Abstract:

Research shows that intergenerational communication is becoming increasingly more difficult in the workplace. There is evidence that other generations hold negative perceptions of Generation Y (1982-2000), but no specific information on how these perceptions are formed (Reynolds et al., 2008; Van Dyke, Haynes, & Ferguson-Mitchell, 2007). Generation Y is the first generation that had access to all forms of electronic communication including instant messaging, texting, and email (Ponidexter, 2005). Our study examined whether the communication channels and message characteristics used by Generation Y have an effect on the perceptions Baby Boomers (1946-1964) form of them and their own perceptions of themselves. At the conclusion of this research we expect to describe how Baby Boomers and members of Generation Y perceive a range of communication behaviors commonly associated with Generation Y.

Introduction:

• There are notable differences among communication patterns of Generation Y and members of the Baby Boomer generation (McKenzie & Cannon, 1998).
• The communication differences are directly correlated to technology use, especially text messaging and email (Simons, 2010).
• Generation Y communicates more informally than other generations (Erickson, 2008).
• The communication gap between generations can lead to miscommunication in the workplace (Dominiack, 2007).

Research Questions:

RQ1: How do members of the Baby Boomer generation perceive individuals who enact communication behaviors generally associated to Generation Y?
RQ2: How do members of Generation Y perceive individuals who enact communication behaviors generally associated to their own generation?

Methods:

• Data were gathered through the use of surveys targeting members of the relevant generation in the workforce.
• The survey included sample mediated messages that were evaluated using semantic differential scales.
• Participants were asked to read sample mediated messages and evaluate the sender using a seven point semantic differential scale.
• Six additional questions gathered demographic data and information on technology use.

Participants:
The survey was administered to 45 Baby Boomers born between 1946-1964 and 133 members of Generation Y born between 1982-2000 throughout the Midwest.

References:


Funding for this poster was provided by UWEC Differential Tuition.