2000). Generation Y’s preference for working in teams has been demonstrated in the Western literature as well (Gursoy et al., 2008; Kupperschmidt, 2001; Martin, 2005). This literature suggests that Generation Y’s educational experiences have contributed to their teamwork aptitude. The current study revealed similar factors contributing to the teamwork skills of Generation Y in Bangladesh.

**Generation Y’s Attitudes**

Preferred leadership style Both Generation X and Baby Boomer managers noted that their Generation Y employees are both vocal and enthusiastic about giving their opinions to their
managers. The following comment highlights a perceived change in the organisational environment in Bangladesh with regard to Generation Y’s relationships with their managers:

Today’s boys and girls are not like when we were at this stage. We never uttered any disagreement or suggestions to do a task in a different way. Whatever the manager said, we used to carry it out no matter if we liked or disliked it. But now the situation has changed. Now they [Generation Y] do not consider giving their opinions as impoliteness or disobedience. Actually, our society is changing. What was considered as disobedience in our times is not considered the same now. (Baby Boomer male bank manager, interviewee 17)

The management style preferences of Generation Y in the current study match to a great extent the findings from Western context research in that the members of the Y Generation prefer an inclusive or participatory style of management (Broadbridge et al., 2007; Eisner, 2005). Specifically, they have been characterised as outspoken and challenging of authority (Barnes, 2009; Howe & Strauss, 2007). American Generation Ys tend to ask questions (Eisner, 2005; Francis-Smith, 2004; Gursoy et al., 2008) in a way similar to the Generation Ys in the current research context.

Promotion expectations The manager interviewees described their Generation Y employees as “ambitious” and “high achievers”, with unrealistic expectations of quick advancement up the career ladder:

Sometimes they get over-ambitious that they will get promotion frequently. But banking is a steady job and one needs to be “patient” to achieve successes. But the university graduates do not seem to understand that and get “frustrated”. (Generation X male bank manager, interviewee 13)

They are not steady at work. They want their salary to be increased rapidly. They are very impatient. In my opinion, ‘for growth of earning you have to stay with an organisation’ for a considerable amount of time. (Baby Boomer male bank manager, interviewee 17)

Generation Ys were perceived to be concerned with high achievement, and this was seen as driving their expectations of high remuneration and frequent raises at workplaces. Managers also perceived Generation Y to be less hard working and inclined to look for “shortcuts” for career progression. Several of the manager participants found that Generation Ys became easily frustrated if they did not attain quick promotions, which implied that they did not fully comprehend the importance of hard work and patience for career advancement.
They do not understand that ‘jumping’ from one organisation to another will not bring them any benefits...The young generation is too ambitious. A position for which I had to serve the bank for 15 long years, they want to achieve that within a few months! (Baby Boomer male bank manager, interviewee 22)

Bangladeshi Generation Y’s promotion expectations appear to match with Western Generation Ys’ desire for quick promotions (Dulin, 2008; Ng et al., 2010), with Alsop (2008) noting that they expected a promotion in as little as six months.

Organisation loyalty Generation X and Baby Boomer managers both considered that Bangladeshi Generation Ys showed less organisational loyalty. Half the managers said that Generation Y employees were not properly loyal to their organisations in the way that they themselves were. Several managers labelled Generation Y employees as “job hoppers”.

From this ‘jumping attitude’ of the employees, the bank is getting affected as well. The fresh graduates are not offering the bank their new and innovative ideas and they are not doing the hard work and quality duty. (Baby Boomer male bank manager, interviewee 22)

For the older generation managers, remaining with the one organisation had been linked to family responsibility as well. One Baby Boomer manager compared the situation when he started his banking career with the present situation for Generation Ys and their tendency to switch jobs, saying:

Not everyone has the ‘luxury’ to think about job changing. I had to be very careful to keep my job. Because I had to think about my family. I had young brothers and sisters. My father was old. I just couldn’t go to a new job. What if I went to a new job and then didn’t like it or I had some trouble adjusting there? I had to think about my family duties. (Baby Boomer male bank manager, interviewee 17)

This issue of family responsibility was often raised by the older generation managers. Several interviewees spoke forcefully about the fact that family responsibility made them risk averse, which may also be related to the uncertainty avoiding orientation of traditional Bangladeshi culture (Abdullah et al., 2011; Head & Sorensen, 1993; Hofstede, 2011).
inclusion to avoid uncertainty is likely due to widespread poverty in the country, higher responsibilities towards family, the high unemployment rate, job insecurity and uncertainty in economic progress. The managers’ perception about the job hopping tendencies of Generation Y raises the possibility that Bangladeshi society is actually moving towards less fear of uncertainty because of economic progress. The increased economic capacity of many families and rising competition in several service sectors has meant greater security and job opportunities for the latest entrants in the workplace.

**Generational Comparisons of Managers’ Evaluations of Generation Y**

Baby Boomer and Generation X managers were in agreement that the technical, team and communication skill sets of Generation Y are a positive strength that makes them valuable members of the current workplace. However, our interviews revealed that there were generational differences in the way that Baby Boomer and Generation X managers perceived Generation Y’s attitude towards management. Generation X managers appeared more able to understand Generation Y’s workplace expectations than Baby Boomers managers, who had a rather conservative attitude regarding management style. Baby Boomer managers tended to consider Generation Y’s desire to freely offer their opinions and question their managers to be rude and impolite. In contrast, Generation Y’s opinions and curiosity did not antagonise Generation X managers, who were more tolerant and understanding of their young employees’ views, possibly since Generation X is closer in age to Generation Y.

**CONCLUSION**

The fact that this newest and fastest growing element of the workforce, Generation Y, is underspecified in current generational cohort theory, and in particular in regard to South Asian contexts, is problematic. Corporations comprised of multiple-generation workforces and a rising number of Generation Y employees need to more fully understand this new cohort’s profile (Dulin, 2008; Tulgan & Martin, 2001). By clearly understanding Generation Y’s characteristics, business organisations have the opportunity to keep them motivated and improve organisational performance (Twenge et al., 2010). Failure to recognise their unique skills, values, job expectations and attitudes can result in ineffective management which then gives rise to conflict, dissatisfaction, low productivity and low job commitment, leading to high turnover (Macon & Artley, 2009; Rawlins et al., 2008; Westerman & Yamamura,
This study extends the generational literature from a non-Western perspective by providing a profile of Generation Y in the populous, emerging South Asian country of Bangladesh. In the absence of any identified academic publication on generational cohorts in Bangladesh, the present study offers a significant insight into the youngest generation of professional employees with respect to their workplace behaviours, attitudes and expectations.

There are several unique contributions made by this research. First, our findings point to the fact that a shift in workplace expectations is taking place as the younger generation in South Asia enters the workforce. For example, Bangladesh traditionally has been a collectivist society that has maintained a high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, and a long term orientation. This collectivist society appears to be facing a changing cultural orientation in Generation Y, who prefer less power distance in their relationships with authority, are more accepting of uncertainty, more short-term oriented and display more individualistic preferences in the workplace.

Our finding of similarities between the Bangladeshi and existing Western Generation Y profiles suggests that at least for this youngest workplace cohort, generational theory applies to both developed and developing countries. It is likely that the recent influences of Westernisation and globalisation in South Asia (Page & Crawley, 2001) have contributed to this convergence of the Generation Y profiles.

Specifically, in accord with our second research question, “how does the Bangladeshi Generation Y profile compare with the Western profile?” our research suggests that there are three key areas where Bangladeshi Generation Y’s have the same competencies as western members of Generation Y. These are: technological skills, communication skills, and teamwork practices. Also, the attitudes of Bangladeshi Generation Y’s towards preferred management style, promotion expectations, and organizational commitment are similar to those of western members of Generation Y.

Implications for Managers
In accord with our first research question, “what is the profile of Generation Y business graduates in Bangladesh from their manager’s perspective,” our results suggest several important implications for talent management practices to ensure the motivation and retention of the Generation Y workforce in Bangladesh. Namely, one of the significant implications coming out of the current study for Bangladeshi managers is that Generation Y employees prefer an inclusive style of management. It is very important for organisations to evaluate their prevailing management styles, because if there is a mismatch between Generation Y’s expectations and organisational practices, there is the possibility for conflict (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Gursoy et al., 2008; Macon & Artley, 2009). For example, although Bangladesh is traditionally a high power distance society, where organisations usually practice a top-down management style, the present study indicates that younger Bangladeshi employees prefer a more inclusive style of management, which is a change from previous generations. This suggests that South Asian organisations may need to assess their management styles and consider possible changes in their supervision of younger employees. Also we found evidence that Bangladeshi Generation Y’s promotion expectations appear to match with Western Generation Ys’ desire for quick promotions (Dulin, 2008; Ng et al., 2010). Both of these findings suggest that HRM units should take a proactive approach to encouraging inclusive leadership from managers or at least developing the capacity for inclusive leadership. Our findings also suggest that supervisors should be careful to manage the promotion expectations of Bangladeshi Generation Y’s. If these recommendations are practiced, consistent with the observations from leading talent management research (Barnes, 2009; McDonnell, 2011; Real, Mitnick & Maloney, 2010) organizations can expect a better return on their investment in Generation Y employees, who will become the most numerous generation in the workforce (Twenge, 2006).

The study highlights another important feature of managing Generation Y employees in Bangladesh: Generation X managers find it easier to relate to Generation Y than do Baby Boomer managers. In contrast, several generational cohort studies conducted in the West have suggested that Baby Boomers are more effective in the role of mentoring Generation Y (Jenkins, 2008; Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008). This current study highlights the danger of assuming a “one size fits all” approach in management practice. The current findings suggest that it is important to take into account the national context. Organisations in Bangladesh (and possibly in South Asia in general) need to address the gap between Baby Boomer managers and Generation Y employees. For example, managers in different positions need to be alerted
to young employees’ supervision expectations; in this case, organisations need to acknowledge changing cultural orientations in the country due to the different types of international, personal and educational experiences that have influenced Generation Y in ways earlier generations of Bangladeshis have not known.

In Bangladesh, Generation X managers may be used as useful mentors to Generation Y employees to guide their career development. These mentors could help young employees set more realistic career expectations and attainable goals and alert them to the dangers of unrealistic expectations and the perils of short-term mismatch at the beginning of their career. If the managerial relationship between Generation X and Generation Y can be strengthened, Bangladeshi organisations may benefit in the long term as more Baby Boomers will be retiring from their jobs in the coming years, while Generation X and Y will continue to be in the job market for many years to come.

Generation Y displays more individualistic tendencies, such as expecting fast promotions, high salaries and numerous fringe benefits. In this respect, Generation Ys have been perceived to be more willing to accept uncertainty in their lives than are their predecessors. Furthermore, Bangladeshi Generation Ys possess a more short-term orientation than their older colleagues. Leaning towards short-term orientation has influenced Generation Ys to be more ambitious, with unfulfilled expectations causing them to become frustrated, demotivated and consequently to search for new jobs. Hence, organisations may think of providing developmental opportunities and benefits deemed attractive by their young employees that will satisfy their short-term needs.

In addition, Generation Y’s willingness to accept uncertainty, coupled with their ambitious attitude, may motivate them to accept challenging assignments that could enhance their satisfaction in reaching short-term goals. In this way, organisations can harness Generation Y’s energy and ambition to benefit the organisation. Nevertheless, there should be scope for Generation Y to be rewarded for long-term commitment as well. Organisations can try to
fulfil Generation Y’s expectations that are short-term in nature, as well as increase their long-term organisational commitment.

Limitations and Future Directions for Research

As in all research, there are limitations to the present study. Employer perspectives about Generation Y business graduates were derived from a limited sample of twenty two managers in the banking sector. Future research could increase the sample size and broaden the scope to include managers from other industry sectors like manufacturing, governmental and non-government organisations, and also gather perceptions about Generation Y workers who have not attended university. Another limitation is that we collected data only from one country in South Asia – Bangladesh. While it is reasonable to expect that the results of this study could transfer to other countries in South Asia, such as India and Pakistan, due to similar cultural and historical factors, such predictions need to be verified through empirical research.

This study revealed that there are tensions in the Bangladeshi workplace due to perceived differences between the generations. Although Bangladeshi Generation Ys are more individualistic than previous generations, they enjoy working collaboratively in teams. More multigenerational team-based projects may serve to foster enhanced understanding between generations (Benson & Brown, 2011; McGuire et al., 2007; Sirias et al., 2007). Researchers have suggested bringing a multigenerational workforce together in various projects and for training sessions so that each generational cohort has the opportunity to understand what they have in common and what divides them. Greater understanding is likely to foster greater harmony (McGuire et al., 2007; Sirias et al., 2007). As argued by Macon and Artley (2009), to ensure an efficient, competitive and sustainable workforce in today’s diverse, multigenerational organisations, managers must seek to understand each generation’s unique needs and leverage their distinct strengths.
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<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Probable causal events</th>
<th>Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Observing the failure of parents and grandparents in meeting goals</td>
<td>Loughlin &amp; Barling 2001; Ng et al. 2010; Wong et al. 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Working mothers, renewed focus on children and family, exposure to an American school system that catered to people’s self-esteem</td>
<td>Broadbridge et al. 2009; Glass 2007; Myers &amp; Sadaghiani 2010; Zemke et al. 2000</td>
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<td>Enthusiastic and optimistic</td>
<td>Economic expansion, relative affluence, low unemployment</td>
<td>Solnet &amp; Hood 2008</td>
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<td>High self-esteem</td>
<td>Participation in family decision-making (Inclusive styles of parenting)</td>
<td>Alsop 2008; Eisner 2005; Hurst &amp; Good 2009; Lowe et al. 2008; Szamosi 2006</td>
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<td>Expectation of high salary, meaningful work, involvement and achievement orientation</td>
<td>Raised in an environment of high expectation with much feedback and praise</td>
<td>Alsop 2008; Marston 2007; Martin &amp; Tulgan 2001; Sheahan 2005; Sujansky &amp; Ferri-Reed 2009</td>
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<td>Multi-taskers</td>
<td>Technological competence</td>
<td>Arhin 2009; Eisner 2005</td>
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<td>Good at teamwork</td>
<td>Exposure to group work</td>
<td>Dulin 2008; Lancaster &amp; Stillman 2002; Myers &amp; Sadaghiani 2010</td>
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Table 2 Managers’ Perceptions of Bangladeshi Generation Y Employees

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<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Specific Work Attitudes</th>
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<td><strong>Technology skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Attitudes to leadership</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• good technological competence</td>
<td>• prefer inclusive relationships with manager</td>
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<td>• exposed to computers at home and at educational institutions</td>
<td>• more forthright and opinionated</td>
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<td>• can help managers to learn computer and software skills</td>
<td>• not deferential to managers</td>
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<td>• will substitute books and newspapers with internet and cell phone</td>
<td>• “spoon fed’ mentality (less willingness to learn, not inquisitive, not responsible in work life)</td>
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<td><strong>Communication skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promotion expectations</strong></td>
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<td>• good presentation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>• strong interpersonal relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• good professional manners and behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Organisation loyalty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comfortable in work environments that require teamwork</td>
<td>• less job loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• good at team work</td>
<td>• too impatient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• exposed to group activities at university</td>
<td>• more job switching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>