Chapter 4
Facets of Intergenerational Communication

It is necessary to examine the levels of communication effectiveness and communication satisfaction, and brought about changes in communication styles and channels. This will help in the understanding of intergenerational communication dynamics without which, a complete understanding of the phenomenon will not be possible.

This chapter explores the various aspects of communication from an intergenerational perspective. An endeavour is made to determine what effective communication means to the older, middle-aged and younger generations. In addition, discussion will seek to explain the following. What are the factors that result in communication satisfaction? What are the communication channels and styles the older, the middle-aged and the younger generations adopt and what are the reasons for their choices? For which generation is communication effectiveness and satisfaction the highest and the least?

This chapter discusses communication styles and channels from the perspectives of all the three generations and the resulting effectiveness and satisfaction.

Communication Channel

Older generation’s Perspective on Communication Channel

(a) Older generation’s preferred communication channel. To the extent possible, the older generation participants preferred face-to-face communication. The most important reason for their choice is body language. The participants deemed body language to be an important component of communication. A few even termed body language as a distinct channel of communication. Body language helps in understanding whether a person really means what he/she is saying. Body language makes this kind of contradiction apparent. It also conveys nuances that are not possible with only what is spoken. Fatt (1998) observed that successful employees prefer verbal communications over the written word as it enables them to read body language and voice cues. Face-to-face communication also gives a personal touch to the communication process. The older generation considers it as a more courteous
way of communicating. It makes the communication process of communication seem less formal and provides more scope for discussion.

*I prefer face-to-face communication any day because it is more personal. You can communicate things in exactly the way you want. It is paramount that the recipient is able to understand. Without a face-to-face exchange, communication becomes very impersonal and rude. You do not know if the other person has understood your message. There is this recent trend of a person from the younger generation sending an sms that he is ‘not well and not coming’. This wouldn’t have happened earlier. Earlier, when the person rejoined work there would be a discussion on what happened. Today there is no such discussion. People think that having sent an sms, their communication is over. According to me, this is not a communication.*

(Tushar, Older generation)

Face-to-face communication gives space to the older generation to improvise. They are able to change their approach with the constant feedback they receive. Older generation participants compared technology-based\textsuperscript{11} and face-to-face communication to make a case for the latter. Face-to-face communication helps people to accommodate the individual styles of the interactants (Fatts, 1998)

*Face-to-face communication is preferred because it helps us to communicate better. If I communicate through technology, I have to use specific words, as I know the things must be communicated. Take this interview as an example. If I had to just respond to a mail, I would not have conveyed whatever I am trying to now. Here, I am able to communicate freely and also use the appropriate expression. When you indulge in face-to-face communication, you can say so much more. However, when you write, you have to be careful about what should write be written (Vagrya, older generation).*

Literature suggests the view that older workers find it difficult adopt technology to the needs of their day-to-day activities (Morris & Venkatesh, 2000). Technology-based communication does not convey a holistic picture. Important components like expressions, feelings, body language and para-language are left out. The older generation participants felt that excluding such components can only be detrimental to communication effectiveness.

*...if you are having a face-to-face communication, you can study the body language of the other person and, accordingly, bring changes to your behaviour to convince the other person. But this is not possible with other communication channels. What is good in direct communication (in one-on-one communication) is *

\textsuperscript{11} Technology in the present study has been understood through the participants understanding about the concept. According to participants, technology is the facilitator of the communication process and includes, computer-based knowledge, Gadgets, ERP process, Internal messenger (computer-based), SMS, emails.
that you are able to read the face of the person, observe body language, and hence, you are able to convince people or get your message across. When you send an email you cannot be that explicit in what you want to communicate. However, when you communicate face-to-face you can continuously change your style to convince people. It is better a way of getting a message across. Face-to-face communication has both its good and bad points; but at a holistic level it is a good channel to communicate (Teleangana, Older generation).

With technology-based communication (such as e-mail) people tend to be cautious in their choice of words because the communication goes on record. Therefore, the scope to be natural is restricted.

(b) Older generation’s preferred communication channel with own generation. To communicate among themselves, the older generation participants were overwhelmingly in favour of face-to-face communication. At the same time, they were emphatic that lack of knowledge about technology should not be seen as the reason of their preference for face-to-face communication. They accepted that technology does not come naturally to them as compared to the younger generation. They grew up in the absence of technology in their social context. Therefore, they cannot be termed as ‘technology ignorant’. Many of the older generation have not adapted to the alternative medium of communication (which are detached and impersonal) like email, social networks as they still value the sense of connectedness that face-to-face communication offers (Birkman International, 2009).

Besides their limitations, they also felt that face-to-face communication provided greater scope for a discussion in comparison to technology-based communication. They also stressed that a tech-savvy person may not necessarily be good at communications. Thus, technology cannot be seen as a pre-requisite for effective communication.

When you ask about my generation who are approximately 45 or 47 plus, there was no technology when we entered the organization. In the present, however, technology based communication is being used rampantly(sic). Our generation does not accept technology that is merely conveniently; we ask for hard copies and other things. We are not that conversant with technology; so case we ask for additional reports and all. We have changed, but might not have come to the same level of the younger generation in terms of technology. We have our own style of communication; even with technology you need hard copies. We may take help of the middle-aged or the younger generation, as we are not fully capable to use technology (Shripal, Older generation)
According to the older generation, there is a popular misconception that they are not aware of technology and do not appreciate its importance. The participants insisted that they are aware of technology and its usefulness in quick communications; and that they were making constant efforts to improve.

Sometimes we are supposed to or want to communicate at an urgent basis. There are instances, when the message has to be delivered quickly. In this case, I might use the phone to communicate. In the given case, if the person is not picking up phone so we sent sms or a message on whatsapp. Now even he reads the message on whatsapp but he doesn’t know how to reply. Since, I was aware and had all the channels to communicate so I did it. Basically, I wanted to communicate by any means (Mehen, Older generation).

The older generation also stressed that they were making the efforts needed to keep pace with the younger generation. However, it takes time to catch up. They are sufficiently knowledgeable and aware to manage by themselves, but are hesitant to use it. They still preferred hard copies. The situation is changing, however, and the technology usage gap has reduced. The problem, therefore, is more with the older generation’s mindset than being ‘technology-phobic’. R B Singh (older generation said, 'Today technology is an essential component and people of our generation know sufficient amount of technology. You may call it a 'majboori' (compulsion) but people of my generation definitely know the basics.

Jearth (older generation) elaborated further. He said, 'as on date the older generation is 50 plus and this technology entered our office environment almost 15-20 years back. So people know the basics of technology. The issue is not knowledge about technology, but the application of the knowledge'.

(c) Older generation’s preferred channel for communications with the middle-aged generation. Here, the choice shows a mixed-use pattern. The older generation participants asserted that they were comfortable with both face-to-face communication and technology. The preference, however, was for face-to-face communication. Mishra (Older generation) accepted that ‘I like face to face communication, but if it is a constraint, I use technology also’. The rationale for their preferences is that although the older generation is comfortable with face-to-face communication, on certain occasions the middle-aged generation is more inclined to using technology.
(d) **Older generation’s preferred communication channel with the younger generation.** The older generation uses technology-based communication channels with the younger generation. According to them, the younger generation is more conversant with technology and is more receptive when it is used in communications. Given the current business needs and time pressures, face-to-face communication is often difficult. Technology is now an integral part of an individual’s everyday life and it is difficult to avoid its use.

Though the older generation has reluctantly adopted technology, they stressed that face-to-face communication is a better way to communicate with the younger generation. Achutananad (older generation) said, ‘[...] see again, this is the question which should be addressed at other levels. I am a very emotional person. I would definitely like to meet people physically. I don’t believe in all these technology wherein you have to contact on phone. For my generation, I guess it is like this only’. Due to the perceived inexperience of the younger generation, the older generation believes that better communication can be achieved by face-to-face. Younger employees need more guidance than the middle-aged from the more experienced ones, which the older generation feels is more effective when dealing face-to-face.

Rajesh Kaul (older generation) said, ‘With the younger generation you need to have face-to-face communication to understand where the gaps are. The younger generation needs to understand these ... before they execute a particular work or job or activity’. In addition, the older generation states that impact of face-to-face communication in case of the younger generation is far stronger as compared to technology-based communication. It is more effective in the event of serious and critical situations. Mishra (older generation) said, [...] if there is a constraint I send a mail. I share my knowledge over the mail also. But, again, I would be saying that by giving a laptop wouldn’t be that useful. Whatever we are discussing has more impact than reading something on laptop (technology)

**Middle-aged generation’s Perspectives on Communication Channel**

(a) **Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication channel.** Middle-aged generation participants overwhelmingly endorsed face-to-face communication. At the same time, they did not undermine the importance of technology-based communication. But they also acknowledged that technology cannot match the power of face-to-face communication and can only supplement it.
I personally prefer face-to-face communication. No other communication channel can match face-to-face communication. You have voice communication, [...] a recent development is video conferencing. But technology is not the answer to face-to-face communication. If a person is sitting in front of you, you can observe his expression. It sends a signal whether something is ok or not (Ajay, Middle-aged generation).

Face-to-face communication is considered an effective and personal way of communicating with the others as body language acts as a feedback tool. Fatts (1998) observed that face-to-face communication has the advantage of being a feedback process. With continuous feedback, executives can tailor their communication to meet the needs of the situation. Face-to-face communication shows the expressions and feelings of the stakeholders, whereas technology-based communications (email) are passive in nature.

I don’t have any apprehensions about technology-based communication. But I personally prefer face-to-face communication. Reason being if that, if you were to look at your mail box, it will be filled with so much data that you just don’t know how to process all the information together. Sometimes, you are terrified by it (Udyaan, Middle-aged generation).

In face-to-face communication, triangulation of cues (body language, paralanguage, words) takes place. Triangulation of cues reduces the probability of a communication gap. Technology is adopted for transactional purposes; communication is about engaging people and is achieved through face-to-face communication. It is important to note that the middle-aged generation is not opposed to technology; rather, they find it to be a passive way of communicating. In addition, they prefer written communication as it can be used as evidence. People have a tendency to communicate something and behave differently, which is the reason why written communication is a better channel.

I would prefer face-to-face communication any day. See, when you are communicating face-to-face you also understand the body language of the other person. You are able to understand whether the person is interested or not. There may be something in the body language that may convey that your communication is not very clear to him. So you can go into detail and channelize communication in a way that he can understand. While communicating through technology it is a kind of commanded communication. It really doesn’t give the complete communication (Vinay, Middle-aged generation)
(b) Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication channel with the older generation. Middle-aged generation participants preferred face-to-face communication with the older generation. The main reason for choosing face-to-face communication is that the older generation is not conversant with technology. Sabita (middle-aged generation) said, ‘I prefer face-to-face because if I have a doubt I can ask for and get immediate clarification. It would be waste of time to do it through technology: you reply and wait, again go through it and then ask. If I am having face-to-face interaction it can be clearly understood whether the person whom I am asking doubts is getting my point’.

The middle-aged generation participants also feel that they have to seek personal clarifications from the older generation on a regular basis. Hence, technology-based communication tended to increase communication time because of which face-to-face communication is preferred. However, middle-aged generation participants maintained that lack of knowledge of technology does indeed affect communication negatively.

(...) It hampers communication. For example, if, on a busy day I want leave, the older generation would prefer to speak on the phone and sort out the issue. But the younger and the middle-aged generations are busy with other things; they would prefer to leave sms or a message so that they can respond without affecting their work. So in that way some kind of gap might be there (Santosh, middle-aged generation).

In addition, the older generation’s physical strength and capabilities are in a decline. Therefore they must not be burdened with having to learn technology and it is best to communicate face-to-face to the extent possible. The middle-aged participants also mentioned that the older generation people like to maintain proof of the communication. As a result, they prefer face-to-face communication to be supplemented with written communication for the record. Lal (middle-aged generation) elaborated on this, ‘I think written plus face-to-face communication is better. Written because the older generation wants it. When I am talking about my organization, I am talking about the PSU setup. They want something as proof of what I have said so that they can keep a record’.
(c) **Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication channel with own generation.** Within their generation, situation rather than the generation dictates the choice of channel. This is because they are comfortable with both face-to-face and technology-based communication channels. Lal (Middle-aged generation) also stated that ‘they respond to mails also. Most of them say that they will respond to both written and face-to-face communication. It is a mix and it depends upon the situation. Secondly, they share similar experiences, which result in mutually compatible thinking styles. As a result, when they communicate within their generation, the emphasis is on the content of the communication rather than the channel.

(d) **Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication channel with the younger generation.** Middle-aged generation uses technology-based channels along with face-to-face communication with the younger generation. Participants from the middle-aged generation said that the younger generation prefers technology because of their proficiency with it. Morris & Venkatesh (2000) proposed that the younger generation was raised in a technology-rich environment due to which they are able to make effortless use of it.

A noteworthy observation by the participants is that the younger generation has a tendency to react in face-to-face communications. Use of technology-based communication gives the younger generation the time and space reflect and introspect before reacting.

*Communicating via technology like email or sms gives time to the younger generation to reflect. You can be sure that, before they react, they will at least think. In face-to-face communication you say something and the person reacts. With the older generation, even if you are having face-to-face communication they think and act. For the younger generation, technology-based communication gives them some time to introspect (Ajay, Middle-aged generation).*

The Middle-aged generation feels that they are mentally compatible with the younger generation. They understand each better as compared to the older generation. Hence, they are of the opinion that face-to-face communication is not needed with the younger generation. They also get prompt responses from the younger generation when they use technology. However, the participants agreed that there are some situations when face-to-face communication is preferred, as in cases when a nurturing approach is necessary. Sometimes, unknown aspects are revealed in face-to-face communications.
Younger generation’s Perspective on Communication Channel

(a) Younger generation’s preferred communication channel. Participants of the younger generation said that though the choice of the channel is situation dependent, at a personal level they prefer face-to-face communication. This goes against the common perception about the younger generation that they are ‘gizmo freaks’ and use technology-based communication channels indiscriminately. Various studies (Deloitte, 2009; Raines, 2002) reported that the younger generation prefers computer-mediated communication as they were socialized during technology revolution. However, this study showed that the younger generation prefers the face-to-face communication channel.

The reasons for preferring face-to-face communication are: It affords the opportunity and scope for a non-verbal communication (body language, para language). With the older and the middle aged for non-verbal interactions, it is important to understand body language, voice modulation and read facial expressions. The face-to-face channel also facilitates feedback. An individual may be successful to conceal his/her emotions in non face-to-face communication but it is difficult to conceal it in face-to-face communication. Fatt (1998), in his paper, ‘Non-verbal Communication and Business successes’, said that nonverbal (body language, para language) communication acts as a yardstick against which the words and intentions are measured.

See like you know, I feel that on many occasions sarcasm gets hidden when the communication is not face-to-face. A lot of times a certain communication happens through non-verbal methods, which gets hidden if it is not face- to-face. So, I think that the honesty of the communication is better expressed when it is face- to-face. That is why I prefer face- to-face. This does not mean that other methods are not useful; they do have their uses. Suppose you are a client and I am trying to sell you this thing and you have to pick it up from this place so I can communicate through phone. I had an issue with an older generation person and I spoke to him face- to-face. Basically, the problem was that he used to discuss about me with other people. I got to know about it through someone, which I felt was incorrect. If you have any issue with me then you should come and tell me. If you tell me, ‘Amit I am not happy with your work. You need not tell these things to others’. I expect that frankness and that can only happen when he and I can sit down across the table and talk Amit (Younger generation).

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12 Non-verbal communication refers to body-language, Para language, Gestures (Participants definition)
The younger generation finds that the lack of face-to-face communication leads to incomplete communication. It is difficult to have detailed communication using technology-based means alone. This may result in misunderstanding and communication breakdown. Jyoti (younger generation) said, ‘It is better to have face-to-face communication because with electronic-based communications, while dealing with customers, we are unable to understand the needs of the client properly. We are able to know people psychologically better when they are in front of us’.

Ramandeep (younger generation) stressed this point further:

*We can learn a lot from expressions. Expressions are a very important part of communication. While communicating via technology, expressions take a back seat. If you are talking on phone, even via video-conferencing, it cannot match face-to-face communication. Video conferencing can only create an ambience. I would say that face-to-face communication is much better.*

**(b) Younger generation’s preferred communication channel with the older generation.** Younger generation prefers to have face-to-face communication with the older generation because the older generation is not conversant with technology. They know the basics of technology, but are not enthusiastic about using it. For instance, ERP as a business process has been introduced in organizations but the older generation is still reluctant to utilize it. Nagendra said, ‘with the older generation, face-to-face communication always works better. They are not averse to technology, but generally prefer discussions’. For example, they will not respond promptly to mails. Their laid back approach negatively influences communication process. There were instances when urgent messages are communicated via technology remain unread and un-replied.

Underutilization of technology in communication increases the turnaround time. The younger generation participants made the point that technology use reduces the communication divide by facilitating communications in both directions. It provides the scope of quality communication.

As discussed earlier, the older generation cannot be termed as being ‘technology ignorant’. They are aware of the basics, but are reluctant users. In this study, it was observed that the younger generation responds to and communicates with the older

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13 Detailed communication refers to in-depth communication over an issue.
generation on the basis of age-stereotypes. Age-stereotypes thus can be an important predictor of communication satisfaction. Giles (2010) reported a similar finding in a comparative of the USA and India. Age-stereotype was seen to be predictor of communication satisfaction.

Somewhat(sic) they are not that adaptable to technology. If I am talking to an old person, I will not call him directly. I will find out whether he is free or not. It is better that I go and tell him that this is the thing. We have to follow do's and don'ts and it is true that the older generation is not that familiar with technology. In today's environment I think not being conversant with technology is a problem. I have faced this problem with people from other departments and not in my department. We are E &T people, so everybody needs to know technology; they have no choice. With respect to the other departments, there are some people who don't even know how to send mails. Sometimes they don’t read message on phone, normally talking in person with them works fine with them. They don’t read mails, they just say that who will see the mail and that it is not useful for me. They ask us to send a fax and then they will have a look at it. At that point of time, it become difficult. Sending email is much more easy than fax. For fax I have to first take a print-out and then fax it. When he gets time he will see the fax. It certainly prolongs the things (Siddhant, younger generation).

See, when the older generation was growing up there were no phones, only way of communication was writing letters or telegrams. Their approach and method of communicating takes a lot of time. In our times, we have mobile phones to communicate easily. Laptop(sic) and e-mails are fast way of communication. When we saw these from beginning, we understood these things easily. For the older generation these things are new, so they understand them slowly. It is because of these difference there is a lot of gap (Vipul, Younger generation).

The older generation likes to discuss matters in detail, which is not possible via technology. Older people, especially at higher levels of management, are usually not involved with the details. They have to be briefed when necessary. The older generation is also preoccupied with several issues and does not have the time to respond to mails promptly. It was seen that the level of management had an influence on the younger generation in the choice of channel of communication.

The older generation is at the decision-making level; so face-to-face communication is better. Reason being, they are in a position to make you understand certain things and help you take decisions. In a practical sense, the older generation will be at mid-level or senior level, they can make you understand things better. In addition, they don't have time to go through mails and sms because it takes time (Rakesh, Younger generation).

The discussions show that the older generation prefers written communication (hard copies, paper-based) whereas the younger generation prefers verbal
communication or written technology-based communication. In addition, the younger generation feels that the older generation also prefers documented communication so as to maintain records.

*See, I would like to give an example. A very valid point you made that they are not conversant with technology. It is for this simple reason that I have to draft the letter first. I could actually send a word file to my boss and message him. He can just edit in the word file and send it back to me. But he generally asks me to take the print out and then again make changes. This is how things work here. He is not conversant and prefers paper-based communication. They not being conversant with technology is only half of the picture. Basic bit of technology in terms of emails and sms I think that older generation is conversant with. So, I don’t think that it is much of an issue at least not with Parivartan (Saumya Younger generation)*

(c) **Younger generation’s preferred channel for communicating with the middle-aged generation.** With the middle-aged generation, the younger generation uses both face-to-face and technology-based channels. Generation is not a factor. According to the younger generation, the age difference is not big; and the comfort level is high. They understand each other better. Therefore, choice of channel of communication depends upon situation.

*I would go with 50-50. I would say 50 percent of face-to-face communication and remaining technology based. I am expecting that there is space to do so and the generation gap is less. The expectation is that when space is provided or taken by you, I have the ability to take things forward and I can speak face-to-face. This happens with the middle-aged generation. I am not that too(sic) confident that it will happen with the older generation or a higher level.(Kishore, younger generation)*

(d) **Younger generation’s preferred communication channel for with own generation.** Participants of the younger generation said that although they prefer face-to-face communication, the actual channel they use depends on the situation. They felt that they are highly compatible with one another; therefore, the choice of channel of communication is not consciously made. If there is information to be conveyed or there is a data requirement, they will use technology-based channels. If a detailed discussion is required, they will prefer face-to-face communication. Deepti (younger generation) said, ‘I prefer face-to-face here mostly because only face-to-face communication works. However, if there is a data requirement then I would with technology-based communication’. Generations should try to be effective in
nonverbal communication. It will help them to overcome the barriers of fear, distrust, stereotypes, and resistance.

Discussions in this section showed that, as a personal choice, people of all generation prefer face-to-face communication. However, they accommodate intergenerational differences in their choice of communication channels to make communication a satisfying and effective experience.

### Communication Style

In this study, broadly, communication style is defined as the methods and approaches adopted by generations to communicate. In their comparative study of nations, Nishimura, Nevgi and Tella (n.d) discussed the differing communication styles.

#### Summary of communication style and cultural features in Finland, Japan, and India

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<td>Individualistic</td>
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Source: (Nishimura, Nevgi and Tella, nd: 794).
The findings of the present study are consistent with literature. It is seen that, as a personal choice, all generations prefer a participative style of communication. Participative communication style is defined by being high on body language, talkative and feedback.

**Older generation’s Perspective on Communication Style**

(a) **Older generation’s preferred communication style.** The older generation preferred participative style of communication. They felt that communication should be interactive. It provides a scope for a two-way communication process and makes the person feel a part of the system. In turn, this helps to enhance the sense of belongingness to the team and the organization, which positively impacts the communication process.

*I normally prefer the participative style of communication. The obvious reason is that when you are trying to express something and if you don’t take the requirements or the nature of the person into consideration, then it is a one-way communication. In the given situation, the other person will not be interested in what you are talking. Therefore, I have to take into account his likings and all. I know if I am assertive then I am imposing myself on that person. If I am making that person participate then the interests of both are being satisfied (Achutanand, Older generation).*

The older generation reflected that the ultimate goal of any communication is to get the work done. The participants felt that this can be achieved by adopting a participative style. They said that when interests of the stakeholders are met, it becomes easier to convince them. They believe that participative style provides makes possible the meeting of the interest of both parties as the views of the stakeholders is considered.

*Assertive style does not work nowadays. Participative style of communication fits the bill, as the ultimate goal of communication is to get the work done. If the other person is always convinced in what you say then only you get the end result. If you instruct a person to do this or that, he is not going to be committed and then there will be number of results that would not meet your expectation (Mehen, older generation).*

Older generation participants made a case for participative style by highlighting the gray areas in the assertive style of communication. The assertive style is based on domination. It is believed that the recipient’s feelings and requirements are generally ignored, which may lower the recipient’s interest. The older generation feels that the assertive style, particularly in government organizations, does not work as there is no
hire and fire policy. Sarthak (older generation) expressed that in the assertive style, the recipient feels ‘oppressed’ and there is the likelihood that s/he may not communicate should anything go wrong.

Participative style of communication is always preferred. Previously, I would have been assertive. Nowadays suggestions are always welcomed. First and foremost, assertion always makes the other feel a bit oppressed; being participative means that he is also the part of decision making and it makes a lot of difference. It is much more easier to do work with participative style of communication. Assertive probably means that he follows instructions, but his heart is not in it and probably if anything is going wrong he won’t say anything. Being participative you would be part of talk. It is much better (Sarthak Older generation).

(b) Older generation’s preferred communication style with its own generation. The older generation adopts a restrained and submissive style of communication within its group. This is a deviant finding to the popular notion that intergroup relations are better than out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Gaetner et al., 1993). Older generation participants articulated the rationale for such behavior saying that they are expected to offer respect — for age and level/range of experience — to the colleagues of their generation. This makes communication formal. They have to be slightly submissive though they belong to the same generation. Older generation participants belonging to the higher level of management said that the level of management has to be kept in mind, even though their colleague (same generation) belongs to same level (higher) does not make communication casual or open.

(c) Older generation’s preferred communication style with the middle-aged generation. The older generation follows the participative style while communicating with the middle-aged generation. The participants did not see the need for a change in style and felt that compatibility levels were high. The main reason for the compatibility was the optimum level of experience (as perceived by the older generation) and age of the middle-aged generation; and the respect and deference with which they were treated.

Communication does not mean that you put forward your point of view only. If this is the thing, then there is no need of communication. You can always say do this and do that and things will be done. But participative communication means that you have to put forth your point and you have to also accept good points being told by others and come to a common result. Communication does not mean that what you say is the ultimate thing (Telangana, Older generation).
Therefore, the efforts required to communicate with the middle-aged generation is not much because neither saw the need to make significant changes in style. Jearth (Older generation) said, “normally, I am able to understand middle-age people. I understand them and take things for granted with them”.

(d) Older generation’s preferred communication style with the younger generation. Older generation tend to adopt a parental approach and nurturing style of communication. They feel that it is their responsibility to mentor the younger generation. They compare their style to ‘parent and child relationship’. When they are being parent-like they are patient in listening to the younger generation’s perspective and make an extra effort to understand. Usha (older generation) said, ‘We can talk to them as children and in very friendly manner. ‘what you have learned, “humein bhi sikha do thoda”’. It is more of a parental approach while interacting with the younger generation. Parents also ask their children to tell them about new things but at the same time they guide them also’.

Tushar (older generation) elaborated further, ‘while interacting with the younger generation, communication is more jovial. Communication with them is more about giving examples about how things can be done. It is more of mentoring’.

According to the older generation, the difference between the generations makes the younger generation less forthcoming on certain occasions. However, the older generation maintains that younger people are more expressive than they were at that age. In the present times, the older generation thinks that using instruction-based communication will not help. It is believed that people, especially the younger generation does not like to be micro-managed. An instruction-based approach may increase the communication divide. Thus, participants of the older generation considered that the nurturing style is best suited to the circumstances.

Nobody likes that (instruction-based communication). Whatever views you have and you communicate it to the other person in an assertive or coercive manner- do this or that. I must confess that no one would appreciate or like this. Communication quality will go down. So, it is better that you keep your views to yourself. This is how everyone feels about instruction-based communication. However, you cannot paint everyone with same brush. In general, suppose you have got an instinct that somebody is wrong, and if you try to correct that person, he will not like it. (Achutanand, Older generation)
The older generation maintained that they must increase their patience and explain issues with logic and reason to the younger generation. They must also give enough scope and space to the younger generation so that they are not afraid to commit mistakes and learn from them. It is imperative to understand that the younger generation is at the start of the learning curve and they are likely to stumble. In a later section, it will be discussed that the younger generation is reluctant to share their views with the older generation out of fear of committing mistakes.

Thus, it is interesting to note that, on the one hand, the younger generation is fearful of committing mistakes and, on the other, the older generation is ready to give the space needed for the younger generation to learn from their mistakes. According to the researcher, this gap is at the psychological level. Shripal (older generation) said, ‘While interacting with a person who is 25-26 year old, I would be much more willing to indulge in effective listening, would have more patience because his learning curve has just begun and he is bound to make mistakes. It will make me little bit nurturing with them’.

Middle-aged generation’s Perspective on Communication Style

(a) Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication style. The middle-aged generation also adopts a participative style of communication because it provides scope for two-way communication and helps to know people better. The middle-aged participants felt that it is important to know others’ viewpoint in order to have an effective communication. A participative approach helps to reduce the distance between sender and recipient by building a bond in order to make communication friendlier.

Participative style is considered to be a more desirable and effective way to communicate. In addition, it has the component of feedback; both sender and recipient are able to seek feedback from each other to clarify their positions. This kind of approach builds a firmer understanding between the stakeholders and the communication follows a well-defined path.

I follow participative style of communication. I think it makes communication effective. We can get the idea whether the message is clear to both the sides if we use participative style of communication. I can understand what he wants to say and confirm my understanding. And what I want to say and get his idea. Well I like to check on with my receiver what is the information that he has got and whether it is clear or not. (Ashok, Middle-aged generation).
In spite of the benefits of the participative style, there were occasions, especially during urgencies, when the desired outcomes were not achieved and the communication stretched without a conclusion. In such situations, non-participative communication should be given impetus. The middle-aged participants said that, though they are predisposed to a participative style of communication, it cannot be a rule. In a formal and bureaucratic setup as in a government organization, participative style of communication is very difficult, if not altogether impossible.

(b) Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication style with the older generation. With the older generation, the middle-aged generation adopted a passive and submissive style of communication. They readily acceded to the demands of the older generation, especially with persons from senior management. The communication style of Indians’ is influenced by high-context cultural discourse. People tend to show respect to elders in their communications with them (Nishimura, Nevgi and Tella, n.d.).

Definitely, with the older generation, irrespective of the level of management, many a times I have conceded to their demands. However, the level of management cannot be ignored. We have to take this also into account, if it is an older person from a very junior level I can at least try to convince him. I can instruct as I have the authority to do so. But, generally, with senior officers of above my level, I agree to their likes and dislikes (Rakesh, middle-aged generation).

The middle-aged generation feels that they are required to be more tolerant and accept whatever the older generation has to communicate with utmost respect and patience. Respect is offered to the older generation by being careful with the choice of words, avoiding impulsive remarks and thinking things through before communicating. They attempt to communicate ‘meaningful’ things only. This makes communication more structured and mechanical.

The older generation has been brought up in a different environment; they expect us to show them respect. The way you talk to your father, and the way you talk to your brother, there will be some difference. The same thing applies in the organization, too. I feel that the older generation person is just like my father; he is senior. I feel that the thinking pattern of my father and that of any older generation person is going to be same. It helps me to interact with them an effective manner. (Ratan, middle-aged generation).
Middle-aged generation participants said that they found it difficult to understand the older generation’s mindset. Therefore, they preferred to follow a prescribed style, which is based on respect, in order to avoid misunderstandings. They considered respect-based communication style to be a safe approach. Such structured approach made resulted in a passive style of communication

*With their experience they know things, which I don’t, and they might also expect certain things from us while communicating. They may not be well versed with technology. Therefore, I try to explain the things properly using the medium with which they are comfortable. In order to get the work done, you should just fulfill their expectations. They are open to learning, but make an effort only if they want to know/learn. In order to get a job done, I should know what they are expecting out of me and how I should work on it (Kalyan, Middle-aged generation)*

The middle-aged participants also observed that the older generation tends to separate emotion from fact. They lay importance on facts. There is always a feeling of being termed as being an excessively emotional lot. Consequently, the middle-aged generation participants felt that the older generation did not value their feelings. They saw a deficit of the emotional component in interactions with the older generation. This appears to contradict the claim of the older generation that there is a decline in the emotional component with the generations that follow them.

*Just passing on required information to the older generation. Not telling them what I feel and all. The older generation of today is different from the earlier one. Older generation of yesteryears used understand our emotions also and used to take very comprehensive view. They would not ignore feelings from the facts. But the older generation of nowadays, if I have go to a person of 58 age when I start sharing my feelings, they would separate facts from emotions or they would just simply ignore it. Or they would say that he is very emotional. Older generation has also changed over 15 years (Lal, Middle-aged generation).*

(c) **Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication style with own generation.**

The participants adopted participative style of communication with their generation peers. They did not see any reason to change because they shared many common experiences. Bijoy, (middle-aged generation) said, ‘*repertoire of shared experience is huge, which lays strong foundation of understanding amongst us and we tend to use the style which we individually prefer (participative style)*. It can be seen that sharing common ground makes thinking style, communicative behavior similar. The middle-aged generation is certain of what to expect from their colleagues of the same generation.
(d) *Middle-aged generation’s preferred communication style with the younger generation.* With the younger generation, the middle-aged generation followed a participative and unstructured style of communication. They viewed the younger generation to be more open in comparison to the older generation; thus, the middle-aged generation participants felt that they are in a better position to adopt a participative style of communication. The younger generation’s proficiency with technology, high grasping power and ability to multi-task makes participative communication possible. Kalyan (middle-aged generation) said, ‘they are much more open and they don’t require that much of explanation. Therefore, the required effort is much less. It is more participative.

**Younger generation’s Perspectives on Communication Style**

*(a) Younger generation’s preferred communication style.* Younger generation participants preferred a participative style of communication. They also said that they were not completely familiar with organizational matters. For this reason, they felt the need for guidance from the older generations. A two-way communication gives them the space to learn from other experiences.

_Younger generation is very new to the organization. So, if there is any need of guidance, then we rely on the older generation. They give us directions on how to do things that are going to be best for us. We are efficient in doing things on our own, but if get some direction and guidelines, as they know everyone and everything. We are very new so we are not comfortable with everyone. They guide me to go and meet Mr.x and he will tell you how do things. So, it is always better with them (Nagendra, younger generation)._  

The younger generation believed that two-way communication is the most desired communication style as it allows scope to discuss issues, enabling one to seek and reflect from various perspectives (views and counterviews), facilitating feedback to validate points and the ease of transfer of information. Myer & Sadaghiani (2010) discussed the importance of feedback for the younger generation. In their paper, they showed that the younger generation expects open communication and regular feedback. A participative style of communication was reported as one of the main expectations of the younger generation.

_Whenever there is a discussion, which involves people from different age groups, a participative style of communication always gives scope to validate and collect different ideas. Being assertive is not going help in getting work done work because_
it hurts the ego of the people. Being structured is not going to work as people are already structured in their communications (Shantaram, younger generation).

(b) Younger generation’s preferred communication style with the older generation.

With the older generation, the younger generation adopted a passive and submissive style of communication. Deepti (younger generation) said, ‘if you consider people age-wise then it becomes really difficult to communicate with the older generation. Therefore, it is better to be passive and submissive’.

The reason for adopting a passive and submissive style of communication is essentially due to the expectation of the older generation. Being the experienced group in the workforce, the older generation feels that they know best how things are to be done. They also expect that the younger people should share/follow their vision. This limits the scope of the younger generations. Consequently, the younger generation felt that the older generation has a closed approach in their interactions.

This barrier prevents the younger people from sharing their perspective and communication becomes unidirectional. Lewis (1999) and Pakiam (2007) maintained that, for Indians, the primary purpose of communication is to preserve harmony rather than communicating the intended message. It was observed in this study that, to maintain a harmonious relationship with the older generation, the younger generation gave priority to respect over the purpose of the communication. It was also seen (which is discussed in later sections) that the younger generation had the least communication effectiveness and satisfaction while interacting with the older generation.

On similar lines, Giles et al (2007) said that norm of politeness is negatively related to communication satisfaction. Less expectations of politeness to the older generation increase the communication satisfaction. But adopting a passive style of communication contradicts Howe & Strauss (2007), who postulated that individuals who are senior in age or position do not intimidate younger generation. Ramandeep (younger generation) elaborated this point. ‘They tell us what they have to/want to, they are older people, and have a lot of experience. They might be telling the right thing or something that is wrong. First, understand what they are telling and then decide whether he is right or not. Listening is very important with them’.

The younger generation participants also made the point that they formed a part of the first level of management. The older generation is most likely to be a few
levels higher. Therefore, the dynamics of seniority level is likely to influence interaction, which must be taken into account. Thus, younger generation participants said that they try to be cautious in their communication behavior. The level of passivity did not decline with decline in level of management. Even if the person was from a level below them, the younger generation was passive gave respect for the experience of the person.

*If I am talking to a person of my age, group or of middle-aged generation I will say about, for example 10 sentences; but if I am speaking to an older generation person I will be speaking just three or four sentence. In spite of that fact I would have made my point clear to him, I would just speak less. That is the only thing, convey your point but speak less. As you said that all leadership is from the older generation so we have to be cautious (Debosmita, younger generation).*

It is necessary to understand how communication styles become passive and submissive. A participant from the younger generation, Kiran, said, ‘we have to be very patient while explaining them. Earlier, I used to feel very guilty and blame myself. However, things have changed now, after seeing them, sometimes I used to feel that they are like this only. I have developed a system about how to tackle them. After these years, it is now we know how to tackle them’

The younger generation also said that they would first listen to the older generation; and only then responds, restraining themselves, if necessary, from sharing their views. One has to be cautious with the choice of words, avoiding slang and abbreviations. Neha (younger generation) said, ‘with younger and the middle-aged generation, if we utter 10 sentences, with the older generation, we speak only four sentences’. Nagendra (younger generation) felt that interactions with the older generation was more of ‘ok business’—saying only what is absolutely necessary

*I just tend to be quiet for some time. It is a more cynical approach. Nothing is going to change here; then why to bother and waste time. Yes, communication does become little more passive. [...] Yes, it is one-way communication. Sometimes, if there is a discussion going on, I am trying to put across my view, it gets refuted because of a reason that is illogical. You cannot have arguments with something that is illogical, so I feel that, ok boss tell me what you want me to do. So it becomes little more passive. This takes place because of some kind of a gap that plays out. However, with somebody who is my age, I can actually tell that person that what he is doing is illogical to some extent. I can do that with the middle-aged also. Sometimes you realize that it is little futile to do so with the older generation. Sometimes, it is like expecting someone to change completely. One can’t expect this from someone at the age 55. Therefore, you can just try. You know he is cynical; he is going to retire (Amit, Younger generation).*
(c) Younger generation’s preferred communication style with the middle-aged generation. Ramandeep (younger generation) explained the position of the younger generation,

We need to offer some respect to the middle-aged generation at the start of the communication. After that, if it looks that he is fine, then communication becomes friendly in nature. So, first start with respect and see how he is responding. If his response is good, communication becomes friendly. I have some seniors from the middle-aged generation with whom I am very friendly. Therefore, some of them are very friendly and some of them are not friendly.

The younger generation adopted a participative style with certain accommodations while communicating with the middle-aged generation. The younger generation participants said that they have to offer respect to the middle-aged generation. They used the elder brother-younger brother relationship to describe the dynamics of their relationship with the middle-aged generation. Like a younger sibling, they treat the middle-aged generation (elder brother) with respect. In return, the middle-aged generation guides them.

Younger generation is also able to confide in the middle-aged generation. Swapnil (younger generation) said, ‘[...] it is respectful because he also has experience. Like your elder brother giving you guidelines to do things in your professional personal life. Therefore, it always good to be respectful’.

(d) Younger generation’s preferred communication style with own generation. The younger generation adopts a friendly, informal style with their in-group. Unlike with the other generations, the younger generation participants were not intimidated by their generation peers. They admitted to a sense of comfort. They felt that the people from their own generation would understand their viewpoints and thought processes better. Thus they were able to relate better with each other. Communication within in-group is informal and friendly.

[...] means the words my generation and I are using will be more or less similar [...] suppose I am drafting an e-mail and there is a likelihood that the older generation will have issues with the choice of words but our (younger generation) will understand that it can be written in this particular manner also. This is the reason that communication with own generation is better. (Vipul, younger generation)
Participant responses and the discussions in this section showed that, in general, a participative style of communication is preferred, but because of the intergenerational differences changes in communication style become necessary.

**Communication effectiveness**

Communication involves words, body language, voice, tone and the subject matter, the ‘communication history’ of the participants, individual characteristics and barriers. Effective communication is an important to the success of an organization (American Management Association, n.d). Effective communication reduces the level of misunderstanding between people, which results in fewer mistakes.

In the present study effective communication is understood as,

...a message that must be received by the intended individual or audience. It must get the audience attention. It must be understood. It must be believed. It must be remembered. And ultimately, in some fashion, it must be acted upon. Failure to accomplish any of these tasks means the entire message failed. It fails because it does not accomplish the purpose for which it was created (Therkelsen and Fiebich, 2001:2)

The following section discusses communication effectiveness from perspectives of the three generations.

**Table 4.1 Intergenerational Communication Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generations</th>
<th>Communication effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older Generation ➔ Middle-aged generation</td>
<td>More effective communication (experience and balanced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older generation ➔ Younger generation</td>
<td>Less effective communication (Inexperience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged generation ➔ Own generation</td>
<td>More effective communication (Shared experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged generation ➔ Younger generation</td>
<td>Less effective communication (Inexperience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger generation ➔ Own generation</td>
<td>More effective communication (Shared experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger generation ➔ Older generation</td>
<td>Less effective communication (Rigidity, lack of shared space)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 shows that communication effectiveness is the greater with the middle-aged generation and minimal with the younger generation.
Older generation’s Perceptions about Communication effectiveness

Older generation participants proposed a unified definition of communication effectiveness with subtle differences. In order to keep the nuances intact, the researcher has enumerated key characteristics of effective communication.

In our case effective communication is the one which is very detailed and at the same time you are focused on the particular job activity that is to be undertaken. An effective communication takes into account that an interaction with all other associated people, group or activities. For example, if I tell somebody that there is a piece of equipment, which is lying in our store and you have to arrange to get it shipped to some site. Communication will be effective if he is told what is to be brought, how it is to be acquired and which are resources available to get the job done, what kind of permissions does he needs to sought from the authorities. In addition, what transport he needs to take and he should know who are the concerned people at each and every stage (Rajesh Kaul, Older generation).

This statement by the participant shows the key characteristics of an effective communication as perceived by the older generation: (a) When the sender’s intent is conveyed. The recipient comprehends sender’s intent in the exact manner. (b) When two-way communication takes place so that the perspectives of all stakeholders are welcomed. It is believed that communication effectiveness is not only about communicating one’s own point of view but also listening to others. (c) When the recipient of communication acts in accordance to the expectation of the sender.

Therefore, it can be concluded that importance is given to the cognitive and behavioural aspects; the recipient needs to understand the message and act in accordance to it.

Older generation participants clarified how to improve communication effectiveness.

[...] effective communication nowadays takes place when it is very fast. We are working in our office we have to attend so many phone calls, mobile calls, and respond to email messages. Best thing in our office is ERP. It is the fastest mode of communication. You are able to send message fast. In addition to ERP, email is also there it makes communication fast. Earlier days there were problems in communicating, you had to make trunk call, wait for telegram and all. Definitely technology changes communication (Usha, Older generation)

First, surprisingly, older generation participants agreed that technology usage can improve communication effectiveness, which contradicted the common view that the older generation is ‘technology-phobic’. They accepted that technology speeds up communications and saves time. In addition, errors are minimized, which increases reliability in the communication process.
Effectiveness of communication is higher in the current times as compared to yesteryear. Communication depends upon the kind of personal relations you have with people. We learn a lot about the person while communicating with him/her. Suppose someone is in a very aggressive mood and comes to us, we make him sit, listen to him and cool him down. Our approach is that we should first listen to what he has to say. The second step should be to guide and suggest him. No one likes to be aggressive. Therefore, communication many a times helps you. So, many a times things that are going negative can turn positive with the help of communication (Mishra, Older generation)

Second, building interpersonal relations makes the communication process easier and enhances communication effectiveness. Older generation participants reported that in their attempts to build relationships, they adopted various means (like inquiring into the well-being of the person, asking about family, likes and dislikes) to know the individual. It is important to show personal concern than just restricting the exchange to mundane official conversation.

First of all, I will make an effort to know their well-being and welfare when I see them. If the person is far off, I will catch hold of him and wish him, even if the person wants to avoid me. I will not allow him that. That is my nature; this has nothing to do with age. You might have a person who is 20 years old and not communicating, whereas there might be a person who is 80 years old and still he is communicating (Achutanand, Older generation).

Third, the older generation also felt that communication effectiveness depends on the environment in the organization and the individual’s mindset. If the organization culture is supportive, with a positive attitude, an individual’s chance of effective communication increases.

The older generation reported that they found communications to be most effective with the middle-aged generation and least effective with the younger generation. The possible reason, according to the older generation, is that the middle-aged generation is considered to be among the experienced in the workforce. Thus, less effort is needed to communicate a message and also saving time in the process.

Like I said, they are already reaching my generation. Therefore, they have grown with the company and hence are the experienced lot. So they may know some of the things that I am trying to convey. Suppose, if someone is only one year old in Parivartan, then he may not know what are I am trying to communicate. Middle-aged generation already knows how things work here. If I communicate a message, there is likelihood that he will receive it. I feel that I am able to have more effective communications with them. Within the generation (older generation colleagues) means we have some built-in things, we have some kind of competition in ourselves in making communication bit formal amongst ourselves. Alas!! with middle-aged generation normally I don’t know what is the reason that I am much more comfortable communicating with them (Vagarya, Older generation)
The older generation’s view was that the technology advanced when the middle-aged generation was growing up. As a result, the middle-age people were conversant with technology. At the same time, they were equally adept with the non-technology modes. They do not rely on extensive usage of technology. Bajaj (older generation) said, *Middle-aged generation has a habit of relying on people/ older generation to ask and know things unlike the younger generation who prefer to use technology rather than communicate with people*

Older generation participants found the middle-aged generation to be submissive in terms of being more receptive to the older generation’s perspective. Their view is that the middle-aged generation is patient and has superior listening skills in comparison to the younger generation. It is the researcher’s view that the middle-aged generation’s ability to accommodate is sometimes seen as submissive by the older generation.

*With the middle-aged generation, I mean that they are little bit submissive. They would carefully listen to you and care for you. This does not mean that I am attaching any negative attributes to the younger generation. I mean the younger generation is good but they have this perpetual burning sensation (temperamental). Half of the time with the middle-aged generation things works in following fashion. We focus on how the work can be done and our experience is respected. They listen to us. On the other hand, the younger generation takes decision by themselves without consulting us. So, without seeing and without practically doing anything you can’t take decision. It is communication is more effective with the middle-aged generation than with the younger generation. 50% of the younger generation has burning sensation (sic). They should listen carefully, which they don’t. (Usha, Middle-aged generation).*

Older generation experienced lesser level of communication effectiveness with the younger generation. Lack of experience and excessive or indiscriminate use of technology are the reasons for the low levels of communication effectiveness with the younger generation. The younger generation is still in the learning stage. They tend to be impatient and restless, often asking too many questions. It was observed that the older generation had to invest in the efforts to communicate with the younger generation. This reduces communication effectiveness.

*May be, I feel that he (younger generation) is not that experienced. Again, these are just notions; they may be right or they may not be right. I feel that if the age gap is very high it probably results in slightly less effective communication. On the other
hand, if the age gap is less there are chances that communication is going to be more effective (Jearth, Older generation).

I mean it is good that the younger generation has good communication skill set but very few folks of the younger generation are having patience to listen to things. Most of the younger generation people are listening at the face value but at the back of their mind they are preparing their answers. They may indulge in some kind of aggressiveness and their views are accepted. They start giving suggestion without listening the complete conversation or without assessing the feeling of the other person. If you are communicating something without seeing the complete thing and without seeing the result they will catch you and make their decision. We need to do our preparation also. We can’t go and communicate with them without doing our homework (Sarthak, Older generation).

Usha (Older generation) had observed that the younger generation is habituated to relying on technology. If there is a problem, the younger generation will prefer to find a solution through technology rather than discussing it with the older generation and finding solutions.

Contradicting the stereotypical notion that people do not accepting negative perceptions about themselves, the older generation participants agreed that, to an extent, the responsibility for low communication effectiveness with the younger generation lies with them. Age gap and the large difference in experience were the reasons given. The rigid views of the older generation create a closed door feeling for the younger generation. Thus, it is assumed that the older generation will not listen to or accept their ideas. With such feelings that the younger generation will not get the desired responses from the older generation, it is only to be expected that, in order to avoid any altercation, the younger generation will keep their ideas to themselves and maintain the bare minimum communication with the older generation.

Even though we express ourselves to be socially available to everyone but we have some doors closed in our mind. This is because of the older generation’s (our) thought process. We do not listen to them and because we don’t accept them wholeheartedly. Therefore, it is more of the older generation that is not tuning in to the younger generation’s needs. We need to adapt to their expressions, coming up with ideas, and accepting it (Bajaj, Older generation).

Predominant literature (see works of Giles et al., 2007; 2005; 2010) has shown the staircase pattern when generations have positive communicative behaviour with their in-group. However, this study revealed a contradictory view of the older generation being unable to have effective communication within its own generation.
Older generation participants stated that they have the habit of working with assumptions about their generation.

Older generation state that it is assumed that since their generation is similarly experienced, detailed communication is not required. Therefore, less effort would be required to communicate as compared to other generations. However, experience alone is not sufficient. Detailed communication is essential in some circumstances. Communications based on the assumption that places importance to what is ‘unsaid’. Determining the ‘unsaid’ is often difficult and can lead to incorrect interpretations. Older generation participants also mentioned the ‘ego problems’ of colleagues, which came in the way of effective communication. Mehen said ‘as the older generation we communicate, but effective communication is not there. May be there are some ego issues, some ego problems’.

My own generation must be having some compartments, which on certain occasions are difficult to overcome. They may be having some pre-conceived notions because of which it may be difficult to have effective communication with them. On many instances, our generation believes that we know each other’s position well. Therefore, it is left to the other person to understand the unsaid component of communication. This acts as a predominant factor in a communication breakdown (Vagrya, Older generation).

Middle-aged generation’s Perception about Communication effectiveness

Middle-aged generation participants defined communication effectiveness from an outcome-oriented perspective. Communication effectiveness happens when the sender is able to communicate his/her message to the recipient in its entirety. Kalyan, Middle-aged generation defines communication effectiveness as ‘finally, the objective of any communication is to get the things done. The objective is to be met and that is the most important part of communication’.

Participants from the middle-aged generation accepted that effective communication is one of the biggest challenges at the workplace. They enumerated the dos and don’ts for effective communication. They are: a) a need to have thorough knowledge about the issue that is to be communicated in order to convince the other person; b) a need for awareness of recent developments in different areas related to work, especially technology; c) two-way communication; d) the need to avoid data overload and be terse/concise.
According to the middle-aged generation employees, information overload limits the capability of the recipient to assimilate may lead to communication breakdown. Goris et al (2002) in their study categorically said that data underload or overload reduces the information accuracy and may inhibit communication satisfaction. The outcomes may have negative impact of job satisfaction and job performance.

Effective communication is to say something and being understood in the same way. What I feel, communication effectiveness breakdown takes place when in presentations people try to cram too much of data. This is not effective communication. Effective communication is to put concise and straight data. Reality is different; we are probably required to cram more information than what we can probably assimilate (Udyaan, Middle-aged generation).

The middle-aged generation in consonance to the older generation felt that efforts must be made to establish good interpersonal relationship as it helps to reach across management levels and generations. Building interpersonal relationships brings stakeholders closer and gives them an understanding of each other’s mindset.

For me communication effectiveness takes place when communication and the information intended reaches the desired destination. Channel may be informal or formal- files or letters. However, there are situations when one needs to communicate dense information in an effective manner at that time personal relationship plays a very important role. Good personal relationship is able to cut across the level of management and generation (Ratan, Middle-aged generation).

For the middle-aged generation, communication effectiveness is predominantly more with their generation and the older generation. With the younger generation, it is minimal.

Communication effectiveness is high within the generation because of similar mindsets and the common contexts in which they were socialized. As result, the middle-aged generation understands each other well. Bijoy said that ‘being in the same phase of life results in better understanding; both of us would have passed through the same phase. Therefore, there is a platform of shared experience. Better understanding resulted in better communication.

Reasons for having effective communication with the middle-aged generation would be that they have much more experience than the younger generation. So, if I have to explain around 10 variables, the middle-aged generation would know at least 7. But in case of the younger generation I need to put in more effort, as they may be aware of only three variables, this may be due to lack of experience. Since, I have done my work and prepared 10 variables out which he knows 7 variables so it is easier to communicate with him (Rakesh, Middle-aged generation).
They are also able to think from multiple perspectives. Lal (middle-aged generation) said, since they were socialized in the post-liberalization phase, their thinking patterns and mindset of the people of his generation are similar, making communication effective.

[...] because there is a kind of clear understanding and one feels free to talk to them. In this kind of environment, in which if you can talk anything a lot of things come out, which may not come out otherwise and not part of the context. It will help to make a decision, I have a much better understanding with my own generation (Dutta, Middle-aged generation).

The reasons for high communication effectiveness with the older generations is are similar experiences and depth of knowledge due to which less effort is needed to communicate. Also, there is no information overload with the older generation.

Communication effectiveness was observed to be low with the younger generation because of lack of experience. Low familiarization with the organizational aspects reduces the level of communication effectiveness. Middle-aged generation participants asserted that, with the advances in technology, levels of face-to-face communication from the younger generation, or even communication per se, have declined considerably. They also felt that, situation permitting, face-to-face communication is still the most effective way to communicate. Lal (middle-aged generation) said, ‘as I told you earlier they are very confined to their gadgets, computers and net, to facebook. You won’t find them talking with officers in official setting. Physical interaction is very seldom and rare’

According to the participants from the middle-aged generation, the younger generation believes that information overload in communications should be seen as indication of their sound knowledge. They overload communication with information which the middle-aged generation is not able to assimilate.

I am not saying that they are not effective. It is just that my comfort level is high with the older generation. I cannot process so much of data so quickly that is one of the reasons. Younger generation generally indulges into data overloading. Multi-tasking is another thing that I am not good at. I am bit uncomfortable but multi-tasking is the need of the hour but I am not personally comfortable, I don’t have those skills (Udyaan, Middle-aged generation).
Younger generation’s Perceptions about Communication effectiveness

Communication effectiveness is defined as ability of the sender to communicate a message to the recipient free of ‘noise’; and the recipient’s ability to grasp the message to its entirety. It is obvious that the emphasis is on the abilities of the sender as well as the recipient ensure effectiveness.

The younger generation participants enumerated the elements of an effective communication. Effective communication takes place when the younger generation is able to speak their minds without inhibition. The participants stressed that focus should be on constructing simple sentences and avoiding jargon. Wineclaw (2008) considered the use of jargons as one of the potential barriers to effective communication. He suggested that executives should refrain from using jargon as it restricts the ability of the message to reach a wider audience.

"Effective communication takes place when I am communicating my message in very simple words. If I use simple words, I am better able to express my views and opinions to the other person. I am not going to use flowery words and sentences. I am going to use simple words and sentences (Debosmita, younger generation)."

Both sender and recipient must have a stake in making the communication effective. It helps the communication to remain focused on the subject and prevents misunderstandings. When the sender is able to articulate the message, it helps the recipient to understand better. Shantaram (younger generation) would ‘define effective communication as the one in which needs are clearly specified and articulated. Articulation is important. Therefore, for having an effective communication clarity and articulation is very important’.

Efforts should also be made to reduce ambiguity. A two-way-communication process is an important pre-requisite for effective communication. Ankur (younger generation) said, ‘First it must be a two-way exchange of ideas. Both the parties should be open to each other’s viewpoints’.

Communication effectiveness is greater within one’s generation and least with the older generation. Reasons for high communication effectiveness are: The younger generation participants spent more time with colleagues of their generation, which aided in better understanding among themselves. The nature of communication with the in-group is informal, which helped them to develop mutual understanding.
Obviously, with my friend circle and colleagues, it is much more effective with the younger generation. The time that I spend with my friends is more as compared with other generations. I am not getting the same time with the older generation. Even when I go for lunch, it is not with the older generation. I am with my colleagues. So, I am getting more information from my colleagues. When I go to the older generation to communicate, it is only for 10-15 minutes. If I have work with my generation, I can also have lighthearted conversation. You get much more time with your same age group friends, so you are getting much more information and communication becomes more effective (Swapnil, Younger generation).

Being in the same age group, they remember the same events and have undergone similar experiences, which results in common views and similar attitudes. Having a common attitude makes communication easier, thereby increasing communication effectiveness because of a common platform. Common platform refers to style of communication, use of words and language.

O’Bannon (2001), in his study titled ‘Managing our future’, discussed possible reasons for ineffective communication. One plausible reason, as seen in the present study is the differing environments in which both the generations were socialized. The rapid advances in technology marked younger generation’s socialization. For the older generation, it was socialist economy that defined their era. Communication effectiveness is minimal between the younger and older generations. Wide dissimilarities between the two generations are believed to be the chief reasons. The rigid attitudes of the older generation, unwillingness to consider other views, and vision limited by their experiences are the main barriers.

I think that the older you get, the less you should talk. I am at a stage in life when I should be willing to listen to generations after mine. For example, if I am 55, I am conducting a meeting and most of the participants are younger than me, then I should be willing to listen to them. After listening to them, I would put my perspectives on the table. Unfortunately, what happens in Parivartan, the older generation gives their views first. These views are obviously colored because of their experience; and they could also be biased at times because, at the end of the day, our experiences make us biased. Sometimes, you find a situation in which I am sitting at a meeting with an older guy and I won’t be talking. I feel that in a company like Parivartan, effective communication is the one where youngsters speak more than the older generation. I feel that it is not more in terms of quantity but in terms of speaking their minds. Only then will the older guy tell you that, ok you have this view but I feel that this may not be correct. Or may be you should wait little longer to give a strong opinion to a person. (Amit, Younger generation).

The outcome is an autocratic set up in which the younger generation has no alternative other than to act according to the older generation’s instructions, working style with little scope for experimentation.
Younger generation participants quoted from their experiences to support their opinion that the older generation has conventional mindset. Their thinking style is different from the younger generation’s. This conventional mindset is a serious impediment to the younger generation’s attempts to find suitable and effective communication behavior.

Communication effectiveness is comparatively higher between the younger and middle-aged generations as the younger generation felt that they are closer than. Middle-aged generation colleagues are receptive and better listeners. As the age gap is less, they are able to converse freely. According to the young generation participants, they can also look to their middle-aged generation colleagues for guidance. Swapnil (younger generation) said, 'We have effective communication with them. There is a proverb - the more sugar you put into your tea, the sweeter it will become. It is the same thing with relationships — the more time you spend with your colleagues, better the relationship.'

**Communication satisfaction**

Organizations, being a social system, cannot exist without the help of communications. Communication acts as a synergic force within the organization by linking and facilitating ideas, thoughts and actions. Communication satisfaction has a strong positive influence on job performance and job satisfaction (Goris, 2006). There is a positive relationship between communication efforts and practices and communication satisfaction (Carriere & Bourque, 2009).
Communication satisfaction has been measured with various dimensions like supervisory communication, subordinate communication, personal feedback, communication climate, media quality, corporate information, organizational integration and co-worker communication (Downs & Hazen, 1977 as cited in Clampitt and Girard, 1993). The present study closely examines co-worker communication. Communication satisfaction was studied from intergroup perspective.

Table 4.2 *Satisfaction in Intergenerational Communication*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Communication Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older Generation → Younger generation</td>
<td>More satisfactory communication (Fresh and interesting ideas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older generation → Own generation</td>
<td>Less satisfactory communication (Rigid and conventional mindset)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged generation → Younger generation</td>
<td>More satisfactory communication (Shared experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-aged generation → Older generation</td>
<td>Less satisfactory communication (Communication is formal and structured)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger generation → Own generation</td>
<td>More satisfactory communication (Shared experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger generation → Older generation</td>
<td>Less satisfactory communication (Generation gap)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.2 it is clear that communication satisfaction is highest with the younger generation and lowest with the older generation.

**Older generation’s Perception about Communication satisfaction**

The older generation participants reported higher levels of communication satisfaction with the younger generation; and minimal with their generation. They felt that their generation is fixed in its ideas, which have not changed with the times. On occasion, these ideas are not congruent with those of their co-generation colleagues. One of the participants (older generation) said, ‘*It is not difficult to communicate with the older generation. Rather, to get things implemented is difficult*’.

Rigidity limits scope for open communication. Open communication at workplace increases the levels of communication satisfaction and serves the interests of the organization and its stakeholders (Eisenberg & Witten, 1987 as cited in Goris, 2006). Vagaraya (older generation) said, ‘*same generation means we have some in*
built things. We have some kind of competition, which makes communication little bit formal. But with the middle-aged generation, normally this thing does not exist. I am much more comfortable communicating with them’. A rigid mindset leaves no scope for meaningful two-way communication. It makes the communication formal, which reduces the level of communication satisfaction.

With my own generation sometime ideas become very rigid. There are exceptions, as there will be, always. Many people of our generation tend to have very rigid attitudes and ideas: this is the way I am doing it and this is the way it should be done and what you are telling me is just not correct. And therefore I will do it in this way. So it becomes little more difficult to convince them that you can try this approach also. With the middle-aged generation it is easier. They accept ideas and at the same time they have experience to you know put forth (Rajesh Kaul, Older generation).

An explanation for the higher communication satisfaction with the younger generation lies in the perception of the older generation that the younger generation has a fresh mindset, uncoloured by existing bias. Less experience sometime acts as a boon as it allows the younger generation to come up with creative inputs/ideas. The inputs are rooted in present day reality and make communication a satisfying experience.

At any given moment, generally, I am much more satisfied talking to a 26 year old. As I said earlier, I find them willing to listen and bit more receptive because they have a fresh mind and are much more attentive. I have noticed it. In addition, their inputs are also very interesting because it is absolutely of the present day about which I don’t have much idea so I am also very keen to bounce ideas off them. It is fairer. I am most comfortable with them (sarthak, older generation).

Coming from the younger age group, possessing good grasping capabilities and being abreast of changes they can notice and understand generational differences. Communication satisfaction depends upon how well one understands the other person. Jadhav (older generation) said, ‘Younger generation’s grasping power is more. Whatever you want to say they are able to understand it quickly. They are just coming from colleges so they have a habit of reading; this increases their grasping power’.

It was also observed that the older generation did not enter a communication with the younger generation with the intention of convincing them. Rather, they saw it as a by-product of communication. The purpose was more about listening, analyzing and
accepting each other’s ideas. Other determinants not based on generation were: the mood of recipient, expectations and fulfillment (of expectations).

*It depends on type of communication, expectation from the person also. If the communication is positive and the person is in a positive mood, chances of having satisfying communication increases. See, it depends again on all the things, what you are expecting and demanding and what the other person is giving to you. Expectations of generations are very important; it depends on who expects and what the other person is giving to you. If you are expecting from us and we are giving it you, you will feel happy. You will be satisfied. What you are expecting and we are not able to give you that you will not be satisfied (Usha, Older generation).*

It is seen that pattern of communication satisfaction observed in this study differs from what was reported in earlier works, which proposed a staircase pattern (as the age gap increases the level of satisfaction decreases). In a cross-nation comparative study, Giles, Makoni & Dailey (2006) postulated that the staircase pattern in relation to communication satisfaction is a robust finding. This study found that communication satisfaction is better with other generations as compared with one’s own generation.

The discussions on communication effectiveness and communication satisfaction of the older generation show a linkage. In both the cases, older generation faced difficulties in having satisfying and effective communication within their generation. It is also noteworthy that communication effectiveness is low with the younger generation but communication satisfaction with them is high. It may be hypothesized that older generation draws emotional support from the younger generation.

**Middle-aged generation’s Perception of Communication satisfaction**

The communication satisfaction pattern of the middle-aged generation is the opposite of communication effectiveness pattern. It was observed to be higher with the younger generation and tended to be lower with the older generation.

Communication tended to be formal and structured with the older generation, thereby reducing communication satisfaction. Middle-aged generation participants reported that they were unable to converse freely because of their inhibitions. Consequently, communications with the older generation were limited to what was immediately relevant and important.
There is hesitation and fear about the reaction we will receive if we say something to the older generation. If the younger generation reacts (negatively) we can manage it. We have more conversations and spend more time with our own generation. We can have also lengthy discussions with the younger as well as our generations. We can also discuss other issues (personal), so we are more satisfied with them. On the other hand, with the older generation we can communicate only official/relevant things. We can’t share with the older generation. We have restricted communications with the older generation (Ratan, Middle-aged generation).

Since the older generation is not very proficient with technology, most of the communications takes place on paper or face-to-face, which sometimes do not suit the middle-aged generation because they are extremely time consuming.

Communication satisfaction was highest with the younger generation as their socialization experiences were similar to that of the middle-aged generation (post-liberalization). Meeta (middle-aged generation) said, ‘with the younger generation, I am able have satisfied communication because they listen to us, open to discussion, guided by logical reasoning and are able to communicate effectively. With the older generation, they don’t listen to us and there is resistance’. The middle-aged generation’s participants acknowledged that using technology in business is important and the younger generation’s proficiency makes communication a satisfying experience.

If you want to communicate with the older generation, there you have to cut through the structures that will come into play. Structure here means that you have to communicate mostly through paperwork. See other means of channel of communication that have emerged due to technological innovations; these are not used by the older generation frequently. They are not very much comfortable (Kalyan, Middle-aged generation).

The age difference between the middle-aged and the younger generations is less as compared to the older generation. Thus, they are able to relate well with each other. Less age difference between the generations facilitates effective and satisfying communication.

Younger generation’s Perception about Communication satisfaction
Younger generation participants said that they experienced greater communication satisfaction with their generation and the least with the older generation. The younger generation said that they spent more time with people of their generation so there is scope to know them better as compared to other generations. This finding validates earlier studies (Giles, Makoni & Dailey, 2006). It was seen that, as the age gap
increases, there is a decline in the communication satisfaction. In case of the younger generation, staircase pattern stands validated. Therefore, there is the likelihood that an individual will have greater satisfaction with a person of his/her generation than with a person with whom there is a large age gap.

Satisfying communication, I would say, takes place with same age group. It will be more satisfying because we communicate more. We communicate more with our generation because the place I am living (company’s housing colony) we have lot of people of same age group. So, we communicate more with them. Greater depth in communication helps to build good relations that result in effective and satisfying communication. Degree of communication satisfaction is higher in my generation; as a result we have effective communication. Only the time component is important. If we communicate more with a person, we get to know more about the person, so after some time the other person is also going to understand you (Ramandeep, younger generation).

It may be concluded that the context in which generations were socialized had significant impact on communication satisfaction. It was seen that similar contexts result in higher level of communication satisfaction. Younger generation participants explained that their socialization process was influenced by the technology revolution whereas the older generation grew up in a time when technology revolution was not even imagined.

As discussed in the communication effectiveness section, similar contexts create shared —common experiences, challenges and events— space for the people of the younger generation and make the communication process smooth.

Older generation grew up in a different environment. Younger generation colleagues grew up in the same environment. So, because of the same environment pattern of communication remains similar. See, when the older generation was growing up, there were no phones, the only way of communication was letters and all those. Their mode of communication used to take so much time. In our generation, we have phones. Laptops and emails are fast ways of communicating information. We have been part of technology revolution so we understand those things easily. For the older generation these things are new, they understand them but at a slow pace. (Vipul, Younger generation)

Shared spaces provide a platform for the younger generation to be themselves. Younger generation participants said that colleagues of the same generation are able to better understand their feelings as they were also going through the similar experiences. Younger generation is able to express themselves freely and thus reveal their negative sides —anger and frustration. Kishore (younger generation) said, ‘amongst our generation the space given is more, which brings satisfaction to the
communication. May be I am wrong in what I am talking but they are allowing me to speak. May be later on I will realize that I am wrong’.

Within one’s generation, there are no pre-conceived notions or stigma attached while communicating. The younger generation can enter a discussion without being judged, which is not possible with the older generation. They are able to freely express themselves, making their communication less structured.

The possible reason with them is that on any topic we discuss, whether for and against manner, we don’t argue with each other. We discuss in a detailed manner, rather like elderly people. This is how many things comes to your mind, many things you understand. Even if you are lacking somewhere, you can get many things out of that, you can get different ideas. You can’t do this thing with the older generation (Rakesh, Younger generation).

If I have to tell something to my senior (older generation) then I may have to use certain words and show him respect. Whereas communicating with the our is lot more easy. I can show my anger and frustration to my generation, but this cannot be done with senior people. This includes level of management as well as generations. With my own generation I am very frank, but with other generations I have to be bit diplomatic and others they can’t take it (Anuj, Younger generation).

The younger generation participants reported that communication satisfaction was low with the older generation; and that they did not get quality time with the older generation. Thus, they are not aware of their thinking style. Conversations with the older generation had an undertone of pressure; and to avoid mistakes, the younger generation adopted a hesitant approach. Goris (2006) said that communication dissatisfaction germinates in an environment that does not foster inhibition free communication; information shared is not combined with feedback. For executives, communication ‘does not exist’ if it is not backed with feedback.

According to the younger generation participants, the older generation is not willing to listen to them and accept their perspective. They felt that even if their views are valid they are rejected for the reason that they are young in age and experience. In hierarchical relationships, upward communication can increase the level of communication satisfaction (Goris, 2006)

This is a mindset issue. You need to understand and get this picture that probably no matter how logical I may be, ultimately my point may not be accepted because the door is shut. There is a glass ceiling kind of thing, may be because of our age. They are not going to accept your thing. May be if the same viewpoint is put across by someone of their generation it is going to be accepted. Just because of you are of a particular age your views may not be accepted (samrat, Younger generation).
Younger generation participants said that the older generation tended to compare their struggles with subsequent generations’. The older generation would observe that they had to struggle more at that stage of their lives and that the younger generation was showing the same level of commitment. But, as the younger generation observed, times have changed; there can be no comparisons. If, objectively, the conditions two periods in history differed significantly (time, events, conditions, etc.) the consciousness of the youth of the times will also be different. (Lambert, 1972:26).

Kiran (younger generation) said, ‘Older generation continues comparing themselves with us; that is, in their time, they did things with so much difficulty and all. We are not putting in equal amount of efforts. They need to understand that if people’s mindset can change so can the generations’.

The pre-conceived held about younger generation notions by the older generation further reduces the level of communication satisfaction.

Communication satisfaction is not that high with the older generation. One of the possible reasons is that there are not many common things to understand and discuss. See, I already told you that it depends from situation to situation, what topic we are discussing, etc. With our generation what happens is that you have certain things in common and the problems that you are facing are similar, which makes communication easier. All the guys who are working with me are of my age and are more or less of my level, so we have faced similar problems in the plant and or even in office but what happens with the older generation is that they face different kind of problems. They have been here for so long that they have different kind of relationships with everyone. So, it is very difficult to relate to each other, what you are thinking and what I am trying to say, your writing style is different my writing style is different. So it is like that (Nagendra, younger generation).

Communication satisfaction is achieved with the middle-aged generation. The younger generation said that they spend considerable time with the middle-aged generation and learn a lot from their experience. Being well-networked with the middle-aged generation resulted high comfort levels and open communication.

Published studies show that, along with communication avoidance, age stereotypes, norms are the predictor of communication satisfaction. On one hand, avoidance of communication creates a feeling of unpleasantness and anxiety (Ota et al., 2012); but on the other hand, the younger generation avoided communication with older generation as it was less satisfying (Giles et al., 2010). In the Indian context, it was noted that age stereotypes predicted communication satisfaction, whereas personal vitality was the predictor in the American context. Even Indians tended to
avoid communication with the older generation, as it was an unsatisfying experience (Giles et al., 2007). However, in the next chapter it will be shown that generations do not avoid communication with the older generation.

This discussion on communication satisfaction showed that, contrary to the prevailing view, communication satisfaction across generation was found to be high with the younger generation rather within generations. Communication satisfaction was also seen to be the lowest with the older generation, even in intragenerational communications.

**Possible Linkage between Communication effectiveness and Communication satisfaction**

From the above discussion, it is apparent that other generations have high communication satisfaction but less communication effectiveness with the younger generation. Communication effectiveness is more in the middle-aged generation and communication satisfaction is less in the older generation.

It was seen that communication effectiveness has more to do with the attainment of communication goals, whereas communication satisfaction depends on the personal satisfaction drawn from the communication. Communication effectiveness depends on the outcome of the communication, whereas communication satisfaction is a process-dependent part of the communication.

Therefore, there is the possibility that outcomes may be achieved without regard to the process part of the communication or vice-versa. The result would be high communication effectiveness but low communication satisfaction or vice-versa. This study showed that communication effectiveness is low in the younger generation, but communication satisfaction is high.

Lack of experience is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the younger generation’s inexperience reduced the effectiveness of their communications with the middle-aged and the older generations.

The older generation’s opinion is that the younger generation is not well equipped to deal with communication-based challenges. On the other hand, the inexperience of younger generation has not coloured their vision due to which they
are able to view matters without preconceived notions. This resulted in a greater
degree of communication satisfaction with the younger generation.

If experience is considered to be an important parameter in communication
effectiveness, then socialization context must also be seen as being important for
communication satisfaction. Communication satisfaction is high where a person does
not changes himself/herself significantly. Shared contexts resulted in greater
communication effectiveness and satisfaction. If we try to establish a thread of
common factors that result in higher satisfaction and effectiveness, it will be seen that
they are to understand people and spending time with each other.

It can be thus be hypothesized that, communication effectiveness may lead to
communication satisfaction. However, it is not a necessary condition that
communication satisfaction will result into communication effectiveness.

**Implications**

A contribution to theory by this study is that it questions the staircase pattern. It can
be seen from the discussions that generally generations tend to find communication
effectiveness and communication satisfaction to be not that high with one’s own
generation. Social identity theory and communication accommodation theory, which
suggested that people will seldom change in front of their own generation and the
level of accommodation required would be minimal. Here, however, it was seen that
the older generation changed its communication style from participative to passive
within the generation. In-group behavior is not always effective and satisfying in
comparison to out-group.

This study also showed that the younger generation prefers face-to-face
communication to the extent permitted by the situation. The nature of communication
has evolved with technology, not changed. Face-to-face communication remains the
most preferred communication style for all generations. The popular perceptions that
the younger generation is obsessed with technology freak and indiscriminate with its
use; and the older generation is generally technology ‘ignorant’ are not borne out by
the observations of this study.

This study also explains and validates the finding reported in the available
literature that body language is an important component of communication. It helps
bridge the gap between what is being said, what it actually means and what it was intended for? Consistent with most available literature, the communication style with the elder generation tends to be based on respect based and is passive by nature. Socialization plays an important role; it influences the various factors of intergenerational communication.

**Summary**

The observations and discussions revealed the diverse aspects of intergenerational communications. It was shown that communication effectiveness, in general, is high with the middle-aged generation and the lowest with younger generation. The chief reasons are that the middle-aged generation is balanced in its approach and that they are seen to have the best of the worlds of both the older and younger generations. The middle-aged generation is also balance their communications and, at times, is the bridge between the older and younger generations.

The inexperience of the younger generation is the main cause of least communication effectiveness in the younger generation. Communication satisfaction pattern are different from communication effectiveness. Communication satisfaction was observed to be highest with younger generation and lowest with older generation. Chief reasons are that the younger generation bring in fresh ideas and keep pace with changes in society. Thus, there is a sense of satisfaction when the middle-aged and the older generations communicate with the younger generation. Communication satisfaction is low with the older generation because of their rigid mindset and low receptiveness.

For all the generations, face-to-face communication is considered to be the most effective way to communicate. However, at the same time they are aware of the importance of technology. The older generation is not technology ignorant; rather, they are seen to have a psychological block with respect to technology.

All the three generations prefer participative style of communication, but they change their approach keeping in mind the target audience. Communication style of the younger and the middle-aged generations with the older generation is generally passive and submissive. Older generation’s communication styles towards younger generation it is parental/friendly/participative, and towards middle-aged generation it is participative style. Middle-aged communication style with the younger generation
is participative. From the above major findings, it is apparent that intergenerational differences do bring in changes in communication.