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Assessment of Ethical Behaviors across Generation among Small Scale Entrepreneurs in Noveleta, Cavite: A Descriptive-Causal Research

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Abstract

This study explores the ethical behaviors of different generations, including Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X), Millennials, and Generation Z (Gen Z), among small-scale entrepreneurs in Noveleta, Cavite. Utilizing a structured survey questionnaire, data was collected from a representative sample of 60 entrepreneurs, evenly distributed across the generational cohorts. The study employs descriptive causal research, employing quantitative data analysis methods such as Mean, Percentage, and One-Way ANOVA (Welch's) to assess and compare ethical behaviors.

Findings reveal significant differences among generations, with Millennials exhibiting the highest overall ethical behavior, emphasizing integrity, fairness, public orientation, and sustainability. Generation X closely follows, indicating a shared commitment to ethical values. Baby Boomers demonstrate an average ethical behavior profile, while

Generation Z lags behind, signaling a potential gap that requires attention in fostering ethical awareness. Specific factors, such as public orientation and sustainability, vary across generations.

Additionally, the study highlights that Gen X places higher importance on ethical conduct and integrity compared to other generations. The results underscore the significance of tailoring strategies and interventions for promoting ethical behavior to the unique dynamics and preferences of each generational cohort. This insight is essential for organizations and policymakers aiming to enhance ethical awareness and practices, considering the diverse characteristics and values of each generation. The study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of generational ethical behaviors, offering practical implications for promoting ethical conduct across age groups in the entrepreneurial landscape.

Keywords: ANOVA, Generation Z, Philippines

Introduction

Engaging in ethical behaviors not only builds trust in personal and professional relationships but also sets the stage for a tapestry of interconnected virtues that enrich the fabric of our social dynamics. Trust, as this foundational cornerstone, serves as more than a conduit for successful interactions; it becomes the essence that permeates the intricate nuances of the workplace, the vitality of communities, and the intimacy of personal connections (Santos, *et al.*, 2021)^[9].

Ethical behaviors, as virtuous manifestations of one's moral compass, actively contribute to the ongoing and multifaceted development of personal integrity, fostering a resilient and principled foundation upon which individuals navigate the complexities of life, make decisions with unwavering conviction, and cultivate an enduring commitment to ethical conduct in various facets of their personal and professional spheres (Gou *et al.*, 2023)^[5].

According to Widyani (2020)^[4], the success of a leader, besides having an entrepreneurial spirit, must also behave ethically. Ethics becomes important when leaders make decisions related to business continuity. Therefore, the relevance of business principles and ethics in leadership is very important in relation to organizational performance. Entrepreneur leadership, as defined by (Udo *et al.* 2020), is leadership that promotes a strong organizational culture, especially a strong ethical culture. When an individual accurately identifies his own abilities and challenges, an individual can create a better plan to reach the desired results. Self-leadership allows managers to lead with greater awareness and understanding and helps create a good leader who influences good behavior for their organization (Demir *et al.*, 2022).

Ethical conduct goes beyond being a moral imperative; it stands as a crucial factor influencing business performance, as highlighted by (Bin Nashwan *et al.* 2020)^[3]. The positive correlation between ethics and business performance emphasizes the importance of ethical behaviors in the entrepreneurial realm. Particularly for small businesses, ethical behavior plays a pivotal role in building trust with customers and suppliers, attracting and retaining employees, and upholding a positive reputation.

According to the Institutes for Verga & Garg (2019), research delves into the influence of peer interaction and word-of-mouth on decision-making, particularly among Generation Z, and reveals the positive impact of peer interaction on their decision-making processes. Additionally, Su & Hahn (2021)^[10] posits that younger generations, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, attach greater importance to businesses being socially responsible. Thus, this study aims to assess and compare the ethical behaviors of different generations among small-scale entrepreneurs (including Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z), identifying and evaluating if there is a significant difference among generations.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to (1) assess the ethical behaviors of small-scale entrepreneurs across generational cohorts, including Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z, with a focus on both personal and interpersonal dimensions of ethical leadership. The research seeks to (2) identify potential significant differences in ethical behavior scores among respondents from these generational groups within the local entrepreneurial community of Noveleta, Cavite. Through comprehensive analysis, the study aims to (3) present actionable recommendations derived from research findings to effectively promote and enhance ethical behavior within this specific entrepreneurial context, addressing the nuanced challenges and opportunities present among small-scale entrepreneurs in Noveleta, Cavite.

Methods and Materials

To measure ethical behaviors among small-scale entrepreneurs in Noveleta, a structured survey questionnaire was developed. The survey included questions assessing ethical behaviors across specific generational cohorts, namely Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Respondents used a Likert scale or other relevant measurement scales to indicate their ethical behaviors. Data were collected from a representative sample of 60 small-scale entrepreneurs in Noveleta, ensuring balanced representation from each generational group.

The study employed a descriptive causal research approach, allowing for the examination and analysis of the relationship between variables to determine causality. This approach provides a deeper understanding of ethical behaviors among small-scale entrepreneurs across different generations in Noveleta, Cavite.

For the study, 15 individuals from each generational group were surveyed and interviewed, resulting in a total sample size of 60 small-scale entrepreneurs in Noveleta. Purposive sampling technique was utilized to ensure the study accurately represented the entire group and produced reliable results.

Descriptive statistics, specifically Mean and Percentage, were used for the quantitative data analysis. According to

Hayes (2022), these statistical tools can summarize a given dataset to understand its sample or population. After coding the data in Microsoft Excel, it was transferred to Jamovi Statistics software to compute the mean of each data point, aiding in the summarization and analysis of ethical behavior levels across generations.

Additionally, Anova Statistic method was employed to determine if there were significant differences between the ethical behavior scores of different generations. The examination of data themes and their validation was conducted to ensure correct classification. Corrections were applied as needed, and a written report summarizing the examined data was constructed.

Results and Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Millennials exhibit a relatively higher average level of ethical behavior compared to other generations, with a mean of 2.90, securing the top rank in Table 6. This suggests that Millennials, on average, prioritize ethical considerations in areas such as integrity, fairness, public orientation, and sustainability. The close competition with Generation X, which follows with a mean of 2.89, indicates a shared commitment to ethical values between these two cohorts. While Baby Boomers also display an average ethical behavior profile (mean of 2.88), Generation Z lags behind with a lower mean of 2.64, signaling a potential gap that warrants attention in fostering ethical awareness and practices within this emerging generation. These insights contribute to a nuanced understanding of generational ethical behaviors and can inform strategies for promoting ethical conduct in diverse age groups.

Table 1: Baby Boomers and their Ethical Behaviors

Factors	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
1. Public orientation	3.66	1	High
2. Integrity	2.27	4	Low
3. Fairness	2.30	3	Average
4. Sustainability	3.10	2	Average
Total	2.83		Average

Table 1 presents the ethical behaviors of Baby Boomers, focusing on factors such as public orientation, integrity, fairness, and sustainability. The mean scores reveal that Baby Boomers obtained the highest score in public orientation with a mean of $M = 3.66$, placing it at the top. Sustainability closely follows with a mean of $M = 3.10$, securing the second position. Fairness holds an average position with a mean of $M = 2.30$, while integrity scores the lowest with a mean of $M = 2.27$, categorizing it as low. The overall mean for all factors combined is $M = 2.88$, indicating an average ethical behavior profile among Baby Boomers.

The general average ($M = 2.83$) suggests that Baby Boomers tend to exhibit a moderate level of ethical behavior across the specified factors. This implies a balanced ethical orientation among Baby Boomers, with a noteworthy emphasis on public orientation and sustainability.

According to Blyznyuk *et al.* (2022), the introduction of the "sustainability mindset" emphasizes interconnectedness, a long-term perspective, and prioritizing well-being over profit. The author contends that a populace embracing sustainability is essential for instigating the required shifts in policy, behavior, and consumption patterns.

Table 2: Gen X and their Ethical Behaviors

Factors	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
1.Public orientation	2.88	3	Average
2. Integrity	2.67	4	Average
3. Fairness	2.90	2	Average
4. Sustainability	3.13	1	High
Total	2.89		Average

Table 2 outlines the ethical behaviors of Generation X (Gen X) across various factors, including public orientation, integrity, fairness, and sustainability. The mean scores indicate that sustainability is the highest-ranked factor, with a mean of $M = 3.13$, placing it in the top position. Fairness follows closely with a mean of $M = 2.90$, securing the second rank. Public orientation holds an average position with a mean of $M = 2.88$, while integrity scores the lowest with a mean of $M = 2.67$, categorizing it as average. The overall mean for all factors combined is $M = 2.89$, portraying an average ethical behavior profile among Generation X. This suggests a balanced ethical orientation among Gen X, with particular strengths in sustainability and fairness. The findings provide insights into the ethical tendencies of this generation, guiding discussions on ethical considerations within the Gen X demographic. According to Verma and Garg (2022)^[11], it was found that Gen X employees placed higher importance on ethical conduct and integrity compared to baby boomers, millennials, and Gen Z.

Table 3: Millennials and their Ethical Behaviors

Factors	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
1.Public orientation	2.78	4	Average
2. Integrity	2.90	2	Average
3. Fairness	2.80	3	Average
4. Sustainability	3.13	1	Average
Total	2.90		Average

Table 3 presents an overview of the ethical behaviors of Millennials, focusing on factors like public orientation, integrity, fairness, and sustainability. The mean scores indicate that sustainability is the highest-ranked factor among Millennials, with $M = 3.13$, securing the top position. Integrity follows closely with a mean of $M = 2.90$, placing it in the second rank. Fairness holds an average position with a mean of $M = 2.80$, and public orientation scores the lowest with a mean of $M = 2.78$, categorizing it as average. The overall mean for all factors combined is $M = 2.90$, reflecting a generally average ethical behavior profile within the Millennial cohort. These findings provide insights into the ethical tendencies of Millennials, emphasizing strengths in sustainability and integrity, and can guide discussions on ethical considerations within this generational group. Amin and Tarun (2022)^[1] depicted millennials engaging in social criticism and activism, challenging ethical blind spots in contemporary society. However, in the present context, Millennials exhibit average ethical behaviors.

Table 4: Gen Z and their Ethical Behaviors

Factors	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
1.Public orientation	2.79	3	Average
2. Integrity	2.90	1	Average
3. Fairness	2.10	4	Low
4. Sustainability	2.80	2	Average
Total	2.64		Average

Table 4 outlines the ethical behaviors of Generation Z (Gen Z) across various factors, including public orientation, integrity, fairness, and sustainability. The mean scores indicate that integrity is the highest-ranked factor among Gen Z, with $M = 2.90$, securing the top position. Sustainability follows closely with a mean of $M = 2.80$, placing it in the second rank. Public orientation holds an average position with a mean of $M = 2.79$, while fairness scores the lowest with a mean of $M = 2.10$, categorizing it as low.

The overall mean for all factors combined is $M = 2.64$, reflecting a generally average ethical behavior profile within the Generation Z cohort. These findings offer insights into the ethical tendencies of Gen Z, highlighting strengths in integrity and sustainability, while signaling a need for attention to fairness in ethical considerations within this generational group.

According to Magano *et al.* (2020)^[7], Gen Z's entrepreneurial spirit, technological savvy, and commitment to diversity and inclusion are celebrated, emphasizing their positive contributions to society.

Table 5: The Results of Generations Ethical behaviors

Generation	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Baby boomers	2.83	3	Average
Gen x	2.89	2	Average
Millennials	2.90	1	Average
Gen z	2.64	4	Low
Total	2.81		Average

Table 5 presents an overview of the ethical behaviors of different generations, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X), Millennials, and Generation Z (Gen Z). The mean scores indicate that Millennials have the highest overall ethical behavior with a mean of 2.90, securing the top rank. Generation X follows closely with a mean of 2.89, placing it in the second rank. Baby Boomers are in the third position with a mean of 2.88, while Generation Z ranks lowest with a mean of 2.64, categorizing it as low. The total mean for all generations combined is 2.81, reflecting an overall average ethical behavior profile across the studied generations.

These findings demonstrate that Millennials exhibit a relatively higher average level of ethical behavior compared to other generations, with a mean of 2.90, securing the top rank in Table 6. This suggests that Millennials, on average, emphasize ethical considerations in areas such as integrity, fairness, public orientation, and sustainability. The close competition with Generation X, which follows with a mean of 2.89, indicates a shared commitment to ethical values between these two cohorts. While Baby Boomers also demonstrate an average ethical behavior profile (mean of 2.83), Generation Z lags behind with a lower mean of 2.64, signaling a potential gap that warrants attention in fostering ethical awareness and practices within this emerging generation. These insights contribute to a nuanced understanding of generational ethical behaviors and can inform strategies for promoting ethical conduct in diverse age groups.

According to Mahmood *et al.* (2020)^[8], Millennials express a desire for transparency, collaboration, and social impact in their work environments, suggesting that these values could translate into ethical decision-making, commitment to social justice, and environmentalism. The authors argue that these values shape Millennials' ethical priorities and actions.

Table 6: One-Way Anova (Welch's)

	F	df1	df2	p
Ethical Behaviors	3.73	3	31.0	0.021

The results of the one-way ANOVA (Welch's) analysis for ethical behaviors scores among respondents indicate a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.021$) across the generational cohorts. The calculated F-value of 3.73, with degrees of freedom (df1) as 3 and df2 as 31.0, suggests that there is a meaningful variance in ethical behavior scores among the different generations.

The significance level ($p = 0.021$) being less than the commonly used threshold of 0.05 indicates that there is evidence to reject the null hypothesis, implying that at least one generational group significantly differs from the others in terms of ethical behavior scores. This finding suggests that the ethical behavior levels are not uniform across all generations, and there are notable distinctions among them. In practical terms, these results suggest that strategies and interventions aimed at promoting ethical behavior may need to be tailored to address the specific dynamics and preferences of each generational cohort. Understanding these differences can be valuable for organizations and policymakers seeking to enhance ethical awareness and practices, taking into account the unique characteristics and values of each generation.

Table 7: Tukey Post-Hoc Test - Ethical Behaviors

		Baby boomers	Gen x	Millennials	Gen z
Baby boomers	Mean difference	—	0.267	-0.333	0.733
	p-value	—	0.858	0.756	0.142
Gen x	Mean difference	—	—	-0.600	0.467
	p-value	—	—	0.293	0.513
Millennials	Mean difference	—	—	—	1.067*
	p-value	—	—	—	0.013
Gen z	Mean difference	—	—	—	—
	p-value	—	—	—	—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The Tukey post-hoc test was employed to examine specific differences in ethical behavior scores among distinct generational cohorts, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, subsequent to a significant one-way ANOVA. The outcomes revealed no statistically significant differences in ethical behavior scores between Baby Boomers and Generation X ($p = 0.858$), Baby Boomers and Millennials ($p = 0.756$), Generation X and Millennials ($p = 0.293$), and Generation X and Generation Z ($p = 0.513$). A near-significant difference emerged between Baby Boomers and Generation Z ($p = 0.142$), suggesting a potential distinction that did not reach conventional significance. However, a noteworthy and statistically significant difference was observed between Millennials and Generation Z ($p = 0.013$), signifying that Millennials exhibit higher levels of ethical behavior compared to Generation Z. These findings offer nuanced insights into the ethical behavior dynamics among generational cohorts, informing targeted strategies for fostering ethical conduct.

Conclusion

In summary, the study explored the ethical behaviors of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, revealing distinctive patterns within each generational cohort. The analysis of mean scores across various factors highlighted nuanced insights into their ethical tendencies.

Baby Boomers demonstrated a balanced ethical orientation, prioritizing public orientation and sustainability. The study suggested a moderate level of ethical behavior among this generation, with potential implications for fostering values associated with a sustainability mindset. Generation X (Gen X) showcased a balanced ethical profile, with strengths in sustainability and fairness. These findings imply a potential alignment with higher importance on ethical conduct and integrity, as observed in previous research. Millennials exhibited strengths in sustainability and integrity, resulting in the highest overall mean score. This generational group's engagement in social criticism and activism, as noted in the study, may have implications for organizational cultures that value transparency, collaboration, and social impact. Generation Z (Gen Z) displayed notable strengths in integrity and sustainability, though fairness appeared to be a challenge. The study suggests a need for attention to fairness within this emerging generation, with potential implications for cultivating an ethical awareness that includes a balanced approach to all ethical dimensions.

The one-way ANOVA results indicated a statistically significant difference among generational cohorts, reinforcing the understanding that ethical behavior levels are not uniform. The Tukey post-hoc test further highlighted specific differences, with Millennials exhibiting a relatively higher average level of ethical behavior. These findings have implications for organizations and policymakers aiming to foster ethical awareness and practices within diverse age groups.

Understanding these generational nuances is crucial for creating inclusive and effective strategies to promote a culture of ethical conduct. As organizations navigate a multigenerational workforce, acknowledging and addressing these generational differences can contribute to the development of tailored interventions and initiatives that resonate with the values and preferences of each age group. This may ultimately lead to a more cohesive and ethical workplace culture that aligns with the diverse perspectives and priorities of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

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