AJ ACADEMIC JOURNALS
expand your knowledge

International Journal of Psychology and Counselling

Full Length Research Paper

Understanding the psychology of youths: Generation gap

Suad M. A. S. Al-Lawati

Department of Psychology, College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University, P.O. Box 30, P.C 123 Al Khoud, Muscat Sultanate of Oman.

The aim of this study is to understand the mind set of youths in relation to gender, college, and achievement levels. It is of essence, that counsellors, educators, parents and policy makers are able to uncover the factors that increase the gap between generations, so that they are can help them adjust to educational institutions, family system, work environment, and life in general. A sample of 310 students (male and female) was randomly selected from eight scientific and humanities colleges at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). A questionnaire of Sulaiman and Al-Muscati was used to measure the students' perception of generation gap. The researchers found that: Personality characteristics, information level, technical information, life style, social norms and cultural values, work values, and ways of communication were the factors that contributed to generation gaps from the pilot qualitative study and quantitative studies. The reliability and validity of the instruments were high and suitable for implementation. The result of the study indicated a high generation gap between youths and their parents due to technological information, life style, and personality characteristics factors. Also, there was medium generation gap due to social norms and cultural values factors. However, there was low generation gap between youths and their parents in communication ways, and information level factors. The generation gap is higher between the male students and their parents than female students in social norms and cultural values, communication ways, and information levels factors. Also the result showed Science College students have a greater generation gap with their parents than Humanities College students on two factors: Personality characteristics and technological information. Moreover the result revealed differences among the three categories of achievers (medium achievers, average achievers, and low achievers). All the differences were in favour of the three categories based on life style. The study suggests adjustment and bridging of generation gap.

Key words: Psychology of young people, counselling, generation gap, gender, college, achievement, Oman.

INTRODUCTION

We currently live in a globalized society, a society that is experiencing rapid changes as a result of tremendous developments in the digital technology, media, culture, language, social media and the fourth industrial

revolutions. All these have contributed to creating a quick and accessible means of communication between different people, families, society, cultures, and countries around the world. The recent advancements we have witnessed in the world of digital technology, media technology, and social media have made the world a small global village, one in which people can communicate immediately and efficiently with one another. At times, the total digital communication as previous research has shown is estimated at 80-90% between individuals.

While the remarkable and quick change of digital active technology, media, and social media has brought positive and different elements to individual and family lives at large. On the other hand, some youths encounter daily contradictions in their lives due to some of the complexities associated with technological advancements; leading to the creation of a generation differences and miscommunication which affects the relationships. Generation gap between youths and their parents is difference in beliefs, politics or values (Wikipedia, 2019). Historically, William Strauss and Neil Howe used birth dates ranges and collective cultural experiences to classify two distinct generations; a X generation and millennial and developed a theory of cyclical generation trends (Beinhoff, 2011). Today's generation youths are called a range of terms including: digital generation, internet generation (Net generation), millennial generation, Y generation and many others (McCrindle, 2009). In literature each generation is created once every 20-25 years (Bozavli, 2016). Individuals born between 1922 and 1945 are called a silent generation or traditional generation (Weeks, 2017) or matures (Christopher, 2016). The baby boomers were born from1946 to1964 (Christopher, 2016; Weeks, 2017). Those born between 1965 and 1983 are named as X generation while those between 1984 and 2002 are called Y generation or Millennials and those after 2003 are a "Z" generation children and adolescence (Christopher, 2016; Weeks, 2017). Minet (2013) as sited in (Bozavil, 2016) states generations differ from one other in many aspects such as: qualities and attributes. Moreover, Minet further describes different generations: the traditional generation shows respect for authority, takes responsibility but, is unable to communicate directly; baby boomers avoid conflict and are more optimistic. An X generation expresses global ideas and pro-freedom. A Y generation is sociable, self-confident, and flexible in work, a multitasked, tolerant and interested in technology. A Z generation grows up with modern technological tools such as the internet, smart phones, Ipads and notebooks and lives constant novelties in technology (Bozavli, 2016). Educators in all education levels and fields, counsellors, administrators, and leaders clearly recognise that the new generation's psychology is different. They think, learn and act differently because they live in a world occupied with digital information, active

technology, knowledgably economy and heading towards fourth industrial revolution. A Y generation was raised by parents encouraged to self- growth, expressiveness, open educational opportunities, and material gain (Christopher, 2016).This generation favours multitasking, which refers to the act of doing multiple tasks at the same time instead of concentrating on one task at a time. Furthermore, this generation seems to be more impacted by their peer groups or social media influencers than their parents due to their constant engagement and interactions on social media and active technology. This overreliance on digital sources of information exists in even a collective society such as Oman, and is represented by the fact that they are often closer to people on social media creating their own circle, than their own family members living in the same household. Moreover, family structures have changed from the extended family form to the nuclear family and other alternative forms. These changes have made today's families more independent of one another, decreasing family cohesion and playing a role in increasing generation gap. The digital active technology gap between children and parents is much greater than the actual age gap which may reflect negatively on family member relations/relationships

The generations in Oman can be divided into four generations:

(1) Pre-Omani Modern Renaissance, Pre-1970's and 1970's Generation: The pre-1970s' generation lived a very difficult life, as few schools existed in their time and their curriculum was often created by the teachers as they go by. This generation also lacked access to electricity, modern water supplies, modern roads, and medical services including hospitals. This generation lived the Omani modern renaissance and participated in the hard work of building the modern state of Sultanate of Oman. The 1970's generation lived through the development of the Omani modern state, and witnessed building modern country through hard work, responsibility, and independence by pre- 1970's generation. The Omani modern renaissance moved towards achieving the aspirations of the country, and the citizens in building a modern state. This modern state ensured security, stability, progress and prosperity for the nation.

(2) 1980's and 1990''s Generation: This generation are the youths generation of now. This generation has self-confidence, advanced electricity and privileges, and a well-established self-identity. From their birth, this generation of Omanis were enjoying accessible educational programs, free health services, improved standards of living, sophisticated infrastructure and modern country.

(3) 2000's Generation: this generation born after the year 2000 includes teenagers and children. This generation has a similar experienced to that of the 80's generation, as well as, digital technology, fast internet, social media

platforms, visual reality, knowledge economy and the fourth industrial revolutions.

There are many factors that play measure role in creating generation gap between youths and the past two generations in today's world. Personality characteristic, technological information, work values, and life style are explicit factors that create differences between generations due to the global environment, information economy, technology revolution and the era they live in. Today's youth generation's psychology is different from the past two generations. Some of them may have been brought up in child centred environments, in which they received parent's attention and care, receiving what they desire. The intense parental involvement from their Baby Boomer parents resulted in possession of strong family bonds (Christopher, 2016). However, this up bringing resulted in youth generation holding inflated expectation, and making their personal life a main priority (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010; Christopher, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses and outlines the existing generation gap and its reflection on psychology of youths and related variables. Today's generation gap between parents and their college aged-children is caused factors. The "millennial generations" are individuals that have grown up with active technology such as: the internet, texting, video games, and computers, as a part of their everyday lives (Pricer, 2008). Students in the millennial generation are often raised in environments that emphasize individuality, information, entertainment and social interactions with peers and friends (Roehling et al., 2011). The technological gap between parents and their college-aged children is conceptualized as much greater than the actual age gap, which could lead to a technological and emotional disconnect (Roehling et al., 2011).

According to Patton (2012) many graduate students feel a form of disconnect from their family, when they are back home for the holidays or for good. Once back home, the students may experience tension, misunderstandings, and awkwardness often leading them to constantly waver between their cultures and identities. Family members left behind may experience feelings of anger or envy that their loved ones had left them and came back changed (Patton, 2012). The former family dynamic may lead students to feel devalued and disrespected by their families. However, it is essential to note that such dynamics are not limited to first-generation students, or those from minority or working-class backgrounds. This disconnection between parents and graduate students occurs regardless of the parent's educational background (Patton, 2012).

In a study researchers compared three age groups of 880 students (under 20, 20, 30) to investigate the differences between generation. They found students spent more time on digital technology, but the rang of digital technology they used was limited; 30% of the students used digital technologies for 20 h per week. On the other hand, 40 and 34% of them used digital technology up to 10 h per week. Moreover, the researchers did not found significant differences between the two generations due to the time spent on using digital technology (Kwok-wing and Kian-Sam, 2015). However, researchers in another study discovered that young generations use internet on smart phones for almost 24 h connecting to social network, instant messaging, playing online games, e-reading, listening to music, and video streaming, online shopping, paying bills on line, and online studies. On the other hand, the older generations use internet for less than 6 h per day with a slight higher percentage of reading books or news (Anshari et al., 2016). In another study, researchers studied generation gap of 555 parents and 604 youths; they found out youths were perceived to be knowledgeable about interactive technology from both parties regardless of the interactive technology that they are using. The difference of knowledge between parents and youths was larger in the area of social networking; however it was smaller among the technologies that have been in use for long such as e-mails (Vaterlaus et al., 2015). Thus, despite recent active technological advancements in communication through the Internet, smart phones and more particularly social media such as Skype (chat rooms, video chats) and so on, it is key to note that digital communication cannot replace the importance of face-to-face interactions and communication.

In addition to technology, the way in which the millennial generation chose to communicate with their parents has an impact on broadening or narrowing the generation gap. On one hand, technological advances have made communication with their children more accessible as well as instantaneous to parents. This accessibility of communication has been aided by the emergence of technologies and devices such as cell phones, texting, and email that allow immediate communication (Pricer, 2008). The accessibility of communication has both a positive and negative impact on parent-child relationships. Parents are able to communicate more easily with their children, leading to the provision of more trust. They are also more able to assert more control and surveillances over their college-aged children. This ease of communication may intensify the emergence of the "Helicopter parent" (Pricer, 2008). According to the literature, "Helicopter parents" are conceptualized as very overprotective, and are often overly involved in their children's lives. This often manifests in the parents hovering around their children's lives (Pricer, 2008). Furthermore, while overprotective parenting has always existed, the accessibility of communication may increase the overprotective behavior of 'helicopter parents", thus leading to a greater

generation gap between parents and their children (Pricer, 2008). Harper et al. (2012) conducted a study that investigated the relationship between parental contact (frequency of student-parent communication) and parental involvement (parental interest or participation in students' academic progress and decision-making) with college-students' academic, social and personal development. The researchers found that of the significant relationships revealed, parental involvement comprised over two-thirds of them (Harper et al., 2012). The generation gap can also separate teachers from students in schools (Arar, 2014) and in college creating communication gap between generations (Bahadure et al., 2016). The result from a study indicated that a communication gap still exists between generations. This is a big obstacle to effective intergenerational dialogue between youth, parents, educators (Stepanova, 2014). Stepanova (2014) recommends that educators instead of relying on their ordinary common sense in their interaction with millenniums generation should possess scientific psychological knowledge to understand the psychology of youths, making research such as this even more pivotal than claimed earlier. It is important to study today's youths as a distinct group because they need to be treated , taught, marketed to, communicated with, and studied differently from previous recent generation (Beinhoff, 2011).

Research shows that parental educational background or even educational differences can lead to the production of a generation gap. Parents have a great influence on their children's decision for college enrollment (Dockery and McKelvey, 2013). 2002 students revealed that family plays a more important role in predicting overall 2 years or 4 year college attendances. Additionally, school performance plays an important role in predicting students' 4years college attendance, achievement, and academic excellence (Wang-Yeung, 2016). According to Summerville and Bernadette (2009) and Hirschman (2016), parents' own educational background has a prominent impact on a students' decision to attend college, as well as a determining effect on their relationship with their children once they are admitted to college. In particular, students whose parents have an educational level below a baccalaureate degree fair worse in their first year of college than students whose parents have a baccalaureate degree or at least some form of post graduate degree (D'Allegro and Kerns, 2010). This may be explicated by the fact that parents with higher education are more able to prepare and assist their children in their transition to college, as well as provide them with social capital that is necessary to do well in higher education. Moreover, college-educated children may feel uncomfortable with uneducated parents, and may not relate to them in terms of lifestyle, or education or eventually social class. This information is very relevant for career counsellors in schools or colleges as receiving career information and college programs

could provide more support for college planning, retention and graduation for all students.

In addition to previous factors that generate a generation gap, an individual's cultural values have an influential impact on producing generation gaps. According to Wu and Chao (2011) generational cultural gaps represent the mismatch between an adolescent's ideals, and the perceptions of the parent-adolescent relationship. Choi et al. (2008) elaborate on this through their work on Intergenerational cultural dissonance. Intergenerational cultural dissonance refers to the existence of a clash between parents and children over cultural values, and is a particularly relevant issue for Asian American youth and Russian youth (Stepanova, 2014). Stepanova (2014) studied 60 younger generation youths, 55 parents, 45 grandparents, and 40 educators. The results of the study revealed that the younger generation adapts to new values, negative numerical values, indicating a discrepancy between value orientations. Stepanova (2014) recommended the generations establish and keep a sense of identity with each other and relay on ethno cultural experiences. Choi et al., (2008) investigated the mechanisms by which intergenerational cultural dissonance contributed to problem behaviors, particularly whether it predicts the emergence of parent-child conflicts, whether these conflicts have a direct impact on youth problem behaviors, and finally whether positive bonding with parents could mediate the impact of these conflicts on youths' problem behavior. The results of the study indicated that intergenerational cultural dissonance can predict problem behaviors by increasing parent-child conflicts, and thus leading to weaker positive parent-child bonding (Choi et al., 2008). The authors suggest that interventions that target youths' perception of intergenerational cultural gaps help them deal with conflict, and assist them in strengthening their bonds with their parents. This may be able to prevent problem behaviors among Asian American families (Choi et al., 2008).

Research indicates that gender has a key role in producing generation gaps. Ewert (2012) highlights a dramatic reversal of gender inequality in education. The 1980s marked the era where colleges and universities granted the majority of bachelor's degrees to women. Thus, women showed equal graduation rates with men, and then managed to surpass them (Ewert, 2012). In the present moment, women are more likely to achieve a bachelor's degree regardless of race, ethnic group and socioeconomic status. Reasons for this gender gap in education have been suggested to be a result of various factors including: declining discrimination, patterns of family formation, changing norms, and so on (Ewert, 2012). This gender gap can also be found in higher education academic careers (Dias et al., 2013). In Middle Eastern and Arabic societies and educational systems, gender construction is dramatically different and the

deconstruction of traditional structures and norms by the new generation will promote gender equality (Arar, 2014). This contemporary gender disparity in education may cause today's generation of women to have a broader generation gap with their parents than men (EwerT, 2012). As mentioned earlier, parent-child educational differences may have a prominent impact on their relationship, intimacy, and ways of communication. College-educated children may feel that they can no longer relate to their parents, or may perceive their parents' views as "old fashioned". In a study, Ilomaki (2011) found that male teachers and students in Finland estimated their ICT skills on a higher level than female teachers and students. Ilomaki (2011) concluded the gap between genders and generations will reduce in the future, but continues to exist despite the social and widespread use of ICT and computer systems. In another study from a sample of 589, researchers found out 41% of females and 34% of males used social media on smart phones; moreover, 73% of females and 60% of males used instant messaging (Anshari et al., 2016). The researchers concluded that both genders use technology in their communication; however females have the higher percentage than the males. In his investigation of nearly 10,000 schools during the period between leaving high school and completing college, Hirschman (2016) found that female students scored and achieved better grades, and received more support and encouragement from family, peers and educators. Another study on 1511 students also found and confirmed similar outcomes and results as discussed earlier. Male students have higher rates of academic difficulties and lower college enrollment and graduation rates compared with female students (Sawnson et al., 2017). At SQU, the admission to university is 50% for males and 50% for females for similar reasons.

Objective of study

There is a great importance and need for previous generations to grasp a deeper understanding of the psychology of youths before socializing, interacting, collaborating, connecting, and leading as well as, dialoguing with them at home, school, work and life. The research presented indicates the prevalence and broadening of a generation gap, particularly among the after 80's generation and older generation. Understanding the psychology of youths requires an understanding of the differences between different generations. Being equipped with this understanding will enhance us in learning effective ways of communication, establishing strong positive bonds, and retaining generational cultural values. Also, it is important for youths to understand themselves and the differences between them and previous generation to bridge the generation gap.

METHODOLOGY

Research hypothesis

(1) First hypothesis: "There is a generation gap between SQU Students and their parents on generation gap questionnaire".
(2) Second hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences between female and male students on agreement level degree on the generation gap questionnaire".
(3) Third hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences in the generation gap between Science college students and Humanist college students".
(4) Fourth hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences in the generation gap between high achievers, medium achievers, average achievers, and low achievers.

Study sample

The sample was selected randomly and consisted of 310 students (age 18- 23) which are above 3% from the study's population at Sultan Qaboos University. The higher achiever students achieved GPA of 3.70 and above, medium achievers GPA was 3.69- 2.5, and lower achievers was below 2.5. The sample details are in Table 1.

Research questionnaire

The researcher (Sulaiman and Al-Muscati, 2017) prepared the questionnaire from a literature review on generation gap studies, and from a qualitative (N=12), and pilot study (N = 80). The research questionnaire, after conducting face validity, consists of 7 dimensions measuring the gap as follows: (1) Personality Characteristics: independency, self-satisfaction, life and work balance, responsibility, materialistic. (2) Life Style: basic vs. luxury, daily routine, activities and hobbies, interests, multitasking, connecting with family. (3) Social norms and Cultural values: value acceptance, life values, social norms, social customs and tradition. (4) Communication Ways: support via communication, communication with parents, learning new language, learning words from other language, learning words from other culture, participation involvement. (5) Work Value: timing flexibility, working ways, working style, self vs. Work priorities, career advancement. (6) Technology Information: technology and time, technology effort, technology and work smartly, social network, networking, new Technology programs and terms. (7) Information Level: intellectual level, parenting styles, parents support, family interaction, family dialogue. The questionnaire consists of 50 items measuring students' perception of the gap between themselves and their parents and older generation on seven scales as follows: (1) extremely do not agree, (2) do not agree, (3) do not agree to certain extent, (4) agree to certain extent, (5) agree (6) extremely agree. Other variables were included in the questionnaire such as: gender, college, study year, and GPA. Table 2 shows items distribution on each dimension. The researchers used the following criteria to outline the students' response range:

Low agreement (L):   1.00 - 2.66
Moderate agreement (M):   2.67 - 4.33
High agreement (H):   4.34 - 6.00

Questionnaire validity was measured through the internal consistency (0.40-0.60) and reliability was 0.85. Table 3 shows the result.

Table 1. The sample details.

College year	Gender		College	
			Science	Art
First	M	18	6	24
	F	27	19	46
Second	M	24	32	56
	F	42	50	92
Third	M	23	30	53
	F	12	9	21
Fourth	M	7	5	12
	F	3	1	4
Total	156		152	*308

*Two peoples data in sample is incomplete (308+2 = 310 students).

Table 2. items distribution on each dimension.

Numbers	Dimension	Items	Items N
1	Personality characteristics	8, 25, 30, 34, 36, 47, 48	7
2	Technological Information	6, 12, 14, 16, 22, .37, 42	7
3	Life style	3, 9, 11, 18, 21, 26, 39	7
4	Social norms and cultural values	15, 27, 33, 38, 41, 45, 46	7
5	Communication ways	1, 2, 5, 17, 23, 44, 50	7
6	Information level	4, 7,10, 19, 20, 28, 43	7
7	Work values	13, 24,29, 31, 32, 35,40, 49	8
Total	(7) dimensions		50

Table 3. Questionnaire validity.

S/N	Alpha Cronbach	Dimension
1	0.51	Personality Characteristics
2	0.4	Technological Information
3	0.42	Life style
4	0.6	Social norms and Cultural values
5	0.53	Communication Ways
6	0.47	Information Level
7	0.52	Work values
8	0.85	Total

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis results

"There is a generation gap between SQU Students and their parents on generation gap on the questionnaire". To test this hypothesis, (Table 4). Results from the table show "T" value for the general mean is positive and statistically significant ($0.001 \geq \alpha$). This value indicates that the agreement level is high; there is a gap between the generations according to sample responses, meaning that the hypothesis is accepted. The results show "T"

Table 4. Generation gap between SQU Students and their parents on generation gap questionnaire.

Rank**	Dimension no.	Dimensions	M	SD	T value	Sig	Response level
1	3	Life style	4.29	0.72	19.04	0.00	H
2	2	Technological information	3.81	0.62	8.91	0.00	H
3	1	Personality characteristics	3.79	0.66	7.79	0.00	H
4	7	Work value	3.72	0.64	6.08	0.00	H
5	4	Social norms and cultural values	3.44	0.77	0.24-	0.00	M
6	5	Communication ways	3.33	0.71	4.27-	0.00	L
7	6	Information level	3.23	0.67	7.07-	0.00	L
		Total V of Q	3.67	0.48	6.08	0.00	H

**Mean Ranks arranged descendin, *N: sample number (N*=310).

value on the first, second, third, seventh was positive and statistically significant at (0.001≥α). This value shows high level of agreement about the generation gap. The fourth dimension "T" value was not statistically significant at (0.001≥α); this indicates medium level of agreement for sample responses on this dimension. The "T" value on the fifth and six dimensions was negative and statistically significant (0.001≥α). This value represents that the agreement level is low on both dimensions and statistically significant (0.001≥α). Between 3.23 and 4.29, the first dimension was "Life style" with M (4.29) and SD (0.72), the second dimension was "Technological Information" with M (3.81) and SD (0.62), on the contrary the third dimension was "Information level" with M (3.23) and SD (0.64).

The above findings revealed that there is a high generation gap between the 80s and 90s generation and the previous generation due to various factors. Such factors could be explained further as follows. There is a high generation gap in Life style that could be a result of the college-educated children feeling uncomfortable with uneducated parents, and may not relate to them in terms of lifestyle, or education or eventually social class. There were also differences in lifestyle preferences between two generations such as waking and staying up times (Sulaiman and Al-Muscati, 2017). Moreover, the new generation may have more exposure to different cultures and experiences, globalization and advanced digital technology. This is reiterated by the study results that youths' interest in life, activities, hobbies, and use of technology and entertainment, as well as, connection with family was moderately different in contrast to previous generations (Sulaiman and Al-Muscati, 2017).

There is a high generation gap in technological information. These results support the finding that a large technological gap exists between the millennial generation and their parents (Roehling et al., 2011; Sulaiman and Al- Muscati, 2017). In their study, Sulaiman and Al-Muscati (2017) found that students agreed that using technology information makes them work smarter, saves time and efforts at work (Sulaiman and Al- Muscati, 2017). Despite the overreliance on digital technology, as

well as its advancements, digital communication cannot replace the significance of face-to-face communication (Patton, 2012); however, according to Sulaiman and Al-Muscati (2017) Omani students prefer technological communication to face to face meeting. There is a high generation gap in personality characteristics. The 80s and 90's generation personality characteristics are different from those of the older generation and the 70s-generation personality characteristic.

Whilst in Oman, the Pre-70s and the 70s generations experienced more hardship, and difficulties in their lives, and lived a life without the ease of modern services and technology. The 80s generation were born into a modern state, and were provided all the modern services and technology to facilitate their day-to-day lives. This finding reaffirms the point that students accomplish self-satisfaction through finding a balance between work and life (Sulaiman and Al-Muscati 2017). Sulaiman and Al-Muscati (2017) also uncovered that moderate differences existed between the generations in terms of spending on luxury as well as being accustomed to more pampered and luxurious lives. This is because they have more access to basic resources such as electricity and water, as well as more opportunities for luxury products and modern technology than previous generations.

There is a high generation gap between youths and older generation in work value. The results reveal youth generation prefer work-life balance, flexible work hours, concentrate on their own development, as well as their career advancement, and prefer rest than formalities at work. This finding agrees with previous studies; older generation made many sacrifices working for longer hours, patiently waiting for promotions because career was an essential component of their identity. On the contrary the millennial generation is extraordinarily confident in their abilities and without working hard to prove themselves; they seek key and leadership roles very early at work. This makes older generation to become frustrated and that create complications and conflict between them (Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). On the contrary, Weeks (2017) study found out career goal was a key component of meaningful work for both

generations; however, each generation has negative perspective and stereotype of other generations that they value money over work values, take frequent rests instead of working hard, and lack work meaning.

There is a medium generation gap in social norms and cultural values between the new generation (born in 80s) and the 90s generation's older generation. This finding contradicts that of Choi et al. (2008); and Stepanova (2014), that Omani youths are exposed to Western values from different sources in our globalized society, and may adopt some of these values, leading to a possible generation gap. Omani youths still maintain their traditional values and social norms which are repeatedly reinforced through Omani media, school curriculums and prevalent social norms. This finding is supported by another study of youths that indicates that Omani youths still attend social events mildly, and that no differences were found between the two generations in adhering to Omani cultural values as they readily follow Omani social and traditional customs in today's modern life (Sulaiman and Al-Muscati, 2017).

There is a low generation gap in Communication Ways. Sulaiman and Al- Muscati (2017) discovered that Omani youths greatly prefer to take support from their peers and consult them when they are confused over making big decisions. This is contrary to Pricer (2008)'s findings in which they stated that digital means of technology including: texting, cellphones, email and so on may enable 'helicopter parents' to assert more control and surveillance over their children, leading to a greater generation gap. The results of this study show that family members are more able to trust their children with the use of modern technology. Moreover, as Oman is still a collectivist society, the members of society adhere to clear societal and family boundaries and social norms. Moreover, the 70's and 80's generation communicate well with each other specially when taking mutual decisions.

There is a low generation gap in information level. As Oman is a collectivist society, the knowledge brought forth by first generation students into their families is often utilized to benefit the family and community as opposed to individualistic societies which place a higher emphasis on individualism. Interestingly, Omani youths seem to perceive their generation as being more intelligent than the previous generations.

Second hypothesis result

 "There are statistically significant differences between female and male students on agreement level degree on the generation gap questionnaire".

To test this hypothesis, the means and standard deviation of sample's responses on the dimensions were calculated according to gender (M & F). Moreover "T" test for two separate samples was calculated to compare them. Table 5 summarize the results. The results show there are statistically significant differences at (0.05≥α) between male and female students in relation to the degree level on the generation gap questionnaire in the favour of male students. This leads the researchers to accept the hypothesis. Besides, there are statistically significant differences at (0.001≥α) only for the following dimensions: Social norms and cultural values, communication ways, and information level in male students' favour. There are no statistically significant differences at (0.001≥α) for other dimensions due to the gender variable.

The results indicate that the generation gap between the male students and their parents is greater than the generation gap between female students and their parents. This can be explained through the three dimension of the questionnaire: social norms and cultural values, communication ways, and information levels. In terms of social norms and cultural values, SQU male students prescribe less to social norms and cultural values than female students. Males in Omani society are granted with more parental freedom in terms of not being required to report daily life activities, no curfews or more relaxed curfews than their female counterparts, and sleeping outside of the family house with friends, particularly in rural areas. As a result, males experience less familial boundaries and unspoken family rules than Omani females who consequently spend a lot of their time with the family and participate in social events. Thus, female students receive more familial support and encouragement to complete their education (Hirschman, 2016). This finding strongly contradicts with Ewer (2012) that women have a broader generation gap with their parents.

In terms of communication ways, there is a greater generation gap between males and their families and the older generation. This finding agrees with male students have more support than female students in using cell phones and other electronic dives to communicate (Baker et al., 2012). The older generation tends to have a stronger preference for face to face communication compared to youths, as well as, young men spend less time at home with family; they are more dependent on their friends for support when confused using social net work platforms for faster, mutual support. To reduce communication gap between youths and their parents researchers suggest effective listening, sharing ideas and problems, seeking advice from parents, treating elders with respect, and giving equal importance to career and family (Bahadure et al., 2016).

In terms of informational level, male students have higher generation gap than female students with their parents on information level. Male students and teachers predicted their ICT skills to be higher than female students and teachers (Ilomäki, 2011). Another study's results indicated that youths over-estimated their father information level and underestimated their mother's

Table 5. The means and standard deviation of sample's responses

Dimension	Gender	M	SD	T	SL	Direction differences
Personality characteristics	M (145)	3.83	0.68	0.93	0.35	_
	F (163)	3.76	0.65			
Technological information	M (145)	3.79	0.6	0.44	0.66	--
	F (163)	3.83	0.63			
Life style	M (145)	4.3	0.77	0.74	0.74	-
	F (163)	4.28	0.69			
Social norms and Cultural values	M (145)	3.69	0.72	4.22	0.00	Male Students
	F (163)	3.33	0.77			
Communication Ways	M (145)	3.46	0.71	3.20	0.00	Male Students
	F (163)	3.21	0.69			
Information level	M (145)	3.39	0.68	4.03	0.00	Male Students
	F (163)	3.08	0.64			
Work Value	M (145)	3.74	0.62	0.57	0.57	
	F (163)	3.70	0.66			
Total Q	M (145)	3.74	0.50	2.64	0.01	Male Students
	F (163)	3.60	0.46			

information level of interactive technology (Vaterlaus et al., 2015). That could indicate male students have more generation gap with their mothers than their fathers.

Third hypothesis result

"There are statistically significant differences in the generation gap between Science college students and Humanities college students".

To test this hypothesis the means and standard deviation of sample's responses on the dimensions were calculated according to College (S & H). Moreover "T" test for the two separate samples was calculated to compare them. Table 6 summarizes the "T" test results:

The results show there are statistically significant differences at (0.05≥α) between science college students and humanities college students on agreement level degree on the generation gap questionnaire. This was in favour of science college students, in two dimensions only. This leads the researchers to accept the hypothesis only in two dimensions and reject it for the other study dimensions. There are statistically significant differences at (0.05≥α) only for the following two dimensions: Personality characteristics and technological Information

for science college students. There are no statistically significant differences at (0.05≥α) for other dimensions or total questionnaire due to the college variable.

Previous results indicate that science college students have a greater generation gap with their parents and older generation than humanities college students on two dimensions: Personality Characteristics and Technological Information. This can be explained by the fact that science college students are more familiar with technological information and use it in their daily lives (at university as well as at home) than humanities college students. This in turn, reflects on their personality characteristics too.

Fourth hypothesis result

"There are statistically significant differences in the generation gap between high achiever students, medium achiever students, average achiever students, and low achiever students".

To test this hypothesis the means and standard deviation of sample's responses on the dimensions were calculated according to students' achievement (HA, MA, AA & LA). Table 7 summarizes the results.

One Way ANOVA was used to know the differences

Table 6. T" test for the two separate samples.

Dimension	College	M	SD	T	SL	Direction differences
Personality characteristics	H (152)	3.72	0.73	1.99	0.05	Science Colleges
	S (156)	3.87	0.59			
Technological information	H (152)	3.71	0.64	2.88	0.00	Science Colleges
	S (156)	3.91	0.58			
Life style	H (152)	4.26	0.81	0.55	0.59	-
	S (156)	4.31	0.64			
Social norms and Cultural values	H (152)	3.49	0.78	0.03	0.97	-
	S (156)	3.49	0.76			
Communication Ways	H(152)	3.31	0.78	0.52	0.61	-
	S (156)	3.35	0.65			
Information level	H (152)	3.29	0.68	1.53	0.13	-
	S (163)	3.17	0.67			
Work Value	H (152)	3.66	0.64	1.83	0.06	-
	S (156)	3.80	0.63			
Total Q	H (152)	3.63	0.52	1.22	0.22	-
	S (156)	3.70	0.45			

Table 7. The means and standard deviation of sample's responses on the dimensions.

Dimension	High achievers		Medium achievers		Average achievers		Low achievers	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Personality characteristics	3.56	0.73	3.79	0.48	3.90	0.62	3.62	0.80
Technological information	3.65	0.66	3.77	0.64	3.92	0.53	3.69	0.53
Life style	3.86	0.64	4.34	0.45	4.32	0.71	4/31	0.66
Social norms and cultural values	3.19	0.68	3.57	0.68	3.20	0.78	3.33	0.86
Communication ways	3.11	0.68	3.45	0.78	3.12	0.58	3.18	0.76
Information level	3.05	0.55	3.37	0.80	3.07	0.65	3.24	0.70
Work value	3.54	0.59	3.85	0.61	3.64	0.61	3.89	0.67
Total Q	3.34	0.40	3.74	0.53	3.59	0.34	3.62	0.48

between means for the total questionnaire and all questionnaire dimensions. The result is shown in Table 8. The results show F value is statistically significant at (0.05≥α) in the third dimension (life style). This indicates differences between groups, so the hypnosis could be accepted on one dimension only. There are not statistically significant differences at (0.05≥α)for other dimensions or the total questionnaire. To determine the direction of the services in the third-dimension life style, LSD test was used. The results are shown in Table 9.

The results show statistically significant differences between high achievers and the three categories (medium achievers, average achievers, low achievers). All the differences were in favour of the three categories. The other comparisons did not reveal statistically significant differences indicating no differences in the other groups. The above result shows that SQU students' achievement decreases when they have a greater generation gap in life style. Previous findings indicate that higher achievers are more preoccupied in studying and class-work to achieve higher grades than the medium, average and low achievers which are more focused on experiencing

Table 8. The differences between means for the total questionnaire and all questionnaire dimensions.

Dimension	ANOVA	Sum of squares	DF	Mean squares	F	SIG
Personality characteristics	Within G	1.60	3	0.93	1.20	0.32
	Between G	35.64	80			
Technological information	Within G	0.86	3	0.44	0.72	0.54
	Between G	31.8	80			
Life style	Within G	3.45	3	0.74	2.97	*0.04
	Between G	30.98	80			
Social norms and Cultural values	Within G	2.03	3	4.22	1.05	0.37
	Between G	51.46	80			
Communication Ways	Within G	1.59	3	3.20	1.07	0.37
	Between G	39.89	80			
Information level	Within G	1.40	3	4.03	0.99	0.39
	Between G	37.43	80			
Work Value	Within G	1.79	3	0.57	1.55	0.21
	Between G	30.81	80			
Total Q	Within G	1.04	3	2.64	1.54	0.21
	Between G	17.89	80			

*Statically significant at (0.05≥α).

Table 9. The direction of the services in the third-dimension life style.

Compilations for achievement level		Differences in Means	Differences in Significant	Difference Direction
High achievers	MA	-0.48	0.01*	Medium achievers
	AA	-0.46	0.01*	Average achievers
	LA	-0.46	0.02*	Low achievers
Medium achievers	AA	0.02	0.92	-
	LA	0.03	0.89	-
Average achievement	LA	0.01	0.97	-

Significant at level of (0.05≥α)

different activities in their lifestyle, besides bridging the achievement gap. Moreover, their interaction is greater with the older generations (Hui, 2017), thus as a result they feel the generation gap more strongly than high achievers.

Conclusion

This study sought to understand the perception of 310 students at SQU about the generation gap between them and their parents and older generation. The study revealed a high generation gap between youths and their parents due to technological information, life style, personality characteristics, and work value factors. There was medium generation gap due to social norms and cultural values factors. The generation gap was low in communication ways, and information level factors. Moreover, generation gap was higher between the male students and their parents than female students in social

norms and cultural values, communication ways, and information levels factors. Also the result showed Science College students have a greater generation gap with their parents than Humanities College students on personality characteristics and technological information. The study results also revealed students' achievement decreases when they have a greater generation gap. Parents, educators, counsellors, co-workers, and directors at work in light of study findings can understand the youths' psychology and thus adjust through bridging the gap between them and youths. Moreover, the knowledge of generation gap is important when preparing or providing effective educational experiences, counselling programs for the youths. It is key for policy makers at universities to have access to such knowledge and to hold it in consideration before making any decisions, as well as, issuing any regulations or actions.

Recommendations

(1) Motivating previous generation to gain technological information and educational levels, which will build their self-efficacy and beliefs that digital information will enhance their effective social interactions with others (Tufts, 2010) and bridge the generation gap.
(2) To gain creative thinking and adaptive management, and problem solving skills utilizing open-endings which will enable youths to narrow the generation gap.
(3) Understanding where the members of each generation are "coming from" will help parents, children, counsellors, educators, policy makers, and leaders work with them more effectively (Grotophorst, 2011).
(4) To create more empathic educators, who will assist in establishing students' dialogues and gender discourses using practical tools and symbolic resources leading to bridging the generation and gender gap (Arar, 2014).
(5) To encourage the provision of career counseling services by career counselors for all students at all education levels including higher education to receive career information about themselves and others such as: college programs, training institutions, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

Anshari M, Alas Y, Hardaker G, Jaidin JH, Smith M, Ahad AD (2016). Smartphones habit and behaviour in Brunei: Personalization, gender, and generation gap. Computers in Human Behaviours 64:719-727.
Arar K (2014). Gender Discourse in an Arab-Muslim High school in Israel: Ethnographic Case Study. Journal of Educational Needs 15(3):281-301.
Bahadur RN, Thosar N, Vaghan J (2016). Knowledge and attitude of health profession students about interrelationship of communication

gap with generation gap. International Journal of Educational Psychological Researches 1(3):175-179.
Baker WM, Lusk E J, Neuhauser KL (2012). On the Use of Cell Phones and Other electronic Devices in the Classroom: evidence from a Survey of Faculty and Students. Journal of Educational for Business 87(5):275-289.
Beinhoff L (2011). The millennials: A survey of the most cited literature. Choice; Middletown 48(12):2225-2231.
Bozavli E (2016). Understanding foreign language learning of generation Y. Journal of Education and Practice 7(26):69-76.
Christopher SA (2016). Generation Y: educational considerations. Austrian Journal of Advanced Nursing 33(2):35-44.
Choi Y, He M, Harachi TW (2008). Intergenerational cultural dissonance, parent–child conflict and bonding, and youth problem behaviors among Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrant families. Journal pf youth and adolescence 37(1):85-96.
D'Allegro ML, Kerns S (2010). Is there such a thing as too much of a good thing when it comes to education? Re-examining first generation student success. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice 12(3):293-317.
Dias D, Sa MJ, de Lourdes MTM (2013). The Faculty Conjugated Feminine: A Portrait of Portuguese. Journal of Further and Higher Education 37(1):21-37.
Dockery DJ, McKelvey S (2013). Underrepresented College Students' experiences with school Counselors. Journal of School Counseling 11(3):30.
Ewert S (2012). Fewer diplomas for men: The influence of college experiences on the gender gap in college graduation. The Journal of Higher Education 83(6):824-850.
Grotophorst J (2011). Yours, Mine, Theirs: Multiple Generations in Today's Workplace. School Business Affairs 77(6):22-24.
Harper CE, Sax LJ, Wolf DS S (2012). The Role of Parents in College Students' Sociopolitical Awareness, Academic, and Social Development. Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice 49(2):137-156.
Hirschman C (2016). From High School to College: Gender, Immigrant Generation, and Race-Ethnicity, Russell sage Foundation, Eric No: ED585265. pp.360.
Hui MM (2017). Factors Contributing to the Success of First-Generation College students at a research University. ProQuest LLC. Ed. D. Dissertation, university of Arkansas.
Kwok-Wing L, Kian-Sam H (2015). Technology use and learning characteristics of students in higher education: Do generational differences exist? British Journal of Education Technology 46(4):725-738.
Ilomäki L (2011). Does Gender Have a Role in ICT among Finnish Teachers and Students? Scandinavian Journal of educational Research 55(3):325-340.
McCrindle M (2009). The ABC of XYZ P Understanding the global generations (pp.1-22). Sydney: UNSW Press.
Minet (2013). In Bozavli E (2016). Understanding foreign language learning of generation Y. Journal of Education and Practice 7(26):69-76.
Myers KK, Sadaghiani K (2010). Millennials in the workplace: A communication perspective on Millennials' Organizational relationships and performance. Journal of Business and Psychology 52(2):225-238.
Patton S (2012). Here's Smarty-Pants, Home for the Holidays. Chronicle of Higher Education 59(15).
Pricer WF (2008). At Issue: Helicopter Parents and Millennial Students, an Annotated Bibliography. Community College Enterprise 14(2):93-108.
Roehling PV, Kooi TL V, Dykema S, Quisenberry B, Vandlen C (2010). Engaging the millennial generation in class discussions. College Teaching 59(1):1-6.
Stepanova GS (2014). Problems of the socialization of today's young people. Russian Education and Society 56(4):90-98.
Sulaiman MAS, Al-Muscati SR (2017). Millennial Generations & Their Parents: Similarities and Differences. International journal of psychological Studies 9(1):121-131.
Summerville BM (2009). The Relationship between First-Generation Students' Educational Background and Selected Academic and Non-

Academic Variables. ProQuest LLC. 789 East Eisenhower Parkway. PO Box 1346, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Swanson NM, Vaughan AL, Wilkinson BD (2017). First- Year Seminars: Supporting Male College Students' Long-Term academic Success. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice 18(4):386-400.

Tufts DR (2010). Digital Adults: Beyond the Myth of the Digital Native Generation Gap. ProQuest LLC.

Vaterlaus JM, Jones RM, Tulane S (2015). Perceived differences in knowledge about interactive technology between young adults and their parents. Cyber psychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace 9(4):68-85.

Wang-Yeung, LW (2016). Examining Factors Influencing Asian American and Latino American Students' College Choice. ProQuest LLC, Unpublished Dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo.

Weeks PK (2017). Every generation wants meaningful work- but thinks other age group are in it for money. Harvard Business Review: Digital Article 2-4:3.

Wikipedia (2019). Generation Gap. Retrieved June, 1, 2019. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/generationgap.

Wu C, Chao RK (2011). Intergenerational cultural dissonance in parent–adolescent relationships among Chinese and European Americans. Developmental psychology 47(2):493.