

New Hire on-boarding in Russian Companies:

Differences of Cognitive and Social-Psychological Attitudes Across Three Generations

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Abstract—This paper presents the results of empirical research of the interaction between career motivation, self-monitoring and generational differences. The key goal is to analyze cognitive and social-psychological attitudes of three generations' full-time newcomers from two Russian companies (n=142): Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1983), Generation Y (1984 or later). The research explored the role of career anchors and self-monitoring across three age groups as core cognitive and social-psychological patterns for stable employees. We employed the following methods analysis of variance, Student's t-test and factor analysis. The findings illustrate that Baby Boomers and Generation X have more adaptable characteristics toward achieving organizational socialization. The generation Y is characterized by the most nontraditional social-psychological patterns about organizational environment and, in fact, is in coherence with the stage of their professional and career development. We conclude that for better understanding of both already working and newly coming personnel, managers are recommended to specify their career and social attitudes.

Keywords-career anchors; generations; on-boarding;

organizational socialization; self-monitoring.

I. INTRODUCTION

Due to development of business and labor market after government-led economic and social reforms, effective on-boarding of new personnel is becoming particularly valuable for Russian companies. Majority of Russians, who continue to prefer paternalistic traditions established for centuries, have been adapting hard for fundamental and painful transition from centrally controlled economy to a market one, especially to a new working relationships. Competitive model of organizational behavior hasn't been accepted easily by some employees particularly the elder ones [1]. The workforce now consists of three age groups (generations): Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Millennial) [2; 3]. Generational differences impact communication styles, technology needs, professional development preferences, workplace expectations, compensation and benefits needs, desired leadership styles and the effectiveness of reward and recognition systems [4]. Reference [5] found that "Employers

must identify the separate characteristics of each generation present in their workplace." Therefore, the nowadays job market stimulates employers to create special strategies and technologies to attract new employees taking into account their age-diverse differences such as career motivation as well as cognitive attitudes.

According to some researchers, the decision to continue working in the company new employees make within first 90 days [6; 7]. There is a good reason why Human resources departments in Russia have practical demands for technologies that could optimize the complex process of new employees' introduction into organizations through which new hires learn attitudes, knowledge, skills and behavior.

Our empirical study aims to examine the cognitive and social-psychological characteristics of the newly hired Russian employees from the perspective of their professional motivation, attitudes and perceptions in the age groups defined by the theory of generations. Specifically, this study proposes that generational characteristics and specific values of age-groups' representatives might be defined by career motivation and some cognitive attitudes. Thus, this study clarifies if the basic concepts of the theory of generations, developed by the foreign academic researches, could be universally applied to Russian sample.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Organizational socialization and on-boarding

New employees come into company with different professional background, particular social images about working environment as well as their own values and targets which could differ from organizational ones. A major concern of every organization is to translate as soon as possible to new hires the system rules, organizational standards and behavior stereotypes, which are typical for the company as a social community with its particular behavior imperatives. At the same time the objective is to develop and maintain the sense of morality and responsibility of the employees in achieving the corporate goals. Thus, induction process that follows selection

and assessment is the stage of organizational socialization which refers to the period of newcomer's adjustment and learning in order to meet organizational standards and norms [8]. Reference [9] defined the organizational socialization as "the process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member". The term *organizational socialization* is usually used by foreign academic researches [10; 11; 12], while for Russian specialists who study new employees' induction process more commonly refer to the concept of *on-boarding* [13; 14; 15].

Regardless of the terminology used, this process is associated with greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, lower intent to quit and turnover as well as personnel cost [16]. According to some researches, organizational socialization is similar to the human socialization, but more intensive in time. Well organized on-boarding process helps new hired personnel to understand their role at a corporate hierarchy [10], special aspects of job missions [6] and to facilitate social integration in the team [11].

It's a challenge for Russian companies to organize and maintain well balanced on-boarding process. There are many reasons for it such as the fast development of small and mid-sized businesses that is followed the transition from the Soviet Union centrally controlled economy to a market one as well as frequent economic crises that increase staff turnover and employees' uncertainty. Nevertheless, Russian scholars have already made a serious contribution to the field of organizational psychology, socialization and adjustment [13; 15]. Their papers are usually based on the following core theoretical postulates: psychological theory of relations developed by Myasishchev V.N., the cultural – historical theory developed by Vygotskiy L.S. and the activity approach developed by Leontiev A.N. that are connected to the cognitive psychology and the theory of social representations created by Moscovici S. [17; 18]. In our view, all mentioned above theories are the key basis for theoretical and empirical researchers of on-boarding process that follows the human socialization, personal and professional identification, which are, in turn, the foundation of social experience of different generations. Based on these theories, family and work patterns are determined by sociocultural environment and historical events (in this case is the generational affiliation) as well as changes in the relation systems to social and cultural circumstances.

B. The theory of generations

In 1977 Ananiev B.G. noted that "the development of every new generation is under the impact of material forces and cultural values which could be called "artificial environment". This artificial environment includes up-to-date technologies as well as advances of civilization and, in turn, influences the nature" [19]. Over the last years the effect of cultural and material environment on the human nature has become more dramatic. In the recent years in the literature on human resource management a lot of attention is paid to the specifics of managing a multigenerational workforce, such as Generation X (1965—1983 years of birth), Y (1984 and later) and Baby

Boomers (1946—1964), that differ from each other in ways that are important for managers [1; 3; 5].

The theory of generations is based on analyzing the key values, beliefs and expectations of people born in the specific time period. This means that the same historical, political and socioeconomic events as well as sociocultural environment influence the development of each generational cohort, especially between 8 and 14 years old that is the key period of human socialization.

However, there were some critics against the core theoretical assumptions of the theory of generations, primarily from the standpoint of gender differences, the characteristics of the national culture, belonging to the particular social class and race, as well as due to the presence of specific individual features. Furthermore, foreign empirical papers in psychology founded that each generation has unique perspectives on work based on their unique characteristics [5, p.310]. For instance, Macky and colleagues analyzed some empirical researches, which were conducted in Australia, New Zealand and USA, and revealed that actual career types differed across generations [3, p.859-860]. Significant differences were observed in job mobility and organizational mobility of the various generations, with younger generation being more mobile [2, p.8]. Therefore, foreign papers show that generational diversity should be included in on-boarding process as a part of psychological follow-up of new employees.

C. Main goal of the present research

In this research, the main goal was to examine social beliefs, career motivation, self-monitoring and organizational commitment of multigenerational newcomers during the on-boarding process.

Hypothesis 1: Career motivation, self-monitoring and organizational commitment will differ for three age groups (generations) in Russian companies.

Hypothesis 2: Cognitive and social-psychological characteristics of new employees that include career anchors, self-monitoring scale and generational differences will affect on-boarding outcomes.

III. METHODS

A. Participants

This study was conducted with two companies located in Saint-Petersburg with total of 142 full-time newcomers entered the companies during the research period. The sample was divided into two groups: newcomers who left organizations during six months after entering (n=31) and stable workforce (n=111). The participants were classified into generations as shown in Table I.

TABLE I. CLASSIFYING PARTICIPANTS INTO GENERATIONS

Generation (birth years)	Stable workforce	Dismissed employees	Total
Y(1984 and later)	66	20	86
X(1965-1983)	31	10	41
Baby Boomers (1946- 1964)	14	1	15

B. Procedure

The questionnaire method was used in this research. The data were collected in two companies located in Saint-Petersburg. The study design was longitudinal; at the first working day all newcomers completed two questionnaires to measure self-monitoring and career motivation (career anchors). Stable workforce filled in organizational commitment questionnaire 6 months after the beginning of work. The received data were classified into the following cognitive and social-psychological criteria:

1) *Generational affiliation*. In accordance with generation theory all participants were divided into three age groups: generation Y (1984 and later birth years), generation X (1965-1983 birth years), generation Baby Boomers (1946-1964 birth years).

2) *Career motivation*. Professional beliefs and motivation, career planning that were formed within early human socialization as well as collecting professional and social experience (values, social and psychological attitudes to work and career). The employee career motivation was measured by the Schein Career anchors scale (adapted to the Russian panel by Chiker V.A. [20]) which was extended by Patriotism scale from the culture appeal questionnaire developed by Snetkov V.M. [21]. This questionnaire includes 47 items matching one of the ten types of perceived areas of competence, motives, and values relating to professional work choices. The following career anchors themes were identified: Technical/Functional competence, General Managerial competence, Autonomy/Independence, Security/Stability at work, Security/Stability at home, Entrepreneurial Creativity, Service/Dedication to a Cause, Pure Challenge, Lifestyle, Patriotism.

3) *Compliance of an employee behavior with the requirements of the social situation*, i.e. the assessment of how easily newcomers can establish social and, consequently, professional contacts. We suppose that cognitive and communicative aspects of social and professional attitudes are integral to each other. Therefore, the Snyder Self-monitoring scale (adapted to the Russian panel by Khoroshikh V.V. [20]) was used. To measure the ability of newcomers to adjust to social environment and, as a result, to establish professional contacts.

4) *Organizational commitment* is to what extent the new employees know and understand company mission and its targets. The individual's psychological attachment to the organization was measured by the Porter organizational commitment questionnaire (adapted to the Russian panel by Dominiyakh V.I. [22]) in 6 months after the beginning of work.

Received data were analyzed by at several stages. First of all, descriptive statistics of cognitive and social-psychological characteristics were investigated for three age cohorts. Secondly, we conducted the analysis of variance for career anchors and self-monitoring (dependent variables) and generations (grouping variable). The samples were checked for normality of distribution. To provide a more detailed view of the changes, we continued with paired t-test for each generation to compare cognitive and social-psychological

characteristics. The next step was to fulfill correlation matrices that showed a lot of significant correlations between studied variables of each generation. Finally, factor analysis was used to describe variability among observed, correlated variables in terms of a potentially lower number of unobserved ones that would give the possibility to explain special characteristics of the stable workforce.

IV. RESULTS

A. Psychological differences of newcomers depending on generation

Table II and figure 1 show descriptive statistics for all cognitive and social-psychological characteristics (career anchors and self-monitoring) of three generations. In Hypothesis 1, we proposed that newcomers would differ in career anchors and self-monitoring across three generations. Looking at the means of **generation Y**, it can be seen that this cohort demonstrates higher level of self-monitoring as well as stronger weights of career anchors: *Managerial competence, Autonomy/Independence, Entrepreneurial creativity* than other age groups which reflects activity, self-sufficiency and ambitions of the young newly recruited personnel. **Generation X** shows higher level of the following career anchors: *Security/Stability at work and at home, Pure Challenge, Lifestyle, Service/Dedication to a Cause and Patriotism*. Received result demonstrates that this group tends to stable, well-balanced living position and well-established social attitudes. *Technical/Functional competence* is the only career anchor that characterizes **Baby Boomers** as it has the highest weight among other age cohorts. This finding is related to the stage of this group lifestyle cycle as well as the elder generation background.

Further, we conducted within- and between- group analysis of variance to confirm whether we should test three groups of newcomers separately. The results showed significant effects between generations in the following career anchors: *General Managerial competence* ($F=10.9, p<0.01$), *Entrepreneurial Creativity* ($F=13.1, p<0.01$), *Security/Stability at home* ($F=3.6, p<0.05$) and *Self-monitoring level* ($F=3.1, p<0.05$) (Table II).

The generations X and Y are appeared to be the most active in job search and recruitment process. Comparative study of these groups (statistical significance was estimated by t-test) showed significant effects for the following career anchors: *Entrepreneurial Creativity* ($F\text{-ratio}=1.16; p=0.000007$), *General Managerial competence* ($F\text{-ratio}=1.57; p=0.0005$), *Security/Stability at home* ($F\text{-ratio}=1.196; p=0.013$), *Security/Stability at work* ($F\text{-ratio}=1.677; p=0.014$) and *Lifestyle* ($F\text{-ratio}=1.46; p=0.02$). The representatives of the generation Y demonstrate more dynamic job search attitudes, showing desires to create, manage and communicate as well as demonstrating an ability to regulate behavior to accommodate social situations. The age group X shows more stable attitudes such as job stability, permanent place of residence, work-life balance.

TABLE II. GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN NEWCOMERS

Social and psychological characteristics		Generation Y N=86		Generation X N=41		Baby Boomers N=15	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Self-monitoring		8.51*	3.39	8.10*	3.21	6.20*	2.85
Career anchors	Security/Stability at work	8.36	1.64	9.11	1.32	8.67	1.8
	Service/Dedication to a Cause	7.74	1.69	8.04	1.89	7.65	2.04
	Lifestyle	6.92	1.26	7.46	1.06	7.00	1.54
	Patriotism	6.84	1.63	6.92	1.73	6.47	1.77
	General Managerial competence	6.35**	2.08	5.01**	2.26	4.33**	1.88
	Pure Challenge	6.27	1.73	6.36	1.93	5.63	1.91
	Technical/Functional competence	5.94	1.68	5.95	1.6	6.31	2.0
	Entrepreneurial Creativity	5.65**	2.15	3.86**	2.11	4.00	1.82
	Autonomy/Independence	5.64	1.89	5.10	1.97	5.31	1.77
	Security/Stability at home	5.29*	2.48	6.46*	2.6	6.29*	2.37

Note: * - $p < 0.05$; ** - $p < 0.01$

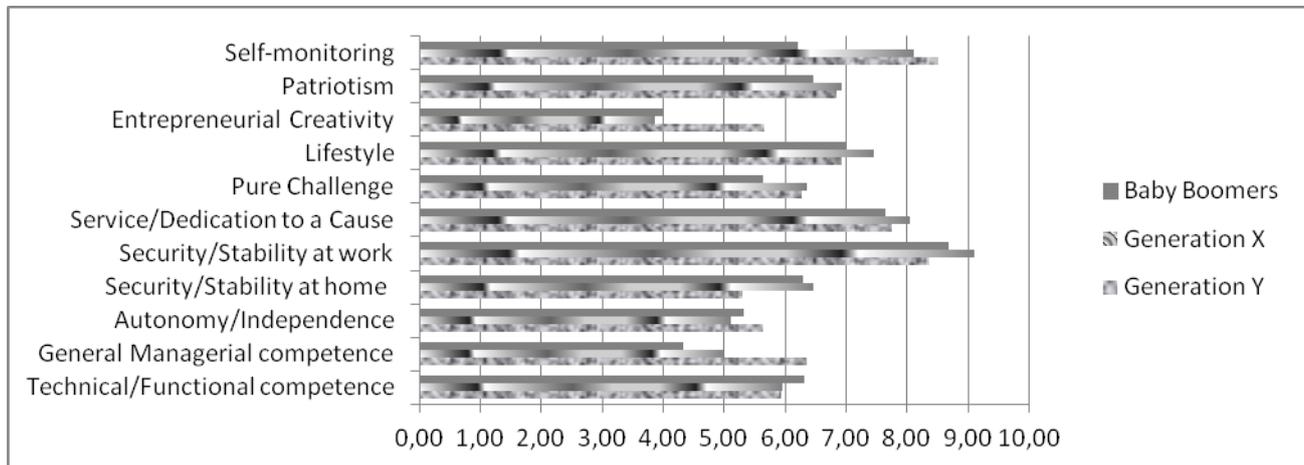


Figure 1. Career anchors and self-monitoring means for three generations

Between generation X and Baby Boomers the results showed significant differences only for *Self-monitoring level* (F -ratio=1.27; $p=0.049$). It means that middle cohort is more active in an ability to regulate their social behavior than elder one. There are no significant results for generation X and Baby Boomers between career anchors; therefore, these age groups demonstrate the similar professional and career attitudes.

The cohort Y and Baby Boomers differed on statistically significant level in the *Self-monitoring level* (F -ratio=1.48; $p=0.02$) as well as in the following career anchors: *General Managerial competence* (F -ratio=1.09; $p=0.0001$) and *Entrepreneurial Creativity* (F -ratio=1.17; $p=0.003$). These results demonstrate even wider gap in generation activity: the

elder the newly coming employees, the less they are oriented on responsibility, management and entrepreneurial actions.

B. Factor analysis of cognitive and social-psychological characteristics for three generations.

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, many significant interaction effects were indicated for studied cognitive and social-psychological characteristics (career anchors and self-monitoring) between three generations. Therefore, the factor analysis was applied to classify variables between generations. We used principal components analysis with a variance maximizing (varimax) rotational strategy (Kaiser criterion). Factor loadings is greater than 0.6 (Table III).

TABLE III. FACTOR STRUCTURE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE NEWCOMERS OF THREE GENERATIONS

Generation	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<i>Stable workforce</i>			
Generation Y Percent of total variance – 63%	Percent of total variance - 27.9% -Patriotism (0.87) -Security/Stability at work (0.848) - Service/Dedication to a Cause (0.844)	Percent of total variance - 18.9% - General Managerial competence (0.84) - Entrepreneurial Creativity (0.75) - Pure Challenge (0.74)	Percent of total variance - 16.2% - Security/Stability at home (0.75) - Technical/Functional competence (0.64) - Lifestyle (0.61)
Generation X Percent of total variance – 58.5%	Percent of total variance - 29.8% - Entrepreneurial Creativity (0.9) - General Managerial competence (0.79) - Autonomy/Independence (0.61)	Percent of total variance - 15.1% - Lifestyle (0.79) - Security/Stability at work (0.62)	Percent of total variance - 13.6% - Service/Dedication to a Cause (0.87) - Pure Challenge (0.65) - Patriotism (0.64)
Baby Boomers Percent of total variance – 68.8%	Percent of total variance - 35.5% - Technical/Functional competence (0.9) - Service/Dedication to a Cause (0.89) - Pure Challenge (0.69) - General Managerial competence (0.63)	Percent of total variance - 18.4% - Patriotism (0.9) - Security/Stability at home (0.81) - Lifestyle (0.79)	Percent of total variance - 14.9% - Autonomy/Independence (0.79) -Entrepreneurial Creativity (0.62) - Security/Stability at work (-0.61)
<i>Dismissed employee</i>			
Generation Y Percent of total variance – 62.6%	Percent of total variance - 25.7% - Patriotism (-0.83) - Lifestyle (-0.75) - Self-monitoring (0.828)	Percent of total variance - 23% - Autonomy/Independence (0.75) - Pure Challenge (0.71) - General Managerial competence (0.68)	Percent of total variance - 13.9% - Security/Stability at home (- 0.81) - Technical/Functional competence (0.76)

Table III shows the content of each factor that differs for three generations. Summarizing the principal findings, it can be concluded that the key professional and social characteristics of the eldest generation (factor 1) are functional competence, feeling of assistance to people (career anchor *Service/Dedication to a Cause*), and the ability to take a challenge as well as managing of other workers. Accordingly, this is a strong group of professional and socially mature employees who are able to solve work and social issues. The second cohort of this generation has patriotic attitudes toward the organization, but these respondents don't want to change anything in their life (career anchor *Security/Stability at home*) and their career ladder (career anchor *Lifestyle*) (factor 2). Therefore, the two most loaded factors describe the eldest participants who prefer constant workplace, but with active career motivation (included career anchor *Technical/Functional competence*) or stable one (included career anchor *Lifestyle*).

However, the third factor shows another kind of Baby Boomers who prefer autonomy, entrepreneurial creativity and, probably, is not orientated to the constant workplace (negative value of career anchor *Security/Stability at work*).

Generation X, in their majority, demonstrates active style in professional and social life as the first factor consists of the career anchors *Entrepreneurial Creativity* and *General Managerial competence*. Probably, the finding is linked with the psychological characteristics of their age stage that includes social and intellectual development, the feeling of energy and health. If the basic needs of these employees aren't satisfied by the company, most likely, they will leave it to fulfill their professional self-realization (career anchor *Autonomy/Independence*). The second factor describes newcomers who prefer work-life balance. The third factor shows people who have patriotic attitudes toward organization

(career anchor *Patriotism*), extending personal or business support activities (career anchor *Service/Dedication to a Cause*) and solving any organizational issues (career anchor *Pure Challenge*). Employees with such combination of career motivations will be good members for organizational teams.

Therefore, compared to Baby Boomers middle generation X demonstrates more independence position and tends to active work. It's very important to note that factor structure of this age group doesn't contain career anchor *Technical/Functional competence* which, in accordance with Schein, is the core base to make organizational decisions [20].

Generation Y demonstrates two key directions of development for their career and life attitudes. The first factor shows young newcomers who prefer stability at work and organizational loyalty. The second group, which is marked by factor 2, demonstrates employees with high motives of self-realization and independences (career anchors *General Managerial competence*, *Entrepreneurial Creativity*, *Pure Challenge*). Consequently, the factor 2 shows young new hires that need the special on-boarding process and the satisfaction of their ambitions. The third factor includes functionally-oriented young employees who seek for work-life balance. This type of newcomers has fewer difficulties at on-boarding process as they have formed the good combinations of professional and personal work motives.

The control group of dismissed employees, in the majority, consists of generation Y. There are also two groups with psychological characteristics that can be considered as a prior reason for the dismissal of employees. For instance, the first factor shows people who have negative patriotic attitudes toward the organizations as well as their lifestyle (negative value of career anchors *Patriotism and Lifestyle*). The second

factor demonstrates newcomers with combination of strong career anchors that are more typical for experienced leaders than for young employees. And the third group consists of unoccupied and functional-oriented people. It's very important to note, *Self-monitoring* wasn't classified in any of the factors identified for the working personnel of all generations. It probably means that the level of expressive controls influences the work behavior and employees' relationships.

C. Organizational commitment

Finally, organizational commitment level of newcomers was estimated in six months after the beginning of work. It is on-boarding parameter that highlights employees' attitudes toward the company such as accepting organizational targets and values as well as desire to work for it. It was founded that, the generation X and Baby Boomers demonstrated the highest rate of organizational commitment.

V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of changes within studied cognitive and social-psychological characteristics shows that each Russian generation has its specific values of career anchors, self-monitoring and organizational commitment. The received data give an opportunity to create a personality profile for three generational groups and understand changes in their attitudes to work and career.

The childhood of generation X occurred within global changes in Russia such as the break-up of the Soviet Union. The majority of them started working early and helped their parents who were not able to adapt to new labor market conditions [1, p. 45]. It is not surprising that the leading career anchors of this age group are Entrepreneurial Creativity, General Managerial competence and Autonomy/Independence. Nevertheless, "Gen X focus on balancing their lives, both personally and professionally and view employment as a contract, whereby loyalty is irrelevant – essentially, this group works to live, they don't live to work" [5, p.312]. The second factor consists of Lifestyle and Security/Stability at work career anchors, which are related to above mentioned characteristics, described by [5], for Russian panel.

Generation Y, also known as Millennials, was born in Russia after the break-up of the Soviet Union, during development of businesses, new technologies and Internet. "Millennials have been protected by parents, teachers and coaches, as opposed to generation X, who had to fend for themselves" [5, p.312]. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the core career anchors of this age group are Patriotism, Security/Stability at work, Service/Dedication to a Cause. However, those are active, persistent and ambitious young people, who master modern technology, learn fast and understand the importance of education [2, p.13]. Career anchors Autonomy/Independence, Pure Challenge, General Managerial competence, which were marked by factor 2, helped them to build career in nowadays job market.

Baby Boomers have become less active group in job seeking process and the majority of them prefer not to change workplace. According to the recent study of job applicants, compared to generations X and Y Baby Boomers reported

significantly fewer job changes in the five years prior to applying, and they spent a significantly longer time in working in one company [2, p.12]. However, there are a lot of professional contacts with this group at workplace as they are well experienced and often occupy top-positions in the company's hierarchy. As a result, Baby Boomers prioritize Technical/Functional competence career anchor. The personality profile of this age group is well added by Service/Dedication to a Cause, Pure Challenge and General Managerial competence which demonstrate organizational commitment and the desire to take part in business development. Patriotism, Security/Stability at home and Lifestyle, which were marked by factor 2, are well connected to their values and age stage.

It is important to note, there are some differences between generations in types of relationships and, consequently, on-boarding process. The analysis of variance and factor analysis show that career anchors: General Managerial competence, Security/Stability at home as well as Lifestyle are perceived in various way by age groups X and Y. There is a difference in attitudes towards Managerial competence and Entrepreneurial creativity as well as the degree of self-monitoring between generation Y and Baby Boomers. It means that managers and HR specialists should create various on-boarding programs taking into account generational diversity.

Taking into account the practical significance of the results for experts in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior, it is necessary to note the importance of further researches as well as more detailed verification of the basic postulates of the theory of generations in Russian samples.

CONCLUSIONS

1) Each generation has special cognitive and social-psychological characteristic that influence on-boarding outcomes and the following stable employment. The generational significant effects of self-monitoring level, organizational commitment and career motivation could be explained by the age peculiarities and generational backgrounds which, in turn, include professional and social attitudes formed once under the same historical, political and socioeconomic events.

2) Sociocultural environment, personal and career attitudes influence the organizational behavior of each generation. Baby Boomers and Generation X have more adaptable characteristics toward achieving organizational socialization. The special attention should be devoted to the generation Y that is characterized by the most nontraditional social attitudes about organizational environment and, in fact, is in coherence with the stage of their professional and career development.

3) For better understanding of both already working and newly coming personnel, managers and Human Resources specialists are recommended to specify their career and social attitudes. The research findings are also important to consider when developing the programs of adaptation of new personnel, their trainings and the organization of work for the representatives of different age groups.

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