

ABSTRACT

Although a substantial body of knowledge has been built upon to examine the generational conflicts in organisations, those were limited to the effects of generational conflicts. However, exploring how the interactions of different generational identities lead inter-generational conflicts largely been ignored, though it is a vital facet in contemporary organisations. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore how the age-based generational identity interactions in terms of sharing of knowledge, skills, experiences and resources lead to intergenerational conflicts at inter-personal level in organisations. In so doing, this research focuses on how individual altruism and individual social dominance orientation influence intergenerational conflicts at inter-personal level. In order to archive the research objectives of the research, the research design was based on qualitative approach of researching. Based on the qualitative research domain, the study was design under the post-positivist research paradigm. The required data were related with a contextual understanding of a research setting, therefore the strategy of inquiry of this study was based on the in-depth case study method. To carry out the fieldwork, under the in-depth case study research strategy, one of the leading Universities in Sri Lanka selected as the research setting. The Selection of participants for the fieldwork was based on the purposeful sampling strategy and snowball sampling strategy. The data collection of the research was mainly based on three data collection methods. That was, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and observations. There were sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted. There was one focus interview was carried out. Participant and non-participant observation were also carried out as part of the data collection method. In order to make sure the trustworthiness of the research design steps were taken in relation to credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of the study. When analysing the data, data triangulation and manual thematic analysis was used. Under thematic analysis, initial codes were identified after extensively reading and re-reading the transcript for multiple times. Through the initial coded data the categories were developed considering the similarity of the codes. Based on the categories themes were developed and those themes were interpreted based on the relevant theories. When interpreting themes were linked with the construct of the research. Throughout the research, steps were taken to ensure the procedural, situational, relational, and exiting ethics of doing research. The results of the study shows that organisational members formed group identities based on their respective age-based identities. When it comes to formation of junior (younger age group) academic identity, high orientation towards material well-being of the life, poor commitment at work, the loss of academic discipline, preference for freedom and autonomy at work, selfishness and individualistic behaviour, importance of own goals instead of institutional objectives, career mobility, unwillingness for the sharing, lower level of capacity to learn and social alienation were identified as the salient characteristics of junior (younger age group) academic identity. Hard working and high commitment towards work, less technological shrewdness were identified as the salient features of senior (older age group) academic identity. Therefore, this formed age-based generational identities lead to inter-generational conflicts at inter-personal level when those identities interact with each other for sharing knowledge, experiences, skills and resources in organisations. However, it was found that the age-based generational identities do not always lead to the inter-generational conflicts because, the level of individual altruism and individual social dominance orientation influences whether interaction of age-based generational identities lead inter-generational conflicts at inter-personal level.