

## Work Ethic in Ecuador: An Analysis of the Differences in Four Generational Cohorts

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**Título:** Ética del trabajo en Ecuador: un análisis de las diferencias en cuatro cohortes generacionales.

**Resumen:** Las organizaciones enfrentan el reto de gestionar una fuerza laboral multigeneracional con características propias que difieren en el valor que le otorgan al trabajo. La incorporación al mercado laboral de las generaciones más jóvenes hace imprescindible el estudio de sus diferentes actitudes hacia el trabajo en comparación con las generaciones anteriores. El propósito de esta investigación fue analizar a través del constructo de la Ética Protestante las diferencias existentes en las actitudes hacia el trabajo de cuatro generaciones (Baby Boomers, Generación X, Generación Y, y Generación Z). La muestra de 624 participantes ecuatorianos (BB 11.2%; GX 11.2%, GY 58.5% y GZ 19.1%) se agrupó por cohortes. Se aplicó el Cuestionario Multidimensional Ética del Trabajo (MWEP). Los resultados mostraron que los BB y la GX tiene una mayor creencia sobre la importancia del trabajo y más tolerancia a la utilización improductiva del tiempo de trabajo que las generaciones Y y Z. En el aplazamiento de las recompensas la GZ muestra puntuaciones superiores a las obtenidas por los BB, GX y GY. No se encuentran diferencias significativas en las dimensiones de autoconfianza, ocio y moralidad-ética.

**Palabras clave:** ética del trabajo; Baby Boomers; Generación X; Generación Y; Generación Z; MWEP; cohortes generacionales.

**Abstract:** Organizations face the challenge of managing a multigenerational workforce with unique characteristics that differ in the value they place on their work. The younger generation has been incorporated into the labour market recently and consequently it is essential to study their different attitudes toward work by comparing them with previous generations. The purpose of this research is to analyze, through the Protestant Ethic, the difference in attitudes towards work of four generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z). A sample of 624 Ecuadorian participants which comprised: BB 11.2 %; 11.2 % GX, GY 58.5 % and GZ 19.1 %, was pooled by cohort. The Questionnaire Multidimensional Work Ethic (MWEP) was applied. The results showed that the BB and GX have a greater belief about the importance of work, and a tolerance towards the unproductive use of working time, when compared with generations Y and Z. In postponing rewards, the GZ generation showed scores higher than those obtained by the BB, GX and GY generations. No significant differences were found in the dimensions of Self-Reliance, Leisure and Morality-Ethics.

**Keywords:** work ethic; Baby Boomers; Generation X; Generation Y; Generation Z; MWEP; generational cohorts.

### Introduction

Undoubtedly one of the main challenges that organizations face today is that of managing a multi-generational workforce characterized by four cohorts trying to create a cohesive working space. A number of factors, such as declining fertility rates, broken systems, retirement, and an increased life expectancy, have led nations to constantly extend the terms of the retirement of their professionals (Finkelstein, Truxillo, Fraccaroli, & Kanfer, 2015). These have caused work teams to extend the average age of their employees, and to manage the coexistence of the different generations at work, which are now a reality with important consequences for the administrative management and human resources. The integration of groups belonging to different generations impact primarily on culture, the results, and intra and inter organizational competitiveness. Companies face the massive outflow of the Baby Boomers generation (GBB), employees rich in experience, who are now being replaced by the Digital Generation Y (GY); digital experts and bearers of new values and dissimilar demands on the values, and the ways of working of previous generations with an interest in reconciling work and their personal life (Golik, 2013). In between these two groups, are people of Generation X (GX), who are

technologically prepared to face labour challenges and measure success at work within the flexibility that the environment offers them. They seek environments that allow them to maintain healthy and stable relationships (Palomino, Medina, & Arellano, 2016). Finally, there is the Z (GZ) generation. While their presence is not yet known among the organizations due to their young age, they constitute the immediate future of the workforce. Few people in this generation that are working, have definitely proved to be able to act in a multicultural and global media, accompanied by a flexible mind capable of organizing and transmitting information; and for which mobility and training are a constant in their career development (Alvarez, 2016). It is evident that these generations differ in their outlook, attitudes, values, characteristics and behavior (Earle, 2003). Therefore, employers and human resource managers need to provide strategies that give significant value to the work performed by different cohorts, according to their needs, expectations and experiences; in order to enhance their performance and job satisfaction (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014; Kyles, 2005). Organizations that do not address these differences are likely to be less efficient and competent in the labour market (Lyons & Kuron, 2014) and could experience the possibility of high levels of dissatisfaction, and a brain drain, that would result in serious visible consequences in the repetitive processes of recruitment and selection (Kyles, 2005; Golik, 2013).

This is especially relevant in a context such as that in Ecuador which has produced changes and developments with regard to employment, social security, health and education

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(CEPAL, 2018), these have not been designed with management practices of the commensurate human capital with such development. In fact, many of these changes have adjusted existing sectorial policies, leaving less space for innovation and continuity of a change in all the areas, specially in labour standards. (CEPAL, 2013).

Although attitudes and values towards work have been addressed from multiple perspectives (Alvarez, 2016; Chirinos, 2009; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Oh & Reeves, 2014; Palomino *et al*, 2016. and Varas & Yanez, 2016) one of the most widely used to explore differences in attitudes among generations, cultures and professions has been the concept of the Protestant work ethic (PWE), (Meriac, Poling & Woehr, 2009; Meriac, Thomas & Milunski, 2015). This ethic was established based on the beliefs of Weber in the early twentieth century. It enables the study of attitudes toward work through the degree to which individuals vary in consideration with respect to the work. It is perceived that to work is a positive thing that responds to a criterion of intrinsic value that goes beyond that of purely economic survival, against a consideration of work as something negative that is 'necessary' to obtain the resources to develop a good quality of life (Borgmann, 1992). The study of PWE through different generations has yielded important results for the management of the workforce in organizational contexts (Jobe, 2014; Meriac, Woehr & Banister, 2010; Real, Mitnick & Maloney, 2010; Walt & Jonck, 2016). However, to the best of our knowledge, the study of PWE between different generations in the South American region, and specifically in Ecuador, has not yet been explored.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the current differences in the PWE of four different generations i.e. GBB,

GX, GY, GZ, in Ecuador. The study of the attitudes and values towards work, through the PWE of different generations living together in the workplace in Ecuador, is extremely important to assist organizations to develop effective retention practices in both organizational talent and job stability.

**Theoretical foundations**

*PWE and Generational Cohorts*

Different authors have studied the comparative value that different generations give to their work, with an emphasis on differences with regard to personal characteristics and organizational preferences. The results of these studies characterize the GBB with the least interest in teamwork and interpersonal relationships, but a good working environment with meaningful tasks. It also reveals that the GX generation demonstrates a high degree of individualism that makes the traditional division between task-related individuals of this generation especially focused on the task. Furthermore, the GY generation are more influential at work; demanding values of freedom and balance between their work and personal life. The most attractive jobs for the young GY are those that offer challenges, allowing them to have the autonomy, flexibility and remuneration commensurate with their effort (Bongiovanni & Soler, 2015; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). In Figure 1 the characteristics of each generation, the values that identify their behaviour, their possible strategies, work motivation, as well as the similarities and differences between them, are described.

Generation	Features and Values	Motivation at work	Differences / Similarities
<b>GBB 1940 - 1960</b>	Doing the extra mile at work. Optimistic, positive, idealistic and wanting to have it all. Self absorbed and intellectually arrogant. Spiritual and religious.	Motivations: self-aggrandizing, self-superiority; and conservation.	<p><b>a)</b> The GX and GY generations are more individualistic and focused on themselves than the GBB. The GZ has no relationships with any of its predecessors, <b>b)</b> the four generations are dissimilar in terms of perception and conceptualization about work, <b>c)</b> the four generations need different intrinsic and extrinsic motivational systems to gratify their work and <b>d)</b> a decrease in the sense of loyalty towards organizations has been evidenced. GX shows a major need in order to balance Work and personal living.</p>
<b>GX 1960 - 1980</b>	Digital analog. Independent, results-oriented, skeptical, pragmatic. Cynical, distrustful, shallow and uncivil.	Motivations: work and personal balance, professional development, salary linked to objectives and training.	
<b>GY 1980 - 2000</b>	Idealistic. They seek happiness. They need to be connected 24/7. They prefer teamwork and have a great sense of social responsibility. They show respect for others. Achievement oriented, creative, constantly in academic and challenging training.	Motivations: rewards, challenges and transparency.	
<b>GZ 2000 onwards</b>	They reject conventional standards, they avoid meetings, inductions and lengthy verbal explanations. Committed to the environment, social equality and transparency. They consider that intelligence and knowledge are more important than an academic degree. Little development of interpersonal skills. They speak little and they chat a lot.	Motivations: spacious recreational spaces, flexible scheduling, continuous development, technology as part of their life, challenging projects.	

**Figure 1.** Generational characteristics (Compiled from Alvarez, 2016; Chirinos, 2009; Howe & Strauss, 2007; O & Reeves, 2014; Palomino *et al*, 2016. Varas & Yanez, 2016).

The discussion about the nature and importance of work for individuals has generally been approached from the neutral perspective of efficiency and technical rationality (Giorgi & March, 1990). However, the issue regarding values towards work is of interest largely because of its strong relationships with organizational commitment, job performance (Smith & Smith, 2011), unemployment, and individual differences (Furham, 1984).

One of the central elements that have tried to account for in these relationships from the approach of attitudes and values towards work has been the concept of the Protestant Work Ethic (PWE). In the early twentieth century, Max Weber through his work 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' laid the foundation of this concept by linking work with a transcendent vision of life: i.e. hard work is ennobling, it is valuable, it is a central part of life; whereas, self-reliance and delay of gratification are the virtues of individuals (Weber, 1958). Weber's theory is based on four fundamental ideas (Furham, 1984): (a) the believer is called by God to work, and therefore their work should be honest; (b) job success and economic prosperity is a sign of God's grace and consequently successful people are considered his beloved sons; (c) prosperity is supported by the asceticism of people, and saving money is an important value, the systematic use of capital accumulation, and reduced spending on vices and luxuries; and (d) the strong individualism taken from Calvinism which states that each individual has to make their own moral choices and be aware of the ethical implications of their actions. Consequently, this vision describes a set of attitudes related to work as 'good' for individuals which goes beyond their instrumental character for economic survival, and has special emphasis on individualism against the practice of social welfare (Borgmann, 1992). This approach to the way we understand work has had an extraordinary influence in the workplace throughout the development of capitalism in the twentieth century. Thus, the study of attitudes and values towards work has usually referred to the PWE.

In this context, we have developed different self-reporting tools for assessing the PWE (Blood, 1969; Buchholz, 1978; Goldstein & Eichhorn, 1961; Hammond & Williams, 1976; Mirels & Garrett, 1971; Ray, 1982; Ho & Lloyd, 1984). However, these scales have been limited in their usefulness due to problems related to their validity and reliability. Among these problems, Furham (1984) states: (a) the construct of erroneous interpretations; (b) inadequate ele-

ments and gender as their language; and (c) lack of rigorous studies on its dimensionality. In line with this last question Miller, Woehr & Hudspeth (2002) point out what they consider to be the most serious problem in these scales: that of their one-dimensional consideration, when in fact, the construct must be approached from a clear multidimensional perspective. Echoing these problems Miller *et al.* (2002) developed the Multidimensional Profile of Ethics at Work (MWEP) that has become the most widely used assessment tool for estimating the PWE. It has been extensively used to analyze the differences in the existing PWE in various cultural fields (Chanzanagh & Akbarnejad, 2011; Li & Madsen, 2009; Özatalay & Chanzanagh, 2013; Ryan & Tipu, 2016; Slabbert & Ukpere, 2011; Woehr, Arciniega, & Lim, 2007); i.e. that which exists between men and women (Meriac *et al.* 2009); that which occurs at the different stages in their career (Pogson, Cober, Doverspike, & Rogers, 2003); those related to motivation and performance (Meriac *et al.* 2015); and also those produced when taking into account different generations (Meriac *et al.*, 2010).

In their most commonly used version, the MWEP is a Likert scale with 65 items grouped into seven dimensions (see Figure 2): (1) Centrality of Work, (2) Self-Reliance, (3) Hard Work, (4) Leisure, (5) Morality-Ethical (which is measured by 10 items each) (6) Delay of Gratification (which is measured using 7 items) and finally, (7) Wasted Time (which employs 8 items). The psychometric properties of MWEP that have been obtained through the studies of different authors (Miller *et al.*, 2002) are adequate. The construct validity of the MWEP has been established by studying its dimensionality with a confirmatory factor that demonstrates good fit indices. This was carried out by analyzing its relationship with other general variables: such as a general cognitive ability, personality and perceived needs, and specifically labour participation, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction, as well as through studies of the generalizability of the scores obtained from different individuals i.e. workers vs. students. The reliability of the MWEP has also been tested successfully by studying the internal consistency of the scales and the temporal stability of scores: the Alfa coefficient scales are suitable, i.e. greater than 0.80 in all scales, albeit less on the Delay of Gratification scale, .73, and the retest correlation yields producing values above .90 for all the scales except for the Delay of Gratification, which was .83.

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	ITEMS
Centrality of Work	Belief in work and the importance of it. <i>Example:</i> I feel uneasy When there is little work for me to do.	10 → 2, 4, 10, 13, 30, 33, 40, 41, 52, 64
Self-Reliance	Effort for the independence in the exercise of daily service. Features of success. <i>Example:</i> To be truly successful, a person Should be self-reliant.	10 → 6, 21, 26, 28, 32, 34, 44, 50, 55, 59
Hard Work	Belief in the virtues of hard work and the chances of success. <i>Example:</i> Working hard is the key to being successful.	10 → 17, 20, 22, 24, 35, 38, 45, 47, 53, 60
Leisure	Attitudes and belief in non-work activities such as leisure and rest. <i>Example:</i> I would prefer a job That allowed me To have more leisure time.	10 → 5, 8, 14, 18, 27, 31, 43, 49, 58, 63
Morality - Ethics	Believe in a just and moral existence. <i>Example:</i> One Should always take responsibility for one's actions.	10 → 7, 15, 16, 25, 37, 48, 51, 54, 57, 61
Delay of Gratification	Orientation towards the future. Postponement of rewards. <i>Example:</i> If I want to buy something, I always wait Until I Can Afford it.	7 → 3, 11, 19, 29, 42, 46, 62
Wated Time	Attitudes and beliefs that show the active and productive use of time. <i>Example:</i> It is Important to stay busy at work and not waste time.	8 → 1, 9, 12, 23, 36, 39, 56, 65
<b>65 items</b>		

Figure 2: MWEP dimensions (itself from Miller et al elaboration., 2002).

PWE and Generational Differences in Ecuador

The study of attitudes towards work through a generational cohort has been developed primarily in the North American and European areas. These studies reveal that in Latin America there is insufficient empirical evidence to demonstrate this, however, none of the studies have used the MWEP. Given the proximity and immediacy of the experiences of a nation, Didier (2017) points out that the differences between generations should be described in terms of local events, rather than from global events. That is why in

Ecuador, we cannot assume the configuration of generational differences purely by taking characteristics from other contexts, and even more so if it is to contribute to knowledge from a theoretical approach and decision-making from a practical perspective. In particular, Ecuadorians have undergone times of political and economic instability that has coincided with the crisis in world capitalism that hit Latin American and as a result shaped the behavior and expectations of its inhabitants (Vanoni & Rodriguez, 2017).

Figure 3 shows the political and economic events that have influenced the development of Ecuador.

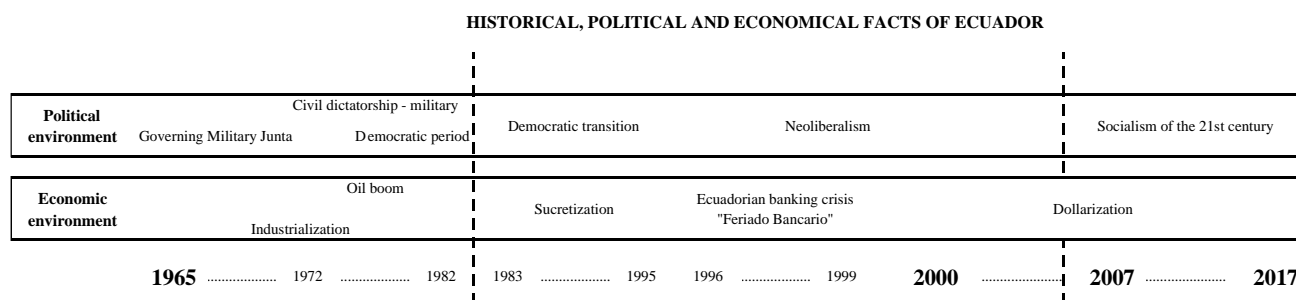


Figure 3. Historical, Political and Economic facts of Ecuador. (Compiled from Vanoni & Rodriguez, 2017).

Ecuadorian society has been marked by countless facts, namely the temporality of generational groups proposed by

Howe & Strauss (2007) and Oh & Reeves (2014), and that the GBB lived through the economic prosperity of the bana-

na boom and the capitalist development of Ecuador. Unlike the GX who witnessed industrialization, the oil boom, a military dictatorship, the return to democracy, economic crisis, unemployment, and the emergence of the social movements of women, and of environmental protection. By contrast, the GY and GZ generations have grown up in the context of the dollarization, the bank holiday, and lastly the 'citizens' revolution', situations that have promoted the development of challenging and self-sufficient attitudes.

Studies carried out in different cultural areas, show that there are significant differences between different generations in the dimensions that make up the PWE (Jobe, 2014; Palomino *et al.*, 2016; Varas & Yañez, 2016, Walt & Jonck, 2016). In particular, the older generation, the GBB, tend to give more value to work as a central element in the plan of life, while giving less value to leisure time and a work-life balance. On the other hand, the intermediate generations, GX and GY, also differ from each other in their conception of work, the first in line with the PWE, considering it as a central element in their personal and social development, but compared to the latter they give a greater value to the sense of work, with a view to finding happiness and a connection to social responsibility. By contrast, little is known about the GZ generation, and that which is available focuses on anecdotal evidence collected from magazines and broadcasts, rather than any rigorous empirical studies. However, based on the available evidence it seems that they show a greater commitment to work than previous generations and to work with organizations that have more general social constructs such as the environment, social equity or transparency.

In this context we consider the following research questions:

*Research Question 1:* Where are the differences in the dimensions of PWE between the generations GBB, GX and GY who are currently working in Ecuador?

*Research Question 2:* What is different, and what is similar, about the Ecuadorian GZ compared to previous generations?

## Method

### Participants

There were 615 participants with an average age of 29.8 years ( $SD = 15.8$ , range 16-76 years). The total sample consisted of 60.2 % males, 26.0 % high school students and 60.9 % college students who were either working, or had done so in the past. Data was collected from four organizations in the southern part of Ecuador, one of which was in the public sector, and three from the private sector. The grouping of participants in each cohort generation (see Table 1) was carried out based on the segmentation proposed by Howe & Strauss (2007) and Oh & Reeves (2014). All the participants gave their consent. Parental informed consent, and written authorization of the institution was obtained in the case of

the GZ generation. All the participants responded to the scale in an anonymous and voluntary way.

**Table 1.** Generational demographics.

Generation	Age	Gender %
GBB <sup>a</sup> (n = 70)	m = 64.8 (SD = 4.9)	Male = 65.7
		Female = 34.3
GX <sup>b</sup> (n = 70)	m = 47.1 (SD = 5.7)	Male = 47.1
		Female = 52.9
GY <sup>c</sup> (n = 365)	m = 22.5 (SD = 3.5)	Male = 65.2
		Female = 34.8
GZ <sup>d</sup> (n = 119)	m = 16.8 (SD = .4)	Male = 48.2
		Female = 51.8

<sup>a</sup>Born between 1940 and 1960; <sup>b</sup> Born between 1960 and 1980; <sup>c</sup> Born between 1980 and 2000; <sup>d</sup> Born 2000 onwards

### Measurements

The Spanish version was used in the MWEF scale developed by Woehr *et al.* (2007) for a trans-cultural study of three countries, one of which was Mexico. Following the recommendations of Epstein, Santo, & Guillemín (2015) prior to the application of the instrument, a linguistic check with the Ecuadorian dialect was performed to ensure that there could not be any misinterpretation of the text. This process involved two university professors who were specialized in organizational psychology, two managers from private companies, and five university students. The changes resulting from this adaptation were few. The description of the response option: "Marque FA si usted está fuertemente de acuerdo con la oración" (Mexican Spanish version) was changed to "Marque 5 si usted está totalmente de acuerdo con la oración" (Ecuadorian linguistics adaptation). Items 26 and 27 were also modified by reversing the order of the words in the first, and removing a diminutive suffix, in the second. The items were as follows: (26) "Las personas estarían mejor si dependieran sólo de ellas mismas" and (27) "El trabajo consume mucho de nuestro tiempo, dejando muy poco para relajarse". The final elements can be found in Appendix 1. To identify the demographic characteristics of the participants a preliminary section including questions relating to the date of birth, gender, and current activity was added to the questionnaire.

### Procedure

The MWEF was applied in the institutions where the participants remained. Data analysis was developed using the SPSS program 22. A comparison of the values obtained in each dimension of MWEF, according to each generation, was performed using an ANOVA test. The effect of size was observed through the partial Eta Squared Test (under effect about .01, with an average effect of approx .06 and a high effect with values around .14).

## Results

Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics as well as the reliability and inter-correlations between the dimensions that constitute the MWEP. The average scores range from Morality-Ethics (4.47) and Leisure (2.91). The reliability scores of

the dimensions are suitable: the lowest recorded in Wasted Time (alpha = .687) and the highest in Leisure (alpha = .831). The analysis of the inter-correlations between the dimensions indicates the existence of significant inter-correlations that were positive and moderate in almost all cases.

**Table 2.** Descriptive and intercorrelations between the dimensions of MWEP.

Dimension	$\rho$	$s$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Self-Reliance	3.98	.56	(.774)						
2. Morality / Ethics	4.47	.50	.305 **	(.723)					
3. - Leisure <sup>a</sup>	2.91	.68	-.252 **	.105 **	(.831)				
4. Hard Work	4.21	.68	.494 **	.416 **	-.010	(.808)			
5. Centrality of Work	3.84	.59	.369 **	.299 **	.104 **	.490 **	(.787)		
6. Wasted Time	3.88	.56	.500 **	.347 **	-.140 **	.520 **	.622 **	(.687)	
7. Delay of Gratification	3.92	.68	.510 **	.259 **	-.177 **	.551 **	.404 **	.456 **	(.761)

The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha is shown in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> Leisure average was reversed based on the theory of original scale.

\*\* Correlation significant at the .01 level; \* significant correlation at the .05 level.

Table 3 shows the results obtained by analyzing the differences between the average size of MWEP in the different generational cohorts. The results show significant differences in the dimensions of Centrality of Work, with a size of medium high effect (partial squared Eta: .081), Wasted Time and Delay of Gratification with average effect size (partial Eta square: .051 and .040 respectively). For the dimensions of Self-Reliance, Morality-Ethics, Leisure and Hard Work, no significant differences were found.

Looking at the generational cohorts to determine why such differences exist, we found that for the Centrality of

Work the GZ generation gets a significantly lower average than the other three generations. In addition, the GY generation also obtained scores that were significantly lower than those of the GX generation. With regard to Wasted Time, the GZ and GY generation obtained scores significantly lower than those of the GBB and GX generations. With respect to Delay of Gratification, the generations GBB, GX and GY were indistinguishable from each other, while the GZ generation showed a higher level in the perception of this dimension.

**Table 3.** Mean differences between generational cohorts.

	Z $\bar{X} (DS)$	Y $\bar{X} (DS)$	X $\bar{X} (DS)$	GBB $\bar{X} (DS)$	F	Differences <sup>b</sup>
Self-Reliance	4.06 (.57)	3.94 (.58)	4.01 (.48)	4.01 (.52)	1,385	-
Morality / Ethics	4.45 (.59)	4.50 (.46)	4.44 (.50)	4.38 (.53)	1,413	-
-Leisure	2.79 (.66)	2.95 (.62)	2.95 (.83)	2.88 (.81)	1,703	-
Hard work	4.30 (.67)	4.22 (.70)	4.11 (.59)	4.09 (.71)	1,791	-
Centrality of Work	3.58 (.60)	3.82 (.56)	4.16 (.44)	4.01 (.64)	17,903 **	1 vs 2,3,4, 2 vs 3
Wasted Time	3.76 (.60)	3.83 (.54)	4.15 (.46)	4.06 (.58)	10,983 **	1.2 vs 4.3
Delay of Gratification	4.16 (.57)	3.91 (.67)	3.82 (.55)	3.67 (.90)	8,414 **	4,3,2 vs 1

\*\* The difference between generations is significant at the .01 level

\* The difference is significant at the .05 level

<sup>10</sup> To distinguish differences between generations the Tukey post-hoc test was applied with a significance level of 5

<sup>b</sup> Differences involves subgroups established based on testing Post-Hoc Tukey with: 1 = Z, 2 = Y, 3 = X, 4 = GBB.

## Discussion

This paper has investigated the differences and similarities regarding attitudes and values to work as expressed through the PWE, of four generational cohorts who live and coexist in working environments. As noted in previous studies (Meriac *et al.*, 2010; Woehr *et al.*, 2007) of populations such as the US, Korea and Mexico, we have also found evidence of differences between the four generational cohorts in Ecuador. Significant differences were found in the dimensions of Centrality of Work, Wasted Time and Delay of Gratification,

whereas for the dimensions of Self-Reliance, Morality-Ethics, Leisure and, Hard Work no differences were found.

Specifically, for the dimension of Centrality of Work the generations GX and GBB obtained significantly higher scores when compared to GY and GZ. This would indicate that the new generations who are entering the labour market consider this dimension more relevant to their life than previous generations.

The dimension of Wasted Time showed similar results: the scores obtained by the GX and GBB generations are significantly higher than those obtained by the generations GY and GZ. These results highlight the fact that the generations

GX and GBB attach greater importance to the effective and productive use of their time than the latter. The results also suggest that the GX and GBB generations give more importance to Centrality of Work and Wasted Time. These generations are results-oriented, who are independent and loyal to their companies, they do not waste time because it should be used productively and effectively to achieve the greatest benefits. These attitudes are reinforced by the social, political, and economic factors in Ecuador between 1946-1964 at the time of the banana debacle, and income capitalism (Vanoni & Rodríguez, 2017).

These results help to explain why these two generations give a high value to work and the importance of that time being used in the best way. By contrast, the GY generation has developed in a completely different context which has been influenced by technology and dollarization, at a time when work has lost some of its centrality, and when optimization in terms of production has become less important (Figueroa Rodríguez, Diaz & Zapata, 2018). Finally, with regard to the dimension of Delay of Gratification, the GZ generation obtained significantly higher scores than those obtained from the GY, GX and GBB generations.

This result indicates that the younger generations have a positive assessment to the achievement of reward than previous generations. The GZ generation comprise people who are committed to global welfare, the environment, social equity, and they prefer to work on long-term projects in which they can contribute to these causes, forgoing any immediate gratification if they feel they can do something to preserve their long term welfare Magallón (2016). Conversely, the GY generation are those who expect an immediate response to their requests. They have anchored their life toward fulfilling achievements and that is what gives them happiness (Varas & Yanez, 2016).

Our findings are partially in accord with previous studies. However, they do not exactly reproduce the evidence of similar studies of North American populations, such as that of Jobe, (2014). It is important to recognize that in Ecuador the presence of different cultural groups is clearly evident, whether they are immigrants from other countries (multiethnic), or diverse cultural groups in the state, or peoples of the nation (pluriculturalism) whose coexistence within the same space can influence the perception to work. This factor leads us to postulate whether the differences found between the Ecuadorian generations are independent of culture and ethnicity or not, and it would be important to study the generational differences in relation to these aspects.

An important additional issue is that none of the previous studies have included an analysis of the GZ generation. Our results suggest that this generation differs from previous generations in some of the aspects that make up the PWE. These aspects include: being more willing to delay rewards, being less focused at work, and using their time for productive activities. In this regard, Magallon (2016) points out that currently the progress of society is linked to the existence of sufficiently strong links between local reality and compre-

hensiveness, and institutional environments whose relationships depend largely on the skills of the GZ generation who, with their 'social DNA', have proven to be able to promote communities that allow replicable and sustainable development of the contributions generated. This undoubtedly has important implications in the field of people management processes in organizational contexts. In fact, it constitutes an important input into these management processes that need to be modified in order to incorporate the attitudes and values of the GZ generation whose entry into the labour market is imminent. The study of the characteristics that these processes have to take in order to meet these needs is an issue that requires further research.

However, any evidence of the differences in PWE between various generational cohorts is far from conclusive. By contrast to our results and those of Meriac *et al.*, (2010) and Jobe (2014), in which more similarities than differences were found with regard to the dimensions of Leisure, Hard Work and Delay of Gratification, other authors have not found any substantive differences between the different cohorts (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Zabel *et al.* 2017). Conversely, the studies have shown the presence of significant differences between the GBB generation, who show a greater inclination for Hard Work and less perspective, versus Delay of Gratification when compared to the GX and GY generations. These disparities indicate the need for further exploration into the existence of such differences and their practical implications (Walt & Jonck, 2016).

Regarding the practical implications, our results indicate that a PWE focused on generational cohorts is a novel input that should be taken into consideration within the strategy for talent management. The dimensions of the PWE may be introduced as skills in the analysis and design of posts, and derive an element of study for recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, and the training of employees. Similarly, the differences can be analyzed for the design of incentive schemes, and quality of life, in order to engage new talent.

Despite the results shown, our study has some limitations that should be noted. Firstly, the GZ sample was only composed of participants aged between 16 to 17 years old, these participants were not considered in this study because their contact with work is zero. This meant that there was very little choice in age within the cohort and, strictly speaking, it can not describe the characteristics of the cohort but only of that age group. In response to this fact, further studies into the characteristics of the GZ generation should incorporate a wider range of ages, and additionally, the adaptation of measuring instruments to the experiential context of those ages.

Secondly, it should be noted that one of the variables that can affect the results is employment status. 90 % of the participants in the GBB, the GX and GY generations indicated on the questionnaire that they were either working, or had worked, at least once; but 69 % of the participants GZ were students who had never worked. This indicates the need to compare the generational cohorts also through those

groups of participants without work experience to appreciate the extent to which there are differences in the PWE between those of the same generation who have work experience, and those who have not.

## Conclusions

The work described in this manuscript provides a better understanding of the values and attitudes towards differ-

entiated work among the four generations that will, in the near future, coexist in the labour market. The results allow us to advance theoretical knowledge about these generational differences that can be transferred to the field of human resources and incorporated into the decision making about key management practices in the workforce.

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## Appendix 1

- 1 Es importante mantenerse ocupado en el trabajo y no desperdiciar el tiempo.
- 2 Me siento ansioso cuando tengo poco trabajo por hacer.
- 3 Si quiero comprar algo, siempre me espero hasta que pueda pagarlo.
- 4 Me siento satisfecho cuando me paso el día trabajando.
- 5 La vida tendría más sentido si tuviéramos más tiempo de esparcimiento.
- 6 Para que una persona sea realmente exitosa, debe confiar en sí misma.
- 7 Uno siempre debe responsabilizarse por sus acciones.
- 8 Preferiría tener un trabajo que me permitiera más tiempo de esparcimiento.
- 9 El tiempo no debe desperdiciarse, debería usarse eficientemente.
- 10 Aún si tuviera buena solvencia económica, no dejaría de trabajar.
- 11 Me complacen más las cosas por las que he tenido que esperar.
- 12 Programo mi día por adelantado para evitar desperdiciar el tiempo.
- 13 Los días de trabajo arduo son muy satisfactorios.
- 14 Mientras más tiempo pase en una actividad de esparcimiento, mejor me siento.
- 15 Uno siempre debe hacer lo que es correcto y justo.
- 16 Tomaría artículos de mi trabajo si sintiera que no se me paga lo necesario.
- 17 Nada es imposible si trabajas lo suficientemente duro.
- 18 Mientras menos tiempo pase uno trabajando y más tiempo libre tenga, mejor.
- 19 Las cosas que toman tiempo son las que más valen la pena.
- 20 Trabajar duro es la clave para ser exitoso.
- 21 La confianza en uno mismo es la clave para ser exitoso.
- 22 Si uno trabaja muy duro, es probable que uno se construya una buena vida para sí mismo.
- 23 Constantemente busco maneras de usar mi tiempo de manera productiva.
- 24 El trabajo duro lo hace ser a uno mejor persona.
- 25 Uno no debe juzgar, hasta que se hayan escuchado todos los hechos.

- 26 Las personas estarían mejor si dependieran sólo de ellas mismas.
- 27 El trabajo consume mucho de nuestro tiempo, dejando muy poco para relajarse.
- 28 Uno debería vivir su propia vida independiente de los demás, tanto como sea posible.
- 29 Una recompensa lejana es usualmente más satisfactoria que una inmediata.
- 30 Para mi es muy importante estar siempre listo para trabajar.
- 31 Más tiempo de descanso es bueno para la gente.
- 32 Uno debe evitar depender de otras personas, tanto como sea posible.
- 33 Aún si heredara una gran cantidad de dinero, seguiría trabajando en algo.
- 34 No me gusta tener que depender de otras personas.
- 35 Trabajando duro, una persona puede superar cualquier obstáculo que le presente la vida.
- 36 Trato de planear mi trabajo diario para no perder el tiempo.
- 37 Nunca debes decir mentiras acerca de la gente.
- 38 Cualquier problema puede ser superado trabajando duro.
- 39 Tan importante es la forma en la que una persona gasta su tiempo como lo es la manera en que gasta su dinero.
- 40 Aunque ya me pudiera jubilar, seguiría trabajando.
- 41 La vida sin trabajo sería muy aburrida.
- 42 Prefiero ahorrar hasta que me alcance para comprar algo, que comprarlo a crédito.
- 43 El mundo sería un mejor lugar si la gente pasara más tiempo descansando.
- 44 Yo lucho por depender en mi mismo.
- 45 Si trabajas duro, triunfarás.
- 46 Las mejores cosas de la vida son aquellas por las que tienes que esperar.
- 47 Cualquiera que puede y quiere trabajar duro, tiene grandes posibilidades de triunfar.
- 48 Robar está bien, mientras no te atrapen.
- 49 El trabajo que ofrezca mayor tiempo para descansar, es el trabajo ideal para mí.
- 50 Para mi es muy importante tener gran independencia de los demás.
- 51 Es importante tratar a otros como quisiera que lo traten a uno.
- 52 Experimento una sensación de plenitud con el trabajo.
- 53 Una persona siempre debe hacer el mejor trabajo posible.
- 54 Nunca es apropiado tomar algo que no le pertenezca a uno.
- 55 Sólo aquellos que dependen de sí mismos avanzan en la vida.
- 56 Desperdiciar el tiempo es tan malo como desperdiciar el dinero.
- 57 Hay ocasiones en las que robar está justificado.
- 58 La gente debería tener más tiempo libre para descansar.
- 59 Es importante que uno controle su propio destino no siendo dependiente de otros.
- 60 Uno puede alcanzar sus propias metas simplemente trabajando duro.
- 61 La gente debería ser justa al tratar con los demás.
- 62 La única manera de conseguir algo que valga la pena es ahorrando para conseguirlo.
- 63 Las actividades de esparcimiento son de mayor interés que el trabajo.
- 64 Un día de trabajo duro me proporciona un sentimiento de logro.
- 65 El disgusto por el trabajo duro generalmente refleja falta de carácter.