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Differences in the Perception of Young Compared to Old Managers

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Abstract

Age bias research emphasizes systematic cognitive processes which influence the perception towards others automatically. An online survey among 195 U.S.-American employees was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in employee perceptions towards young and old managers. The collected data shows (a) differences in the perception of young compared to old managers. In addition the study examines if (b) the perception of employees from different generations towards their out or in-groups is heterogeneous. The measures included perceptions of employees regarding the employees' connectedness to an old or young manager. Furthermore the extent of employees age stereotyping (competence/warmth) towards managers was measured. Data was analysed with a GLM test to investigate the differences of the employees' perceptions Data supported both hypotheses (a) and (b).

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Introduction

Historically managers were over 50 years old and already had a long and successful career in business behind them before supervising staff. Nowadays a manager can climb up the career ladder much faster and have power over people who are older than themselves. By 2030, one in five American will be older than 65 years old and people are working longer through their life span (Colby & Ortman, 2014). In the US, the labour force is getting older and the impacts of that will be dramatic if we do not understand the influences on the work environment. The same development is predicted for all societies of industrialised countries where individuals are getting older and remaining in the work force (United Nations, 2013).

Understanding the impacts of age on perceptions of other people needs to be improved. Research about age stereotyping and ageism started with Tuckman and Lorge (1952) and Butler (1969) with studies about attitudes toward older workers. Subsequently most studies were focused on the perception, attitudes, age biases or stereotypes towards elderly people. Age influences the perception of our counterpart and can cause ageism (Kite et al, 2005; Hummert, 1999; Finkelstein et al., 1995). The demographic change not only influences our Western societies it also has an impact on the organizational structures of companies and businesses.

The working people born between 1980 and 1999, called the Generation Y, are becoming responsible managers and important scientists P. Drucker (1997) assumed that success for a company is determined by the ability to handle these changing demographics. Managers need to understand the challenges which are caused by an age diverse management and executive level of a company. Especially young managers face these new situations and the associated challenges. In general there are two groups of people, who are influenced by age stereotypes: The young and the old. Studies showed that age stereotyping at work (Finkelstein & Burke, 1998; Posthuma & Campion, 2008) causes new challenges for the company (DeArmond et al., 2006) and workers' perception, similar or dissimilar in demographics of team members at work, affects the outcomes of the team (Chattopadhyay et al., 1999). On all levels, age biases have an effect, which should be examined to overcome these stereotypes.

Problem Statement

The problem this thesis strives to understand is how the employees' perception of managers is influenced by the age of the manager:

On the one hand the thesis wants to evaluate if there are different perceptions about managers regarding their age. Do these stereotypes and biases really exist? Is how employees perceive their manager influenced by his or her age? The thesis examines these perceptions by using different measurements of the employee-manager perception. 10 different constructs are taken into account. Competence, warmth, experience level, competition (rivalry), problem solving, employee relations (manager-employee relationship), interpersonal skills, connectedness, communication skills and status are measured and analysed to draw a picture of how the cognitive associations of age contribute to stereotypes towards managers.

On the other hand the study wants to check how old and young managers are perceived by employees from different generations. To determine if there are in-group biases or influences in general the data will be split into the disparate generations. The understanding about the different perceptions of the generation Y compared to other generations' employees about their managers is significant for this thesis.

Scope of Analysis

This study focuses on the perception of employees in the United States of America and is not restricted to any industry. The scope of the study has the restriction that the participants need to work for a company outside their home. Participants must have a manager who is authorised to give instructions. The company, the employee is working for does not have any specific criteria. The goal of the survey is to analyse the perception in general of employees with a different age towards a young manager and an old manager. This study is applicable to all Western Countries.

Explanation of significance

Recent research investigated mainly on gender or racial stereotypes and age as bias was not the focus of scientists. Despite this fact there is research made on age stereotypes against elderly but besides that age stereotype research in business context concentration was more on performance evaluations, attitudes to their job, and stereotypes or discrimination. North & Fiske (2012) proposed to extend research on age since the pressure in society is increasing. Older people remain longer within the work force and the ancient rule of switching social roles as well as the balance between the generations is changing. Threat for young people is growing because historical financial and cultural rules are shifted to the end of the lifespan.

There are clashes of norms and values and the perception of each other need to be clarified. Concerning the perception about elderly workers research was made extensively but

research on neither perception towards managers nor perception toward young managers is substantial. This thesis extends the knowledge about perceptions from (a) employees towards their managers (b) depending on their age.

The research on more factors which could influence how employees perceive young managers is highly relevant, since young managers and companies have to be capable to deal with and to overcome the challenges caused by these perceptions. First, young managers should be aware of those specific perceptions and the influence on the relation to their employees. Second companies need to be able to understand the challenges and problems caused by age differences to be more efficient and to act accordingly.

Theory

This study wants to examine conscious or unconscious influences of age as a factor of human perception. The guiding question is how employees perceive their managers. Age is a basic social-cognitive category (Kunda, 1999) that the study anticipates different answers for the survey depending on the age. Why the answers should be different? In general people have different attitudes and beliefs about younger and older adults (Kite, Stockdale, Whitley, Johnson, 2005, 245). First the thesis will introduce the relevant terms to form a fundamental understanding of the context.

Since the topic of the thesis is "Differences in the Perception of Young Compared to Old Managers" the term perception and its associated terms need to be clear.

Definitions

This part explains the fundamental terms which are relevant for the understanding of the study.

Perception

Perception is a scientific construct which is linked to terms such as attitudes, emotion or others. The question is how perception can be determined when those words seem to be interwoven. Berelson and Steiner (1964, 88) determined that perception is a "complex process by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world". The founder of research about perception was Bartlett (1932, 255, cited in Hinton, 2015). He says that perception is a complex dynamic cognitive and behavioural experience, where a person of a social group can be influenced. The persons of the group influence how the in-group people perceive others by "providing that setting of interest, excitement, and emotion which favours the development of specific images" as well

as they interpret information "by providing a persistent framework of institutions and customs which acts as a schematic basis for constructive memory". Our perception is influenced all the time by others and ourselves.

Attitudes

Perception is not the only thing that matters in a workplace. Humans do have specific sets of thinking processes when triggers such as age do influence the thinking. Attitudes are a cognitive representation of all summarized evaluations of a person about or towards another person or group (Smith & Mackie, 2014). There are attitudes which do influence the people's opinions in the long term. Humans do think in categories (pigeonholing) that everything is stored in memory (Brewer, Dull & Lui, 1981). The human brains are thinking in categories since it is "cognitively economical" (Macrea & Bodenhausen, 2001).

Stereotypes

"Stereotypes are different from prejudice, which is more affective or attitudinal, and different from discrimination, which is more behavioural" (Fiske, 1998). Stereotypes can be grounded on different characteristics of individuals or groups such as race, sex or age. This study examines age stereotypes at the workplace. "Workplace age stereotypes are beliefs and expectations about workers based on their age" (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). This thesis wants to go further and breaks up the understanding of a "workplace age stereotype". Not only is the view about employees and workers determinative instead it should be extended to the question of how the managers are perceived. There are 14 different types of age stereotypes (Posthuma & Campion, 2008): Older workers are facing negative stereotypes such as "resistance to change" or "lower ability to learn" stereotypes, but on the other hand there are also positive stereotypes like the "more dependable" stereotype. On the basis of stereotypes the behaviour of persons is affected and causes discrimination.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the result of stereotypes. People who have stereotypes against a group of people or a single person do behave in a different way towards them, than towards others who are not in that stereotyped group. They treat them negatively and the stereotype is taken into "action". The United Nations determined the term discrimination as follows, commenting that the UN specified the term "racial" and not "age" discrimination (United Nations Human Rights, 1965):

The term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose

or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

Ageism

Ageism is going further than discrimination and Butler (1975) specified ageism as "a process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old". More precise Butler (1980) differentiated between malignant ageism - the belief that "older individuals are worthless" – and benign ageism caused by the insecurity, fear of and anxiety related to older people. More applicable for this study is the definition of Palmore (1999) who says that ageism involves prejudice, discrimination, stereotypes, and attitudes including cognitive and affective processes.

This study has the intention to draw the picture how age influences people's perception and lives when they are getting old. The perception of young as well as elderly causes behavioural patterns which we need to understand, to be capable to take measures to counter any negative developments of our key figures in business- the human capital.

The generations

Determining the age peers this paper uses the different generations as age peer groups. Studies discussed if there are differences of perceptions, values and realities. Deal (2007) stated that they are substantially different. Most applicable for the paper are three generations which are working together in the workplace.

Baby boomers – Born between 1946 and 1964 have worked for many years. The generation is characterized by a high work ethic, competitive attitude and work with a hierarchy (Kane, 2010).

Generation X – Born between 1965 and 1980 generally live in a two-income household and the women started to enter the workforce. Members of Generation X work to live rather than live to work (Kane, 2010).

Generation Y – Born between 1981 and 2000 are most comfortable with technology and want a better work and life balance (Kane, 2010). Also Millennials have high self-esteem, narcissism, and a more internal locus of control (Twenge & Campbell, 2008)

Statement of research

This thesis wants to guide through all terms and all point of views concerning age stereotyping at the workplace and the perception of managers related to their age. The guideline and structure can be characterized as on top of each other's modules.

General research on age perception

First the paper presents general studies about the differences in the perception of age. As defined perception is the basic category to understand the cognitive processes in the human brain. People develop attitudes and stereotypes towards other individuals and in-or out groups of people over time which can cause discrimination. This paper emphasizes the influence of age as a factor of cognitive processes in the relationship and interaction of humans where ageism can be a result of these processes.

Social Distance Theory / Social Role Theory

Introducing general perspectives on age perception the study wants to mention first the self-, inter- and intra-cohort perceptions of age peer groups. There are "interrelationships among cognition, social proximity, life priorities, and knowledge of aging", which as age stratification reduces interaction between cohorts (Luszcz & Fitzgerald, 1986). In fact generations do have diverse perceptions about the other age peer group. Supported by the "Social Distance Theory" age stratification within society is causing a feeling of distance to other age peers from oneself (Kidwell & Booth, 1977). Kidwell & Booth (1977) developed the Social Distance Scale to determine a more detailed picture about the in- and outgroups concerning age. Summarizing the social distance theory it should be stated that people tend to evaluate one´s member cohort more favourably than people from the outside group or cohort (Luszcz & Fitzgerald, 1986). Even the reading of facial expressions concerning the others emotions within the own age group is more precise than with the emotional facial reading of the outgroup (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). As well it was found that these age peers are accompanied with the theory of "Social Roles".

The Social Roles Theory says that when people observe other people, they tend to pay attention to social roles (Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood & Diekman, 2000). These categorizations do influence the perception about other people. Humans think in schemata and we need to understand how attitudes and stereotypes are built to reduce discrimination and ageism. Concerning the age groups it was shown by Brewer and Lui (1984), that "elderly have a more complex representation of their age group than do young adults" (Hummert, Garstka, Shaner & Strahm, 1994). Linville (1982) argues that there are two explanations for the more complex

in-group perceptions of elderly. First that complexity of perception from individuals for their own group is higher than for outgroups, not only considering age, but also race or other social-cognitive categories. It is consistent with the out-group homogeneity theory (Quattrone & Jones, 1980), where out-group members perceived as more similar to each other and the in-group members are perceived as diverse. Second the developmental explanation (Heckhausen, Dixon & Baltes, 1989) reflects that schemas are getting more complex with the integration of life experiences about aging. The social role theory was expanded by Hummert (2003), who documented that subtypes of the age groups, such as "perfect grandparent" or "inflexible senior citizen" for elderly do exist. These subtypes of the age peer groups do outweigh age as predictor of evaluations (Hummert, Garstka & Shaner, 1994). Nevertheless the "Social Roles Theory" is in line with the "Social distance theory", since the determinants of in-groups and out-groups are the same and the results are not opposed. The question at issue is if stereotyping roles of young and old managers are existing (social role theory) and if these stereotypes differ depending on the age of the perceiving subject (social distance theory). Understanding how stereotypes and social roles occur, it is essential to consider attitudes as a basis of stereotypes and the perception of the different social roles.

3 category model attitudes

Eagly & Chaiken (1993) developed a three categories model for understanding attitudes, the basis of perception for stereotypes.

The first dimension for attitudes is "the affective category", which is nearly the definition of attitudes. The affective attitudes are "psychological tendencies that are expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

The second dimension of an attitude toward elderly is the "competence category". Kite and Johnson (1988) and Cuddy and Fiske (2002) found that people have most intense bias against elderly concerning competence and that the perception of competence level is declining by age. Researchers found that depending on age the perceived competence is changing. A high competence level predicted status as well as low warmth (Fiske et al., 2002). The other way round a low competence level predicted a low status and a high level of warmth. They focused on the content of attitudes and showed that age is influencing these perceptions. What they found is that elderly people were perceived as warm and incompetent across all cultures (Cuddy, Norton & Fiske, 2005). Fiske et al. (2002) argued that stereotypes contain only two dimensions (warmth and competence) which determine how people perceive

and behave regarding the other. Non-competitive groups such as elderly people are perceived as warm but incompetent- paternalistic prejudice. Competitive out-groups (Fiske et al. used e.g. Asians) have a low level of warmth but a high competence level –envious prejudice. Stereotypes contain those two dimensions because when people meet other individuals or group members than from their own in-group, they "want to know what the other´s goals will be vis-à-vis the in-group and how effectively the other will pursue those goals" (Fiske et al., 2002). As well there are Mixed Stereotype Contents, which assume that there are people we perceive as high competent and high warmth such as in-group members or close allies - admiration. Low competent and low warmth are people such as poor people –contemptuous prejudice. Recapping the theory and applying it to the thesis only paternalistic or envious prejudice are implied since at the work place "the manager" is neither an in-group member of the perceiving employee nor contemptuous prejudice is not applicable.

Predicting status, Graham & Baker (1989) assumed that there is an inverted U-curve of status or prestige across the lifespan of people. According to the U-curve old and young do have less status than people in midlife. The study showed that people with the age between 30 and 50 years are rated highest concerning status.

The study will pigeonhole the variables of competence, warmth, competition and status from the general context of people and groups (e.g. Asians, Blacks, or Elderly) into the context of the hierarchy in the work place: The perception of the employees towards their manager depending on age. It is one of the first studies which examine the relation of age on this specific perception level (employee toward his/her manager).

The third dimension of age attitude toward older people is the physical category. The physical appearance is a strong component of stereotypes. If we see an old-appearing person we do think in a specific way about the other. McArthur (1982) examined that the physical appearance of a person takes an important role to which category individuals are assigned to by others.

Stereotypes against elderly: What do we know?
To enhance the prefixed theories and getting the focus on the content of attitudes and stereotypes in the workplace, the paper introduces the most important statements of research.

Levy (2003b) presents how aging stereotypes are developed. Already children adapt to the prejudices and take over stereotypes from their family members, friends and culture (Allport, 1954). It is called internalization of aging stereotypes and by repeated exposure through the

life span the mainly negative attitudes towards aging in Europe and North America (Levy, Hausdorff, Hencke & Wei, 2000; Palmore, 1999) are internalized. These aging stereotypes are "acquired in an incremental and often unconscious manner over time" (Levy, 2003a) and even elderly state negative stereotypes toward their own group (applied not only to the workplace) (Nosek, Banaji & Greenwald, 2002) implying that the social distance theory (see Social Distance Theory / Social Role Theory) is not adaptable to elderly in-group subjects.

Primary research examined how workers or employees are perceived by their in-group (same level worker/employee) or managers. Stereotypes about managers were not measured with their primary focus. Recent research also often focused on the perception of performance of the different age groups (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Duncan, 2001; Shore, Cleveland & Goldberg, 2003; Bertolino, Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2013). Although the following studies are not intended to reflect the perception of employees towards their managers depending on age, these findings can be adapted and utilized to the scope of this paper.

Beginning with the pertinent work about attitudes and stereotypes as well as age biases, Finkelstein, Burke & Raju (1995) examined that older workers are rated less favourably by younger raters when there was no job-related information available. As well, younger raters evaluated younger workers more positively. These findings are consistent with the social distance theory. Ongoing research found that perception about age or aging is multidimensional and contains negative as well as positive attributions, but perceptions depended on respondent age likewise (Hummert, 1999; Kite & Wagner, 2002). It is shown that stereotypes and different perceptions exist in the work-place and we need to look at the cognitive processes in detail. Newer and updated research meta-analysis concluded that social role theory is applicable, since effect sizes of stereotypes were reduced when detailed information about the person was given (Kite et al., 2005). Whereas the findings indicated that age bias against older people exists, the effect sizes were not homogenous. Kite et al. (2005) investigated on the basis of theories used for this paper as well. Five components were analysed including the 3 of the 3 category model of attitudes (see 3 category model of attitudes (p.11)): The affective category (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), the competence category (Fiske & Cuddy, 2002) and physical appearance (Deutsch, Zalenski & Clark, 1986). The study will examine the affective and competence category but not the physical appearance dimension.

Before taking a closer look at stereotypes, the question of "Does ageism exist?" needs to be clarified. Kite et al. (2005) found that ageism exists. There are age biases against older

adults when they measured attractiveness or competence, whereas these biases are reduced if behavioural intentions of affective evaluations were judged. Also, Gordon & Arvey (1986) found a statistically significant but mean effect for age bias in literature. All meta-analysis reviews concerning age bias (Finkelstein et al., 1995; Kite & Johnson, 1988; Kite et al, 1995; Gordon & Arvey, 2004; Kite et al., 2005; Posthuma & Campion, 2008) concluded that age stereotypes exist. Gordon & Arvey (2004) suggested that age bias may be reduced in comparison to how strong it had been in previous decades, when Finkelstein et al. (1995) and Kite & Wagner (2002) examined age bias in society. Already Kite & Johnson (1988) found a negative relationship of publication date and effect size and is consistent with the finding of Gordon & Arvey (2004). Despite the reduced findings, the researchers emphasise that moderating variables were conducted and positive, negative, and neutral evaluations for older employees or older workers were made. In general, age bias can operate as barriers especially for older workers but they are more subtle and unconscious. Age stereotypes were not in the focus of research like race or sex stereotypes and discrimination even though it affects everybody since all people, when getting old, can be discriminated against (Duncan, 2001). Recent researchers assume that there is a spillover effect from combined stereotypes (about, e.g., women, minorities) and identified this effect as a reason that when companies were instructed to hire women also elderly workers were treated better (Shore & Goldberg, 2005). In general it is to mention that people are age biased in the work-place (Cleveland & Shore, 1992; Kite & Wagner, 2002) and these stereotypes have an impact on the outcome of employment-related decisions (Taylor, 2001). These stereotypes can be a risk for the organisation and the older workers, which causes a negative effect in terms of output for the company (DeArmond et al., 2006). Underlining these findings with a newer meta-analysis from Bal, Abigail, Rudolph & Baltes (2011) who found similar outcomes as Finkelstein et al (1995) and Gordon & Arvey (2004).

Moderators of age stereotypes

Researchers found out that older workers are less age biased against older workers than young employees are (Shore & Bleicken 1991; Rupp, Vodanovich & Crede, 2006). Despite these findings, other researchers identified stereotypes of older workers towards older workers. Shore, Cleveland & Goldberg (2003) detected lower performance evaluations from older workers about elderly and as mentioned before Kite et al (2005) identified lower subjective competence assessments within the old age peer group across different research results.

Important for understanding the impact of the study is the moderator job-related information. The study uses a simple description of the managerial job, but a moderator of stereotypes is the specific information of the person. If raters get more information about the individual, they are less likely to evaluate these persons on the basis of age stereotypes (Kite & Johnson, 1988). A reason for the reduced stereotyping could be the individuation process of the evaluators. The raters are instructed to focus on the individual skills and personalities and to evaluate the individual rather to evaluate the person which is a member of a specific group (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

Another moderator of age stereotypes in the workplace is the perceived "correct age" for a job (Posthuma & Campion, 2008). There is a reinforcement of age stereotypes if a job is related to a "suitable" age and a person or candidate does not fit (Shore & Goldberg, 2005). Some positions within a company are perceived as only fitting for a person who belongs to a specific age peer group (Gordon & Arvey, 1986; Cleveland & Shore, 1992; Gordon & Arvey, 2004). Concerning the study it is critical since it moderates the age stereotype of the suitable age to be a young manager or an old manager. The question is if employees perceive the "appropriate" age as 25 or 55 and if the social role theory applies. Is the social role suitability of a manager, perceived by employees, dependent on the age of an individual? The study will give an insight about this question.

As mentioned before, most research concerning age bias or age stereotype evaluate the impact of the age on elderly workers or employees. Posthuma & Campion (2008) summarized all types of stereotyping at the workplace. Since it is essential to understand age stereotyping to apply and compare these findings with the results from the study, which examines the perception of employees about their managers in relation to their age, this paper gives an overview on the types of stereotypes.

Posthuma & Campion (2008) drafted the most relevant scientific insights about age stereotypes against elderly across recent literature. Workers perceived age is the key assumption that determines age stereotypes, which are the (a) low productivity, (b) resistance to change, (c) less able to learn, (d) shorter tenure, and (e) more costly stereotypes. These stereotypes are affected by upstream moderators

- (a) Job and task age-typing, (b) industry, (c) job relevant information, (d) evaluator age-related perceptions, (e) evaluator age, race

and by downstream moderators

-          (a) Job-relevant information, (b) EEO training (Equal employment opportunity), (c) Anti-age discrimination policies, (d) applicant pool & workforce age, (e) evaluator age, sex, race.

After assessing that stereotypes are grounded in the nature of perception and how these stereotypes against elderly workers are looking like, the thesis presents how stereotypes have an impact on the subjects. Since most researchers analysed stereotypes against elderly the following model is describing attitudes toward older adults. The results of age stereotypes are that subjects confronted with these age stereotypes are evaluated lower (as applicants for a job), get fewer promotions, get less often selected for training, get lower performance evaluations, lower retentions and are more frequently laid off (Posthuma & Campion, 2008). However the current study has not the intention to measure explicitly stereotypes, only competence/warmth, which is a dimension of age stereotypes, which is measured towards young or old managers. These stereotypes and age biases influence consciously or unconsciously (Levy, 2003b) the perception of employees.

Stereotyping against younger people: What do we know?
As mentioned before, the majority of researchers analysed stereotyping about elderly workers. Nevertheless there is research done about stereotypes against young people. Therefore this thesis presents the current findings about the perception of young people in the workplace. Not just elderly are confronted with age bias, young workers and employees are also subjected to biases (Finkelstein, Ryan & King, 2013). Since young people are influenced by age biases also it is to determine how this age group is perceived in general. Yet in contrast to older people, who feel discriminated against, young adults do not tend to feel or subjectively experience age discrimination and neither their psychological well-being nor their age group identification are harmed. The effect size of the psychological impact on young people is not significant (Garstka et al., 2004; von Hippel, Kalokerinos & Henry, 2013). As one reason for this effect could be that in general young people are rated more positive than elderly (Kite & Johnson, 1988; Hummert, 1990). A finding was that perceived traits of the old and young group are markedly different (Hummert, 1990). Moreover, it was found that the personality (Big five model was used) of the age group old and young is perceived as different (Bertolino et al., 2013) and work performance perception was analysed in detail (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Young people are seen more positively than individuals from the old age peer group. Finkelstein et al. (2013) found 3 different age stereotypes of older and middle aged judgers towards young employees as follows, young workers are (a)

inexperienced (older/middle aged), (b) energy/enthusiasm (older), (c) lazy/unmotivated (middle aged). The study examines the category of experience too and continues with the research about the perception of young persons.

Summarizing the recent research, age stereotyping became a more relevant research topic and investigators concentrated on age stereotypes against elderly. The findings are not as clear as they were regarding other topics such as gender stereotypes. Ageism is more ubiquitous than sexism and racism but harder to detect (Levy & Banaji, 2002) and many moderators can influence the perception of an individual.

This paper follows the recommendation of North & Fiske (2012) to examine stereotypes from an intergenerational perspective and analyses the relationship of the perception of the different generations towards a young and an old manager. But before explaining the study, this thesis draws a narrow picture of the scope of the analysis and the related theory. The next part points out the recent scientific findings how managers are perceived by their employees, although there is not as much research done as there has been regarding age stereotypes towards employees or workers.

The Employee-Manager View: How employees perceive their managers by age?

This part of the thesis shows the present status of research concerning the main questions of this paper. How do employees perceive their managers depending on the manager's age? Researchers concentrated neither on young individuals nor on how managers are perceived, which should be analysed since the members of the Generation Y become managers within an age diverse workforce. The current or potential managers who are under age 35 should know how they are perceived. Before going into the deep clarifying the term "manager" is essential. The Oxford dictionary says that a manager is "a person responsible for controlling or administering an organization or group of staff".

Tsui et al. (1995) assumed that the characteristics such as age of the manager and the employee are in relation and important to understand leader-subordinate relationships. These characteristics are conducive to interpersonal attraction, which is supported by the social distance theory and employee perceptions of managerial supportiveness (both is measured in the study). Lawrence (1988) detected status incongruence between an old employee and a young manager because it violates organizational age norms. In contrast, there is no status incongruence if a young employee has an old manager. Moreover, Lawrence (1988) suggested that people refer the career progression as a benchmark for others. Next to this

called *theory of organizational age grading* there is a consistent theory called *managerial career timetable* (Perry et al., 1999) which assumes that there are time related career paths to become a manager. In most industries employees are working for a company and get promoted over time. Reaching a managerial position in a company needs time and the top of this hierarchal system is to be achieved step by step. The social role theory contributes to this finding since the social norm is to become a manager while following the age related career timetable. The study wants to get more insights about this relationship.

These theories summarize the current research made about the relation of perception and managers' age. It is the essence of the previous theories and knowledge about perception, attitudes and stereotyping. Additionally the paper provides an insight about the employee perception towards young managers.

Violating the Norm: How young managers are perceived by employees?

Demographic developments turn it more and more into reality that older employees are subordinates of a younger manager since the young individual was promoted because of better information technology skills, education or other reasons (Shore, Cleveland & Goldberg, 2003). Also young managers are perceived to be better in problem solving, which the study examines too (Cleveland & Landy, 1981). Young managers are affected by positive but negative stereotypes as well. These negative attitudes cause different problems and are caused by the incongruence between the natural status and the "normed" career timeline. If a manager's age violates this career timetable they can expect less loyalty and contribution from their workers (Tsui et al., 1995). Likewise the employee and the manager's relation contain less liking which is congruent to the social distance theory. Also older workers feel uncomfortable getting directions from younger persons. They feel naturally as the other could be his or her children or even grandchildren (Shellenbarger & Hymowitz, 1994). In the scenario that a young manager supervises an older employee this relationship refers to the Reverse Pygmalion Effect (Eden, 1990), which is related to the self-fulfilling prophecy. The expectation about the leadership capacity of young managers is determined by the perceptions the elderly worker has and some investigators even claim that it turns into reality as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Waclawski, 2002). Data suggests that this effect is reality although it only can be assumed that older workers have fewer expectations from young managers than from older managers (Collins et al., 2009).

In general, most studies showed that young managers have a lack of experience (Tsui et al. 1996; Zenger & Folkman, 2015) and status/competence (Graham & Baker, 1989; Cuddy

et al., 2005). Zenger & Folkman (2015) showed that young managers are associated with negative characteristics (a) lack of trust, (b) lack of experience, (c) not a role model, (d) insensitive to others' needs, (e) not capable to represent the company, (f) lack of strategic perspectives. All in all these characteristics reflect the findings of other researchers and summarise the perceptions from all- young and old employees. But people do not only have negative perceptions about young managers. Young managers are attributed with (a) welcoming change, (b) inspiring, (c) being receptive to feedback, (d) being dedicated to continuous improvement, (e) being focused on results and good at (f) setting stretch goals.

Other studies provide support for these findings. Competence, natural status and experience are the most relevant age bias and Chi et al. (2013) showed that young managers perceived as less favourable. Young managers are prototypical seen as lacking status and it is shown that the young need to adapt their leadership style to an effective leadership style to be successful (Buengeler, Homan & Voelpel, 2016). Researchers found too, that younger looking managers are associated with change, whereas older-looking leaders are endorsed for stability (Spisak, Grabo, Arvey & van Vugt, 2014).

In fact, young leaders or managers are perceived different than older managers and the study wants to strengthen these findings. There is no recent superordinate study made which compares and measures the perception and stereotypes towards young and old managers' independent from industry.

Hypotheses in the Present Study

This thesis strives to analyse the perception of employees about their managers. First the study wants to analyse if there are differences in the perception towards young or old managers and how they are characterized. If there are differences in the perception of the objectives of the survey, the thesis wants to analyse the differences in the perception of the employees.

Research question I: Is there a difference in how employees perceive young and old managers in general?

Hypothesis 1: The perception of young and old managers is different.

Hypothesis 2: Young managers are perceived as lacking experience.

Hypothesis 3: Young managers are rated higher regarding problem solving capabilities.

Hypothesis 4: Old managers are perceived as possessing more warmth, but (b) less competence, competition and status.

There are several theories which can be applied. Cuddy et al. (2005) take the view that young people are seen as less competent and lower status respectively, whereas middle-aged have high status and old low status as well as young adults. Social Role Theory, where old managers should have higher ratings concerning status since they are perceived as experienced (Tsui et al., 1995). The question is which tendency is stronger overall?

Do perceive young employees their old manager different than the old employee perceive the old manager? Do perceive young employees their young manager different than the old employee perceive the young manager? The study wants to measure and present those occurring discrepancies.

Research question II: Is there a difference in how employees of the different generations perceive young or old managers?

Hypothesis 5: Young employees perceive more connectedness towards young managers including higher ratings for employee relation (manager-employee relationship), interpersonal skills, and communication skills.

Hypothesis 6: Old employees perceive more connectedness towards old managers including higher ratings for employee relation, interpersonal skills, and communication skills.

Hypothesis 7: Middle aged employees perceive higher status and competence for the old managers than for young managers, but perceive lower warmth and competition (rivalry).

Methodology

Subjects

In total, the dataset contained (N = 375) residents of the United States of America who were employed outside their home, recruited on the Amazon Mechanical Turk survey platform. The data included the duration for the test processing for each subject, which ranged from 11sec to 3605sec with M = 757sec (12,61min). This variable was restricted to a realistic time for answering the whole questionnaire to the range of 180sec and 3600sec. This reduced the data about 25% from 375 participants to 278. There was also measured how much of the questionnaire was completed by each subject in percent; this variable was limited to a 95% progress status. Furthermore there was a control question about the age of the object within

the survey ("How old was the manager in the description on the previous page?"). The limit for the young manager control question was 35, for the old manager a minimum for 52, since it is to assume, that people have the same perception about an individual which belongs to a specific generation. This reduced the data for additional 30 %. After this elimination of the named outliers the N = 375 was reduced to N = 195 with the age ranging from 20 to 71 years (48,71% female, 51,28% male, M = 37.57, SD = 11,650). All participants work for a company outside their home in the United States of America, as this was a requirement in order to participate in the study. The data set was divided into the three generations: Generation Y (Young) with N = 103 with a minimum age of 16 to 35 (M = 28,89, SD = 4,02), Generation X (Middle aged) with N = 60 between 36 and 51 years (M = 41,71, S = 4,90) and Baby boomers (Old) with N = 30 have 52 years until 70 years (M = 57,93, SD = 5,17).

Design

Participants answered an online survey with questions about their perception of a company manager profile. All were asked 24 items in total, concerning a young and an old manager. They were randomly assigned to whether answer the young vs. the old manager profile first. The survey is follows a within subject design (Kinias et al., 2014).

Measures

The assessment occurred in November 2016. The two single parts of the questionnaire were introduced as followed: "Imagine that you are working for a company and you will get a new manager. He/She is 55-years old, knowledgeable and has worked for 2 years for your company. It is his/her first leading position within the company. Your future manager has a university degree and is well educated." Only the age of the manager was changed from 55 to 25 or inversely. One half saw the situation with the old manager first and the other half saw the situation with the young manager first.

The survey included several independent variables that were used from different investigators before to measure perceptions about people. All variables were used in other studies within the field of social psychology. These variables are chosen since all of them do have a connection to the scope of this thesis. Four specific items were used to measure stereotyping against the different objects. Following the approach of Cuddy et al. (2002) questions were included which measured to the perception of (a) competence, (b) competition (rivalry), (c) warmth, and (d) status. Furthermore participants responded to questions concerning (e) interpersonal skills, (f) problem solving, (g) communication skills and (h) employee relations. These items are adopted from Cleveland and Landy (1981). As well the

study included the scales of (i) connectedness and (j) experience level from (Chi et al., 2013). Overall the study included 10 scales and 24 items which were answered by the participants (see Appendices Questionnaire: survey structure). Each item was a positively-worded statement reflecting the dimensions of perception towards the corresponding object except the variable "experience level". The items were asked twice, one time about the young and also about the old manager. A Likert scale with 5 steps was used for the measurements. The answer scale ranged from completely disagree to completely agree or very low to very high. The scale measurement was used as follows: 1 = completely disagree/very low, 2 = disagree/low, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree/high, and 5 = completely agree/ very high. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of all items that were measured. The perception from all participants of the study towards young and old managers is portrayed.

Table 1

Item characteristics Comparison Old and Young Manager

	Mean	Standard deviation
Competence_old	3,8910	,58104
Competence_young	3,7111	,61291
Warmth_old	3,6795	,75203
Warmth_young	3,4282	,75469
Status_old	3,6333	,82185
Status_young	3,4923	,80667
ProblemSolving_old	4,1718	,59852
ProblemSolving_young	3,8897	,68819
Experience_old	2,9385	1,26259
Experience_young	1,7538	,92554
Competition_old	2,5846	,96819
Competition_young	2,7231	1,03308
EmployeeRelation_old	4,0325	,60028
EmployeeRelation_young	3,6769	,72345
InterpersonalSkills_old	3,9725	,62415
InterpersonalSkills_young	3,6753	,73206
CommunicationSkills_old	4,0308	,73153
CommunicationSkills_young	3,7487	,83939
Connectedness_old	3,8970	,62685
Connectedness_young	3,8423	,63292

* Participants (n = 195)

At the end of the questionnaire demographic data was assessed, asking for age, gender, nationality, employment status ("student", "employee", "self-employed", "manager",

"other"), whether they hold a job outside their home ("yes", ""no"), and age of their own manager.

The data analysis was conducted with IBM SPSS Statistics 21. To investigate the research questions within-subject GLM-tests were performed.

Findings and Analysis

To answer the research questions, there had to be fulfilled some prerequisites to use the data appropriately. First the single items of the questionnaire were grouped to superordinate constructs (competence, competition, warmth, status, interpersonal skills, problem solving, communication skills, employee relations, connectedness, and experience level (Cuddy et al., 2002; Cleveland & Landy, 1981; Chi et al., 2013)). The correlation between the single items, which belong to one construct (see Appendices Questionnaire: survey structure), was measured as well as the reliability. To assess the reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was used (see Appendices Cronbach's Alpha scale), which measures the internal consistence of a scale (Cronbach, 1951). The reliability of all constructs (see Table 2) is acceptable (ranging from $\alpha = 0.7$-0.8) except for the constructs competence and status for the young managers (ranging from $\alpha = 0.6$-0.7), which are questionable. So it is assumed that the grouping of single items to superordinate constructs is applicable. After reviewing the online survey data the study presents the results for each research question and related hypothesis.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha for Item constructs

Reliability statistics

	Items Questions	No of Items	Cronbach's α
Competence_old	1, 2, 3, 4	4	.752
Competence_young	1, 2, 3, 4	4	.664
Warmth_old	5, 6	2	.772
Warmth_young	5, 6	2	.724
Status_old	7, 8	2	.800
Status_young	7, 8	2	.682
Problem Solving_old	9, 10	2	.796
Problem Solving_young	9, 10	2	.823
Experience Level_old	11	1	-
Experience Level_young	11	1	-
Competition_old	12, 13	2	.798
Competition_young	12, 13	2	.875
Employee Relation_old	14, 15, 16	3	.789
Employee Relation_young	14, 15, 16	3	.821
Interpersonal Skills_old	17, 18, 19	3	.773
Interpersonal Skills_young	17, 18, 19	3	.784
Communication Skills_old	20	1	-
Communication Skills_young	20	1	-
Connectedness_old	21, 22, 23, 24	4	.769
Connectedness_young	21, 22, 23, 24	4	.736

Cronbach's Alpha; Items see questionaire: survey structure

Research question I: Is there a difference in how employees perceive young and old managers in general?

To test the following hypothesis, which includes the perception of all participants a GLM-test was performed.

Hypothesis 1: The perception of young and old managers is different.

Table 3

Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts

Construct	
Competence	$F(1,194) = 12.702, p < .001$
Warmth	$F(1,194) = 18.348, p < .001$
Status	$F(1,194) = 4.987, p < .05$
ProblemSolving	$F(1,194) = 29.365, p < .001$
Experience	$F(1,194) = 131.615, p < .001$
Competition	$F(1,194) = 6.006, p < .05$
EmployeeRelation	$F(1,194) = 12.326, p < .001$
InterpersonalSkills	$F(1,194) = 27.808, p < .001$
CommunicationSkills	$F(1,194) = 18.870, p < .001$
Connectedness	$F(1,194) = .949$, n.s.

GLS two factor analysis

The pattern of means of the dependent measures show, that there are differences in the perception of old compared to young managers (see Table 1). All mean differences of the dependent measures show these effects as a function of target manager's age, which indicates that the perceptions of old and young managers are not the same. Providing more substantial evidence Table 4 shows the correlations between the variables. All constructs correlate only slightly (less than 0.5) and only competition has a middle correlation (less than 0.7). Next to the issued means and correlations of the items a within-subject GLM-test was performed. The GLM-test points out that the mean of each construct-old manager is different from the construct-young manager. These differences are significant except the constructs of connectedness (F (1,194) = .949, n.s.) (see Table 3). Results indicate that the perception about each manager profile is different and Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 4

Item characteristics - Comparison Old and Young Manager

	Correlation
Competence_old Competence_young	,304**
Warmth_old Warmth_young	,409**
Status_old Status_young	,414**
ProblemSolving_old ProblemSolving_young	,368**
Experience_old Experience_young	,159*
Competition_old Competition_young	,691**
EmployeeRelation_old EmployeeRelation_young	,369**
InterpersonalSkills_old InterpersonalSkills_young	,338**
CommunicationSkills_old CommunicationSkills_young	,340**
Connectedness_old Connectedness_young	,225**

N= 195 *Pearson correlation; *p < 0,05; **p < 0,01*

After showing that the perception of young and old managers is different, the second hypothesis concerning the experience level of young managers will be analysed.

Hypothesis 2: Young managers are perceived as lacking experience.

A first indicator that employees perceive that young managers need to gain experience is the difference in the means (see Table 1). The mean for the construct experience for the old manager is M_{old} = 2,9385, SD = 1.26 and for the young manager M_{young} = 1,7538, SD = .92. As the GLM-test (see Table 3) shows the difference is highly significant in the perception of experience level towards the two different managers age profiles ($F_{(1,194)}$ = 131.615, p < .001) and it is to assume that the Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3: Young managers are rated higher regarding problem solving capabilities.

Considering the question of whether young managers are rated higher regarding problem solving capabilities, the means indicate a reverse result. Older managers problem solving is rated higher with (M_{old} = 4,1718, SD = .59) than that of the young managers, with (M_{young} = 3,8897, SD = .68) and a correlation of r = .368. The difference is significant according to the GLM-test with (F (1,194) = 29.365, p < .001) (see Appendices Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was rejected because the effect was significant in the opposite direction from what was predicted.

Hypothesis 4: (a) Old managers are perceived as possessing more warmth, but (b) less competence, competition and status.

According to Table 1 which shows all means of the constructs it is indicated that old managers are perceived as having more warmth (M_{old} = 3,6795, SD = .75 to M_{young} = 3,4282, SD = .75), but in the same time their competence level (M_{old} = 3,8910, SD = ..58 to M_{young} = 3,71119, SD = .61) and status (M_{old} = 3,6333, SD = .82 to M_{young} = 3,4923, SD = .80) are higher than those of the young managers as well. On the other hand competition (M_{old} = 2,5846, SD = .96 to M_{young} = 2,7231, SD = 1.03) is perceived as lower for the old managers like assumed. The correlations are on a small level and only competition has a middle correlation. The GLM-test results imply that all differences are significant. Competence (F (1,194) = 12.702, p < .001) and warmth (F (1,194) = 18.348, p < .001) are highly significant, whereas competition (F (1,194) = 6.006, p < .05) and status (F (1,194) = 4.987, p < .05) are significant (see Appendices Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts).

Research question II: Is there a difference in how employees of the different generations perceive young or old managers?

The data is analysed concerning the question of whether employees from different generations (Generation Y, Generation X, Baby Boomers) perceive a young or old manager differently- The study uses a GLM-test. The different views are taken into consideration (Young-Old, Young-Middle, Middle-Old).

Hypothesis 5: Young employees perceive more connectedness towards young managers including higher ratings for employee relation (manager-employee relationship), interpersonal skills, and communication skills.

The difference in the mean of the construct connectedness of young employees towards young and old managers is indicating that the young are more connected to the young managers than to the old managers. The mean of the connectedness construct is (M_{young} = 3,8495, SD = .62) towards young managers and towards an old manager mean of (M_{old} = 3,8172, SD = .65) (see Table 5). On the other hand data about employee relation implies that young employees are more related towards old (M_{old} = 3,9741, SD = .66) than towards young (M_{young} = 3,7476, SD = .73). Also young employees rate older managers (M_{old} = 3,9029, SD = .67) higher regarding interpersonal skills than young managers (M = 3,7120, SD = .72) as well as regarding communication skills (M_{old} = 3,9806, SD =.75; M_{young} = 3,8252, SD = .82). Although these figures imply a relation only two constructs are significant (*EmployeeRelation:* $F_{(1,102)}$ = 10.100, $p < .05$ and *InterpersonalSkills:* $F_{(1,102)}$ = 5.831, $p < .05$), two dependent measures are not significant (*Connectedness:* $F_{(1,102)}$ = .182, n.s. and *CommunicationSkills:* $F_{(1,102)}$ = 3.036, n.s.) and the hypothesis has to be partly rejected (see Appendices Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Generation Y).

Table 5

Constructs Generation Y: Mean / Standard deviation

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation
EmployeeRelation_old	3,9741	,66779
EmployeeRelation_young	3,7476	,73722
InterpersonalSkills_old	3,9029	,67902
InterpersonalSkills_young	3,7120	,72618
CommunicationSkills_old	3,9806	,75382
CommunicationSkills_young	3,8252	,82161
Connectedness_old	3,8172	,65804
Connectedness_young	3,8495	,62263

N = 103

Hypothesis 6: Old employees perceive more connectedness towards old managers including higher ratings for employee relation, interpersonal skills, and communication skills.

Survey results (see Table 6) means imply that older employees slightly perceive more connectedness (M_{old} = 4,0726, SD = .43 to M_{young} = 3,9194, SD = .63) and more employee relation (M_{old} = 4,1075, SD = .31 and M_{young} = 3,5269, SD = .67) towards old managers than to young managers. The same pattern is shown for the construct of interpersonal skills where old are (M_{old} = 4,0108, SD = .45) rated higher than young managers (M_{young} = 3,6022, SD = .61). Also data shows, that old employees perceive young managers (M_{young} = 3,5484, SD = .96) worse in their communication skills than old managers (M_{old} = 3,9667, SD = .65). Nevertheless the GLM-test (see Appendices Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Baby Boomers) reports that the construct (*Connectedness:* $F_{(1,30)}$ = 1.826, n.s.) is not significant. On the other hand the 3 other dependent measures are significant (*EmployeeRelation:* $F_{(1,30)}$ = 22,760, $p < .001$; *InterpersonalSkills:* $F_{(1,30)}$ = 15.985, $p < .001$; *Communication:* $F_{(1,30)}$ = 6,945, $p < .05$). Data suggests that Hypothesis 6 is supported with the limitation that *connectedness* is not significant.

Table 6

Constructs Baby boomers: Mean / Standard deviation

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation
EmployeeRelation_old	4,1075	,31490
EmployeeRelation_young	3,5269	,67645
InterpersonalSkills_old	4,0108	,45934
InterpersonalSkills_young	3,6022	,61113
CommunicationSkills_old	3,9677	,65746
CommunicationSkills_young	3,5484	,96051
Connectedness_old	4,0726	,43394
Connectedness_young	3,9194	,63373

$N = 30$

To examine the Hypothesis 7 a within-subject GLM-test was performed since the thesis wants to analyse if there is a difference in the perception of middle-aged towards old or young managers.

Hypothesis 7: Middle aged employees perceive higher status, competition, and competence for the old managers as for young managers, but perceive lower warmth.

The mean of the construct status indicate that old managers (M_{old} = 3,8333, SD = .65) are seen with more status as young (M_{young} = 3,4833, SD = .77) (See Table 7). Also old managers are perceived with a higher level of competence (M_{old} = 3,9125, SD = .62 to M_{young} = 3,7042, SD = .57) and warmth (M_{old} = 3,6333, SD = .72 to M_{young} = 3,3500, SD = .70). On the other hand middle aged rated older managers with a lower competition level (M_{old} = 2,5000, SD = .90) than the young managers (M_{young} = 2,6583, SD = .92). All constructs correlate slightly to each other (less than 0.5) besides competition with a correlation of .714 with a middle correlation (see Table 8). Despite these measures the GLM-test explains if there is significance in the statement of these figures (see Appendices Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Generation X). Status, competence as well as warmth are significant *(Status:* $F_{(1,59)}$ = 9.499, $p < .05$; *Competence:* $F_{(1,59)}$ = 5.097, $p < .05$; *Warmth:* $F_{(1,59)}$ = 7.854, $p < .05$*)*. Nevertheless competition is not significant (*Competition:* $F_{(1,59)}$ = 3.142, n.s.) and the hypothesis has to be rejected partly according to the significance level. Moreover warmth and competition violate with hypothesis 7.

Table 7

Constructs Generation X: Mean / Standard deviation

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation
Competence_old	3,9125	,62066
Competence_young	3,7042	,57947
Warmth_old	3,6333	,72408
Warmth_young	3,3500	,70890
Status_old	3,8333	,65527
Status_young	3,4833	,77002
Competition_old	2,5000	,90198
Competition_young	2,6583	,92742

N = 60

Table 8

Item correlation- How Middle aged perceive their managers

	Correlation
Competence_old & Competence_young	,292
Warmth_old & Warmth_young	,403
Status_old & Status_young	,246
Competition_old & Competition_young	,714
N= 60	

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to find patterns in the perception of employees towards their managers which strengthen the assumption that the perception is age biased. Results provide an empirical support for this assumption in general, although there were found some outcomes contrary to recent research. As described in the part for the results there are significant differences in the perception, when looking at the whole sample.

Most researchers found these differences and called them stereotypes or age bias (Finkelstein et al., 1995; Kite et al., 2005; Posthuma & Campion, 2008). Although most research focused on age bias towards employees this study supports the assumption that age stereotypes exist. A difference in the findings of the study is that old managers are rated higher than the young manger except for competition, which was not significant.

The current findings are contrary to what that most prior researchers have found, specifically that age stereotypes harm older people, particularly the elderly. Data shows that participants rate at 9 out of 10 constructs the older manager higher, except for competition, which is arguably a negative attitude in the view of employees. All significant mean differences in the current research thus contrast with the general research findings on ageism. The internalization of aging stereotypes (Levy, 2003b) theory is violated in the context of the work environment and its hierarchical structures. Since the data indicates more positive attitudes towards old managers, there cannot have been a process of internalized negative attitudes towards aging in this specific context. A possible explanation could be that the

manager as the object of the investigation is perceived as a strong social role (Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2000) where general stereotypes are reduced. The special social role of a young manager, who violates the naturally assumed career timetable (Perry et al, 1999), implicates some perceptions of employees about a young manager. The theory of organizational age is consistent with the findings since young managers are rated lower than the old managers throughout most constructs. Another reason for the better rating of old managers could be the Reverse Pygmalion effect (Eden, 1990), that older employees just have lower expectations of the young manager than from the old one. One other possibility is that our stimuli for the older manager, which indicated that they were 55 years old, did not portray that person as being old enough that they would trigger ageist prejudice.

Already Tsui et al. (1996) and Zenger & Folkman (2015) found that young managers are perceived as lacking experience like this study. But not all results support past research. Cleveland & Landy (1981) had depicted a higher rating for problem solving of young managers than for old managers and this study reported the relationship the other way around.

This study goes beyond past research and includes not only constructs about perception; it also measured stereotypes in one survey. According to the 3 category model of attitudes the study measured two dimensions – the "affective category" and the "competence category" (warmth, competence) (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Data about stereotyping was collected as well and contained constructs about stereotyping. Fiske et al. (2002) argued that a high competition level comes along with low warmth and status predicted competence. However study findings indicate that although old managers are perceived as high competent with a high status, they also are perceived with high warmth, which is contrary to the theory. Competition is perceived as lower, which is only a sign for an mixed stereotype. Fiske et al (2002) stated that there are mixed stereotypes (in this case high warmth – high competence) described as "admiration". The researchers stated that an in-group or close ally, which is not the case for this study (except the sample group "old") belong to admiration. Nonetheless current data is contrary to the stereotype theory which says that low competition predicts high warmth. An explanation for the findings of this study, that high competence and high warmth for older managers were observed, could be again that the social role outweighs the importance of stereotyping as Hummert et al. (1994) found that the subtypes (here "manager") outweigh age as category. The subtype "old manager" is seen as more favourably than the subtype "young manager".

Second focus of this study was to examine if the different generations have a diverse perception about a young or an old manger. Social Distance Theory (Kidwell & Booth, 1977; Lusczcz & Fitzgerald, 1986) assumes that one`s member cohort is evaluated and perceived more favourably than members of outgroups. Despite the finding that young employees feel more connected towards young managers, all other data of the constructs concerning the relationship towards a young manager is converse to the social distance theory. For all constructs regarding the relationship of employees towards their managers, young and old employees rate the old manager higher than the young manager, except for connectedness. But the differences across the constructs, connectedness and communication are not significant and only employee relation as well as interpersonal skills supports the assumption that in this specific context it violates with the Social Distance Theory.

On the other hand the observed behavioural patterns suggest that older employees rated the relationship towards their in-group member, the old manager, higher than the young manager which is consistent with the past findings of researchers. Nevertheless the results for the construct connectedness are not generalizable, because findings of the data of are not significant. For the single dependent measures employee relation, communication skills, and interpersonal skills survey results are significant and it indicates that older employees favour their age in-group member as manager.

The thesis investigated if middle aged employees have different perception about the diverse manager profiles too. As suggested by Graham & Baker (1989) status should be an inverted U-curve across the lifespan. Consequently young managers as well as old managers should have a similar status. Data yield that old managers are seen with more status which is contrary to the proposition that status is decreasing over life time. The results imply that the more elder a manager is the more status he or she receives. The general theory about status (Graham & Baker, 1989) is not applicable, but the data suggests similar results as Lawrence (1988), who examined status for young managers and called it status incongruence. The middle aged are independent from the social distance theory because they neither belong to the old nor to the young age group. Despite that it was found that the same stereotype pattern impacts the perception as for the whole sample including young and old employees. Old managers have a higher competence level and warmth level. The high level of warmth, which is in theory associated with a lower competition, comes not along with the expected level of competition. The theory of Fiske et al. (2002) can be supported with the note that high age predicts status and a high competition level is only associated with young managers, which

could be caused by the social role and that young managers violating the theory of organizational age. Summarising the findings the data is an indicator that the research questions can be supported with exceptions.

Limitations and Future research

This study was an online survey about perception and there are reference points which lead to the conclusion that there are opportunities for improvements. Providing these indications for future research is intended to help other researchers.

First, the limitations of the survey content needs to be mentioned. As research suggests (Posthuma & Campion, 2008) there exist upstream and downstream moderators for age stereotypes. Job-related information, the description of the managers' profile, was limited and just switched the age from 25 to 55 or the other way round, to assure that only age was measured. Despite this the profile could go into detail to strengthen the age differences to get more diverse and differentiated statements. Kite & Johnson (1988) argued that an individuation process of the evaluators reduces stereotyping. The more information we have about an individual, the less likely age stereotyping occurs. This was not considered by the survey.

Another potential moderator is the job itself, since a manager position has a perceived "correct age". The question is if these perceptions are throughout all industries the same when we think about a start-up compared to an old industry? The study did not measure variables such as team or company membership and used a narrow description for the raters. There are several levels which should be considered in the future. Widening the research on the individual who is rating (personality, self-esteem, company belonging, personality etc.) as well as the environment (team size, team age mean, company size, industry etc.) can be an opportunity to take a step forward.

Although the online survey provided data from employees and proxies were not needed to be used like often in social psychology, and a randomized survey without geographical limitations (here only the US) could be used as well, online surveys have disadvantages. Online surveys have the problem that participants can "rush" through a survey without paying attention. Although the smallest time for answering the survey was set to 180sec, it is not much time to answer 24 items twice.

A limitation of the study is that it did not measure if only the general perception of the employees towards young or old managers was measured or if there would have been

significant difference to a control group employee-employee perception. The study assumes that the participants understand that they are rating a manager.

There are many possibilities for future research to examine the relationships and perceptions of employees towards their managers in dependent on their age. Research just started to investigate on the field of how managers are seen and how they can avoid age biases at the workplace.

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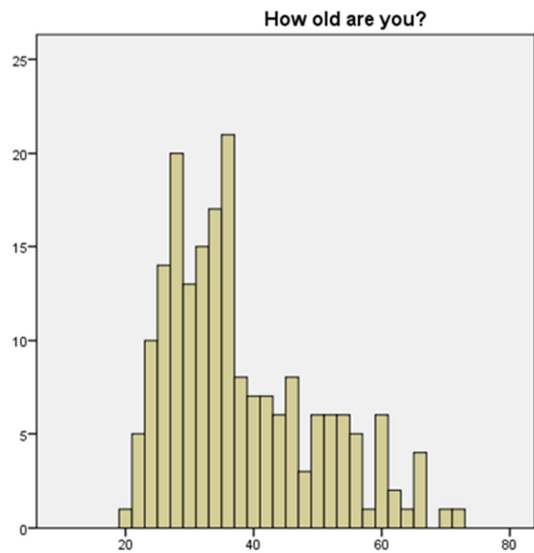Waclawski, J. (2002). Large-scale organizational change and performance: An empirical examination. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 13(3), 289-305.

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List of Tables

Appendices

1.   Age Distribution Data

How old are you?

2.   Cronbach's Alpha scale (Cronbach, 1951)

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 < \alpha$	Unacceptable

3. Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts

Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Competence	Linear	3,156	1	3,156	12,702	,000
Error(Competence)	Linear	48,202	194	,248		
Warmth	Linear	6,156	1	6,156	18,348	,000
Error(Warmth)	Linear	65,094	194	,336		
Status	Linear	1,939	1	1,939	4,987	,027
Error(Status)	Linear	75,436	194	,389		
ProblemSolving	Linear	7,756	1	7,756	29,365	,000
Error(ProblemSolving)	Linear	51,244	194	,264		
Experience	Linear	136,823	1	136,823	131,615	,000
Error(Experience)	Linear	201,677	194	1,040		
Competition	Linear	1,869	1	1,869	6,006	,015
Error(Competition)	Linear	60,381	194	,311		
EmployeeRelation	Linear	12,326	1	12,326	43,736	,000
Error(EmployeeRelation)	Linear	54,674	194	,282		
InterpersonalSkills	Linear	8,571	1	8,571	27,808	,000
Error(InterpersonalSkills)	Linear	59,485	193	,308		
CommunicationSkills	Linear	7,756	1	7,756	18,870	,000
Error(CommunicationSkills)	Linear	79,744	194	,411		
Connectedness	Linear	,292	1	,292	,949	,331
Error(Connectedness)	Linear	59,618	194	,307		

4. Questionnaire: survey structure

Item	
	Do you have a job outside your home where you have a supervisor?
	Imagine that you are working for a company and you will get a new manager.
	He/She is 55-years old, knowledgeable and has worked for 2 years for your company.
	It is his/her first leading position within the company.
	Your future manager has a university degree and is well educated.
1	How competent do you see him/her?
2	How independent do you see him/her?
3	How competitive do you see him/her?
4	How intelligent do you see him/her?
5	How good natured do you see him/her?
6	How tolerant do you see him/her?
7	How prestigious is the job achieved by your manager?

8	How economically successful has your manager been?
9	The manager generates assignments and projects accurately and on time.
10	The manager uses logical approaches to define, analyze and solve problems.
11	He/She needs to gain a lot of experience.
12	The more power the manager has, the less power people like me are likely to have.
13	Resources that go to the manager are likely to take away from the resources of people like me.
14	The manager stimulates subordinates to produce high quality work.
15	The manager evaluates the performance and capabilities of subordinates objectively and realistically.
16	The manager helps subordinates to work up to their potential.
17	The manager maintains a positive work relationship with all individuals in the organization.
18	The manager treats subordinates fairly and consistently.
19	The manager responds positively to constructive critisism and suggestions for work improvements.
20	The manager keeps all individuals in the organization informed of matters related to them.
21	He/She tries very hard to get to know employees.
22	He/She is up to date.
23	He/She pushes for better training.
24	He/She is very appreciative of their subordinates.
	Imagine that you are working for a company and you will get a new manager.
	He/She is 55-years old, knowledgeable and has worked for 2 years for your company.
	It is his/her first leading position within the company.
	Your future manager has a university degree and is well educated.
	How old are you?
	Gender
	Male/ Female
	Nationality
	Which of the following best describes your employment status?
	Student / Employee / Self-employed / Manager / Other
	Do you currently have a job or internship at an organization outside the home?
	No / Yes, part time / Yes, full time
	You do have a supervisor: Guess how old your manager is?
	Constructs:
	Competence (Item 1,2,3,4)
	Warmth (Item 5,6)
	Status (Item 7,8)
	Problem Solving (Item 9,10)
	Experience Level (Item 11)
	Competition (Item 12,13)
	Employee Relation (Item 14,15,16)
	Interpersonal Skills (Item 17,18,19)
	Communication Skills (Item 20)
	Connectedness (Item 21,22,23,24)

5.   Boxplots Constructs (Total sample)

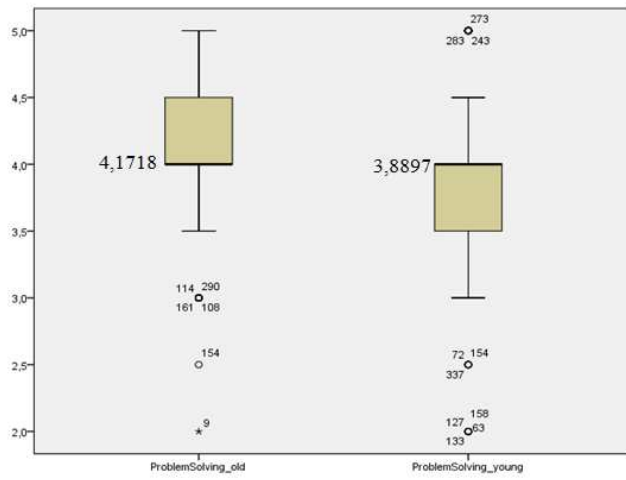Competence *Old & Young (total sample)*
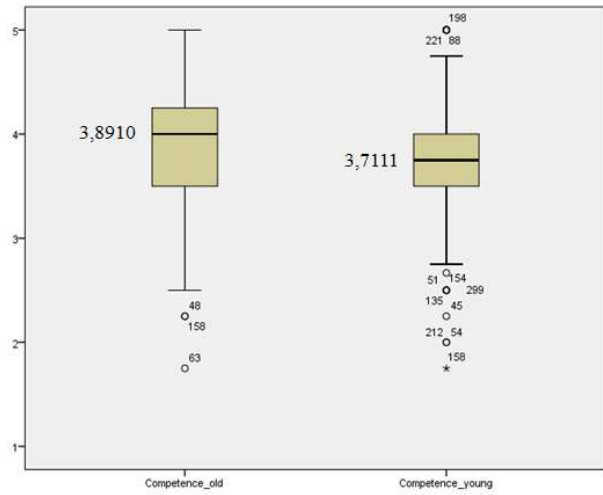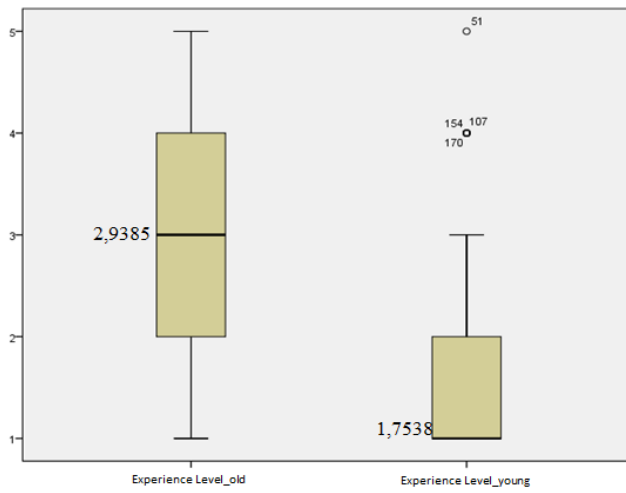

Warmth *Old & Young (total sample)*
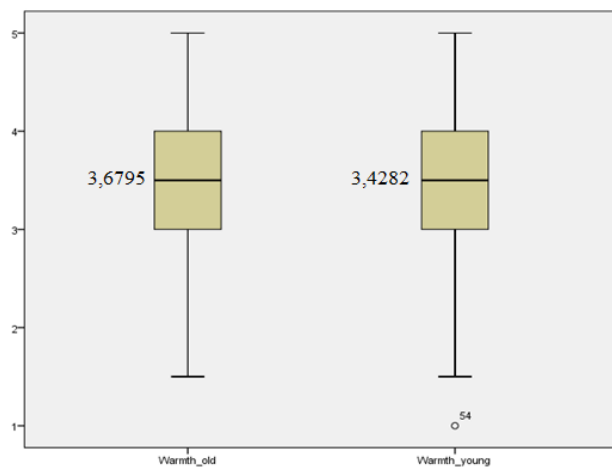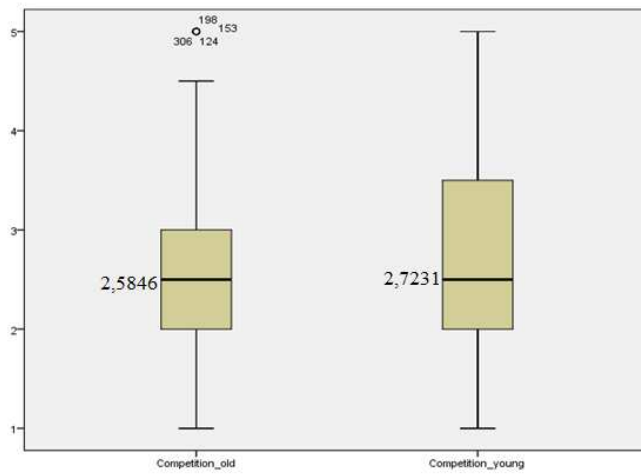

Status *Old & Young (total sample)*
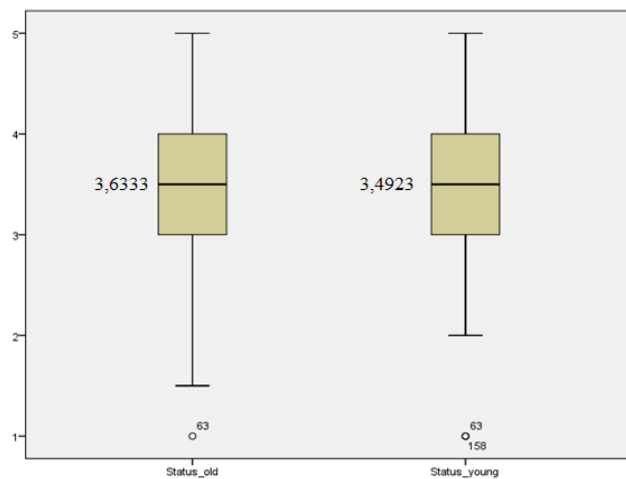
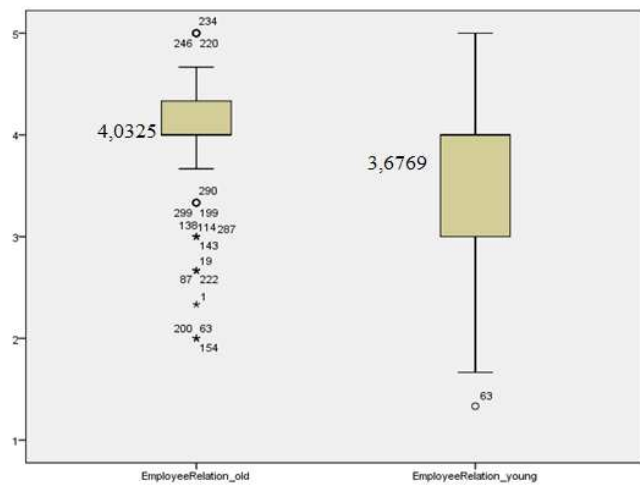ProblemSolving *Old & Young (total sample)*

ExperienceLevel *Old & Young (total sample)*
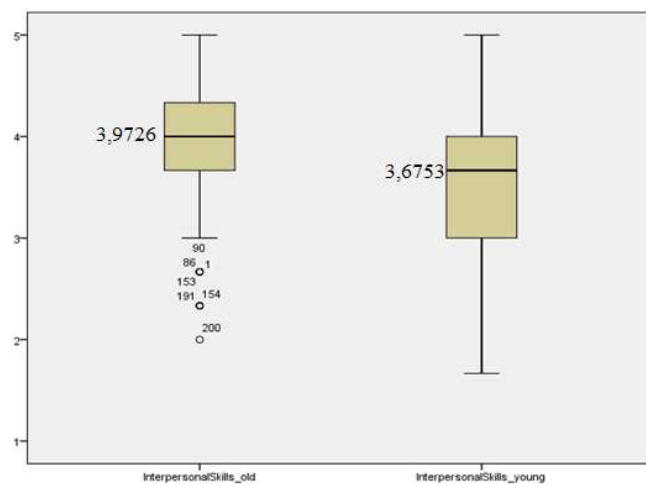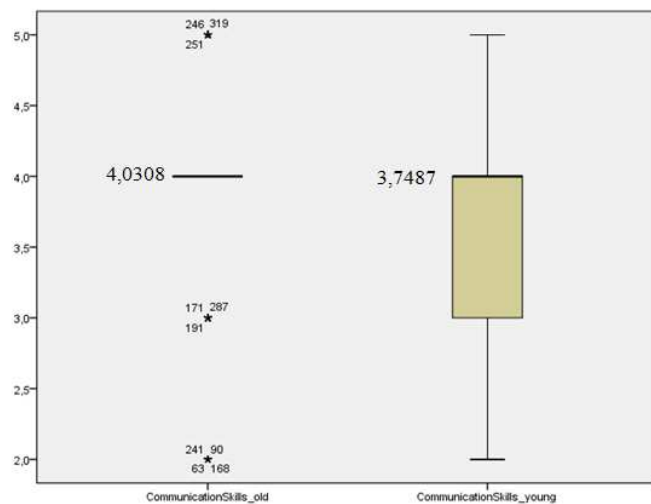

Competition *Old & Young (total sample)*
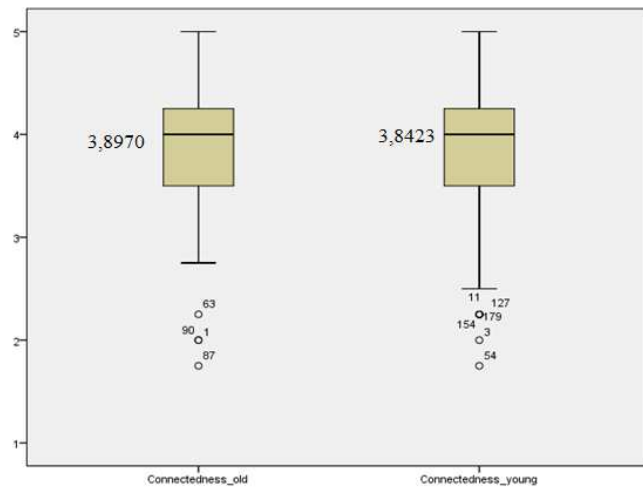
EmployeeRelation *Old & Young (total sample)*

Interpersonal Skills *Old & Young (total sample)*

Communication Skills *Old & Young (total sample)*

Connectedness *Old & Young (total sample)*

6. Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Generation Y

Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Generation Y

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gen_young_connectedness	Linear	,054	1	,054	,182	,671
Error(Gen_young_connectedness)	Linear	30,231	102	,296		
Gen_young_emplrelation	Linear	2,643	1	2,643	10,100	,002
Error(Gen_young_emplrelation)	Linear	26,690	102	,262		
Gen_young_interpersonalskills	Linear	1,878	1	1,878	5,831	,018
Error(Gen_young_interpersonalskills)	Linear	32,845	102	,322		
Gen_young_communication	Linear	1,243	1	1,243	3,036	,084
Error(Gen_young_communication)	Linear	41,757	102	,409		

N = 103

Connectedness Boxplot Generation Y
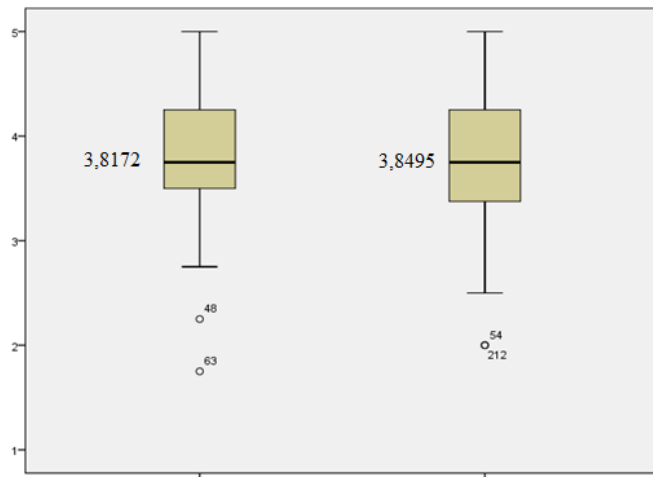
EmployeeRelation Boxplot Generation Y
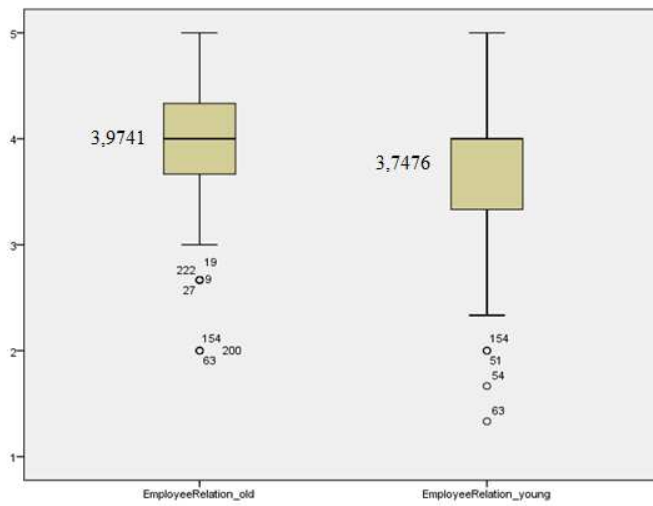
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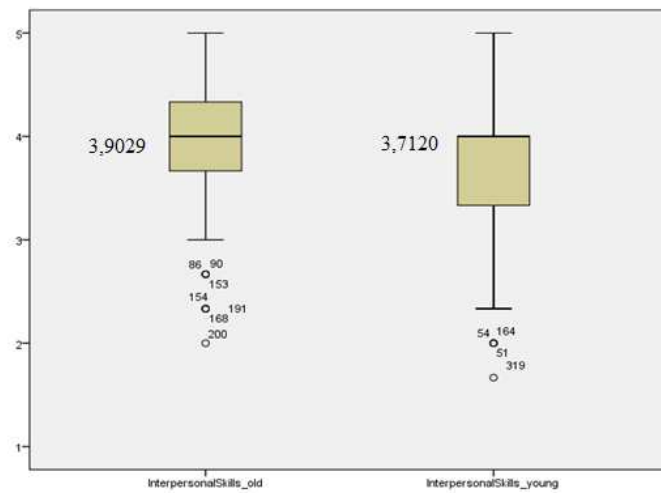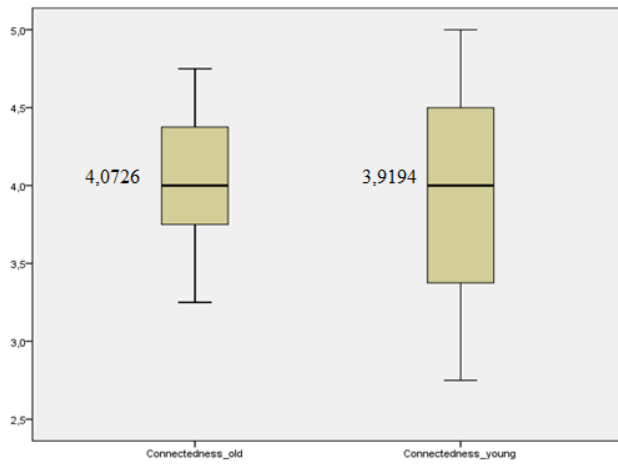
Communication Skills Boxplot Generation Y
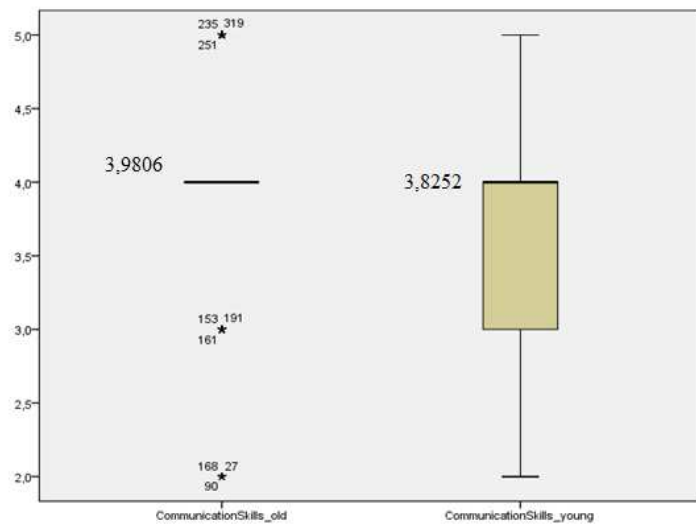
7. Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Baby Boomers

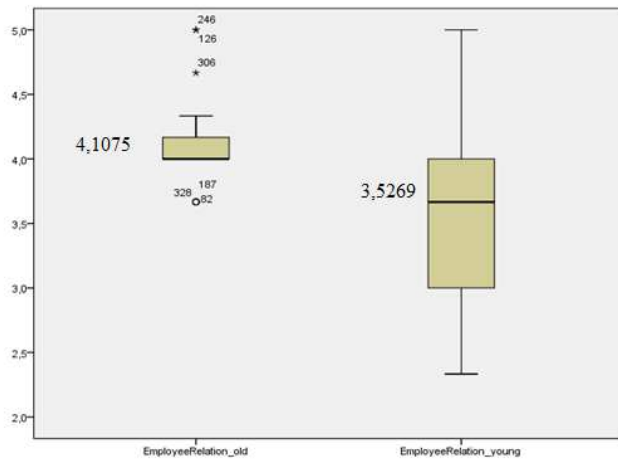Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Baby Boomers

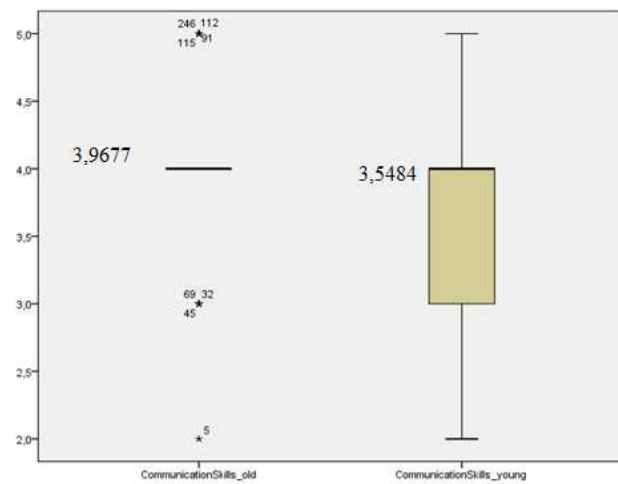| Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gen_old_connectedness	Linear	,364	1	,364	1,826	,187
Error(Gen_old_connectedness)	Linear	5,980	30	,199		
Gen_old_emplrelation	Linear	5,226	1	5,226	22,769	,000
Error(Gen_old_emplrelation)	Linear	6,885	30	,230		
Gen_old_communication	Linear	2,726	1	2,726	6,945	,013
Error(Gen_old_communication)	Linear	11,774	30	,392		
Gen_old_interpersonal	Linear	2,588	1	2,588	15,985	,000
Error(Gen_old_interpersonal)	Linear	4,857	30	,162		

N = 30

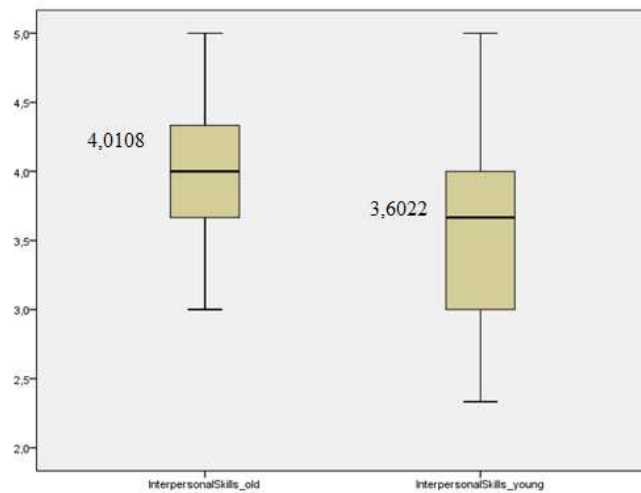## Connectedness Boxplot Baby Boomers

Employee Relation Boxplot Baby Boomers

Communication Skills Boxplot Baby Boomers

Interpersonal Skills Boxplot Baby Boomers

8. Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Generation X

Constructs: Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts Generation X

| Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gen_mid_status	Linear	3,675	1	3,675	9,499	,003
Error(Gen_mid_status)	Linear	22,825	59	,387		
Gen_mid_competence	Linear	1,302	1	1,302	5,097	,028
Error(Gen_mid_competence)	Linear	15,073	59	,255		
Gen_mid_warmth	Linear	2,408	1	2,408	7,854	,007
Error(Gen_mid_warmth)	Linear	18,092	59	,307		
Gen_mid_competition	Linear	,752	1	,752	3,142	,081
Error(Gen_mid_competition)	Linear	14,123	59	,239		

N = 60

Status Boxplot Generation X
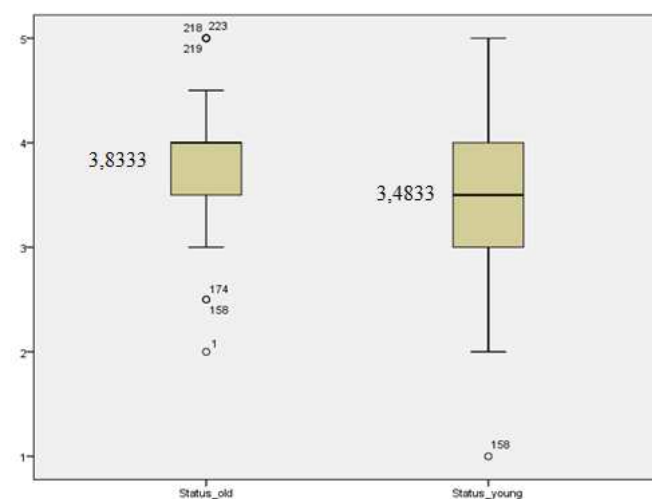
Competence Boxplot Generation X
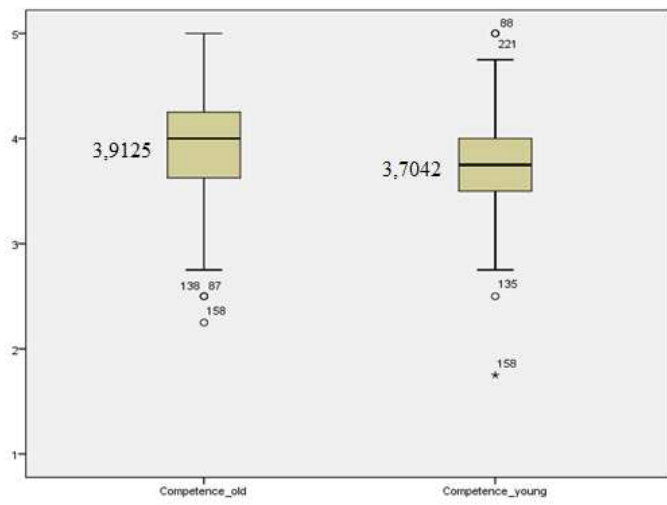
Warmth Boxplot Generation X
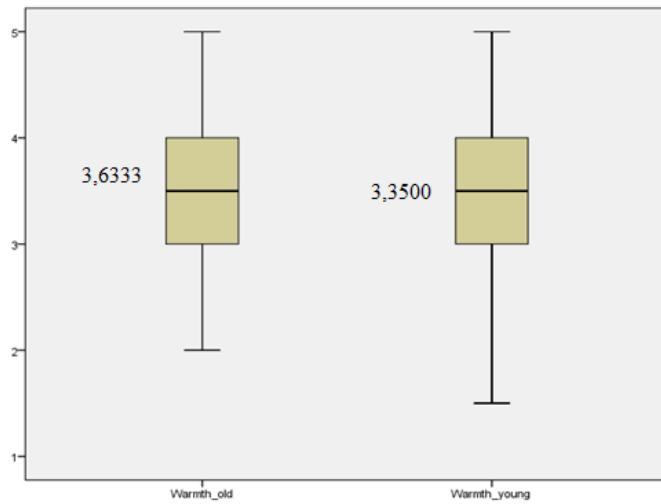
Competition Boxplot Generation X