

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

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ABSTRACT: A toxic work environment remains a critical issue in today's workplace, characterized by behaviors such as gossip, verbal abuse, lack of appreciation, and unsupportive leadership. This study investigates how different generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z—cope with toxic workplace dynamics. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were gathered from 96 participants through open-ended questions and analyzed thematically using MAXQDA 2024. To enrich the findings, the study also employed descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Spearman's rho correlation to explore generational patterns and the influence of age on four coping strategies: adaptive, avoidant, emotion-focused, and problem-focused. The results revealed that significant generational differences exist only in the use of avoidant coping strategies, with Generation Z showing a greater tendency to withdraw or avoid toxic situations compared to Generation X and Millennials. In contrast, adaptive, emotion-focused, and problem-focused strategies showed no statistically significant differences between generations, although practical patterns emerged—such as Baby Boomers displaying a higher use of emotion-focused coping. Spearman's correlation further revealed a strong negative relationship between age and avoidant/emotion-focused coping, suggesting that older individuals are less likely to engage in these strategies. These findings suggest that while generational identity plays a role, coping with toxic work environments is also shaped by other factors such as age, experience, and organizational culture. Understanding these dynamics enables organizations to design more targeted and inclusive interventions to promote psychological well-being in the workplace.

KEYWORDS: toxic workplace, generation, coping strategy, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z

I. INTRODUCTION

A toxic work environment is a significant challenge in many modern organizations. Negative behaviors such as intimidation, gossip, lack of appreciation, and unsupportive leadership can create an unhealthy work atmosphere and have a detrimental effect on employee well-being and company productivity (Appelbaum et al., 2007). A toxic work environment can also weaken employee engagement because individuals feel a loss of psychological safety. In such conditions, employees tend to withdraw from work responsibilities and show a decline in performance. The imbalance between high work demands and insufficient support from the work environment further exacerbates this situation, as explained in the Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In 2023, a survey by the American Psychological Association (APA) reported that 19% of 2,515 workers felt their workplace was toxic, 28% of workers admitted to witnessing insults, negative jokes, and derogatory remarks about someone's background at work, 15% experienced discrimination at work, and 31% reported having experienced verbal abuse. In October 2022, the International Labour Organization found that 70.93% of workers in Indonesia had been victims of violence at work. Gallup also noted that 67% of employees in companies with poor culture felt not fully engaged in their work, and 76% reported that poor communication was the main factor causing workplace stress. These research findings indicate that a toxic work environment is a systemic issue that broadly impacts employee well-being, not just an isolated concern. However, responses to toxic conditions at work can vary significantly, depending on factors such as cultural background, work experience, and especially generational differences. From Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, to Generation Z, each generation has different values, expectations, and communication approaches when dealing with conflicts and pressures in the workplace. This can be explained through the Generational Cohort Theory (Mannheim, 1952; Strauss & Howe, 1991), which states that generational characteristics are shaped by specific historical and social experiences shared during their formative years, such as economic crises, technological advancements, or changes in workplace culture. For example, Baby Boomers are often known as a resilient generation that perseveres through difficult situations for the sake of work responsibilities. Baby Boomers are also seen as optimistic, hardworking, and competitive (Lewis, 2013). They strongly believe in their abilities and resist change (Harris, 2015). Meanwhile, Gen X can be described by the following characteristics: they possess critical and creative thinking skills, seek independence in the workforce, and desire a balance between work and life. Gen X tends to be independent and more focused on solving problems practically. Generation X tends to

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

resolve conflicts individually and avoid confrontation (Twengw et al., 2010; Deal et al., 2010). Millennials, on the other hand, are beginning to show courage in speaking up. For example, Millennials are more vocal about expressing discomfort and prioritizing mental health. Millennials value a good work-life balance and seek companies to earn their loyalty. Growing up with technology has equipped them with strong technological understanding. As a result, they are capable of handling multiple tasks when needed (Johnson & Johnson, 2010). Generation Z, the newcomers to the workforce, place greater emphasis on work-life balance and are quick to identify and reject harmful work patterns (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). As the diversity of generations working within an organization increases, it is important to understand how each generation responds to pressure and the dynamics of an unhealthy work environment. Differences in values, communication styles, and perceptions of authority and mental well-being can influence each generation's strategies for dealing with toxic work conditions. Therefore, this study aims to explore and analyze how different generations, from Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, to Generation Z, cope with toxic work environments. By understanding how generations handle toxic work environments, organizations are expected to design more effective policies and managerial approaches to create a healthier and more productive work culture.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is descriptive qualitative research, which involves purposive sampling, open-ended data collection, text or image analysis (e.g., images, information representation in images and tables, and personal interpretation of findings that provide information (Creswell, 2018). This research was conducted through the distribution of open-ended questions online using Google Forms. The respondents in this study were four main generations who have entered the workforce and have experienced or witnessed toxic work environments. The total number of respondents collected was 96, comprising 39.6% Generation Z, 32.3% Millennials, 19.8% Generation X, and 8.3% Baby Boomers, with 53.1% male and 46.9% female. The researcher used MAXQDA 2024 to systematically manage and analyze qualitative data, specifically text data derived from respondents' answers to open-ended questions. Each response was manually coded using a thematic approach. The codes were then grouped into categories representing patterns of findings relevant to the research focus.

III. STATISCAL ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of statistical analyses conducted on data collected from research respondents. The analyses employed a combination of descriptive statistics, correlational techniques, and inferential statistical tests, specifically Spearman's rho correlation and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the central tendencies and variability of coping strategy scores across gender groups, providing a general overview of how male and female respondents engaged in adaptive, avoidant, emotion-focused, and problem-focused coping strategies. To examine the relationships between age and the use of different coping strategies, Spearman's rho correlation was conducted due to the non-parametric nature of the data. This allowed the researchers to identify significant associations between respondents' age and their tendency to apply certain coping mechanisms, such as avoidant or emotion-focused strategies. In addition, ANOVA was employed to test for statistically significant differences in coping strategies across four generational cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Given the research objective of comparing more than two groups, ANOVA was deemed appropriate for detecting generational differences in the frequency and type of coping strategies used. Where significant differences were found, post hoc tests were applied to explore specific intergroup differences in greater detail. These statistical approaches were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of generational and demographic influences on coping strategies in toxic workplace environments. Findings are interpreted both statistically and contextually, with reference to relevant theories and prior studies in organizational psychology and human resource management.

A. Adaptive Coping

One-Way ANOVA Results for Adaptive Coping Across Generations:

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Eta Squared
Between Groups	2.393	3	0.798	2.372	0.0755
Within Groups	30.941	92	0.336		
Total	33.333	95			

Homogeneity of Variance

Levene's Test: $p = 0.0000$

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

Post Hoc Tests

Comparison	Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Hedges' <i>g</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> (Scheffe)
by Boomers vs. Generation X	-0.632	0.000	0.000	2.226	0.0904
Baby Boomers vs. Generation Z	-0.368	0.000	0.000	0.889	0.4499
Baby Boomers vs. Millennials	-0.452	0.000	0.000	1.285	0.2841
Generation X vs. Generation Z	0.263	0.423	0.417	0.869	0.4600
Generation X vs. Millennials	0.180	0.332	0.327	0.117	0.9497
Generation Z vs. Millennials	-0.083	-0.132	-0.131	0.117	0.9497

Result:

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in adaptive coping strategies across generations. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences among the generational groups, $F(3, 92) = 2.37$, $p = .076$, $\eta^2 = .072$. Although the p -value approached the conventional threshold of .05, the variation in mean adaptive coping scores across generations was not substantial enough to be considered statistically significant. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances indicated a violation of the assumption of equal variances, $F(3, 92) = 7.66$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the variances among groups were not equal. This violation should be taken into account when interpreting the ANOVA results. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé test confirmed that there were no statistically significant differences between generations ($p > .05$ for all comparisons). Effect size measures, including Cohen's d and Hedges' g , indicated very small effects, suggesting that practical differences in adaptive coping strategies across generations are minimal or negligible.

B. Avoidant Coping

One-Way ANOVA Results for Avoidant Coping Across Generations :

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Eta Squared
Between Groups	3.716	3	1.239	6.071	0.0008
Within Groups	18.773	92	0.204		
Total	22.490	95			

Homogeneity of Variance

Levene's Test: $p = 0.0000$

Post Hoc Tests

Comparison	Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Hedges' <i>g</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> (Scheffe)
by Boomers vs. Generation X	-0.105	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.9587
Baby Boomers vs. Generation Z	-0.500	0.000	0.000	2.699	0.0503
Baby Boomers vs. Millennials	-0.129	0.000	0.000	0.173	0.9144
Generation X vs. Generation Z	-0.395	-0.749	-0.738	3.224	0.0262
Generation X vs. Millennials	-0.024	-0.072	-0.071	0.011	0.9948
Generation Z vs. Millennials	0.371	0.737	0.729	3.838	0.0122

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

Result :

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in the use of avoidant coping strategies across generations. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference among generational groups, $F(3, 92) = 6.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .165$. This indicates that approximately 16.5% of the variance in avoidant coping strategy usage can be attributed to generational differences, representing a medium to large effect size. However, Levene's test for homogeneity of variances indicated a violation of the assumption of equal variances, $F(3, 92) = 21.65$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the variances among groups were not equal. This violation should be considered when interpreting the ANOVA results. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé test revealed significant differences between specific generational groups:

- Generation X reported significantly less use of avoidant coping strategies compared to Generation Z ($p = .026$).
- Generation Z reported significantly higher use of avoidant coping strategies compared to Millennials ($p = .012$).
- The comparison between Baby Boomers and Generation Z approached significance ($p = .050$), though it did not meet the conventional threshold of $p < .05$.

Effect size measures, including Cohen's d and Hedges' g , supported these findings, with values around -0.74 for the comparison between Generation X and Generation Z, and approximately 0.73 for Generation Z versus Millennials, indicating substantial practical differences.

C. Emotion-Focused Coping

One-Way ANOVA Results for Emotion-Focused Coping Across Generations :

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Eta Squared
Between Groups	1.008	3	0.336	2.509	0.0637
Within Groups	12.325	92	0.134		
Total	13.333	95			

Homogeneity of Variance

Levene's Test: $p = 0.0211$

Post Hoc Tests

Comparison	Difference	Cohen's d	Hedges' g	F	P (Scheffe)
by Boomers vs. Generation X	0.395	1.014	0.983	2.183	0.0954
Baby Boomers vs. Generation Z	0.368	0.970	0.954	2.232	0.0897
Baby Boomers vs. Millennials	0.339	0.828	0.811	1.815	0.1499
Generation X vs. Generation Z	-0.026	-0.079	-0.078	0.022	0.9956
Generation X vs. Millennials	-0.056	-0.159	-0.156	0.092	0.9948
Generation Z vs. Millennials	-0.030	-0.083	-0.082	0.037	0.9929

Result :

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in the use of emotion-focused coping strategies across generations. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences among generational groups, $F(3, 92) = 2.51$, $p = .064$, $\eta^2 = .076$. This indicates that approximately 7.6% of the variance in emotion-focused coping strategy usage can be attributed to generational differences, representing a small to moderate effect size. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances indicated a violation of the assumption of equal variances, $F(3, 92) = 3.40$, $p = .021$, suggesting that the variances among groups were not equal. This violation should be considered when interpreting the ANOVA results. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé test revealed no statistically significant differences between generations ($p > .05$ for all comparisons). However, effect size measures indicated moderate effects in the comparisons between Baby Boomers and Generation X (Cohen's $d = 1.014$) and between Baby Boomers and Generation Z (Cohen's $d = 0.970$), suggesting potential practical differences despite the lack of statistical significance.

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

D. Problem-Focused Coping

One-Way ANOVA Results for Problem-Focused Coping Across Generations :

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Eta Squared
Between Groups	0.393	3	0.131	0.575	0.6326
Within Groups	20.940	92	0.228		
Total	21.333	95			

Homogeneity of Variance

Levene's Test: $p = 0.0212$

Post Hoc Tests

Comparison	Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Hedges' <i>g</i>	F	P (Scheffe)
by Boomers vs. Generation X	0.164	0.367	0.355	0.223	0.8802
Baby Boomers vs. Generation Z	0.033	0.068	0.066	0.010	0.9985
Baby Boomers vs. Millennials	-0.012	-0.024	-0.024	0.001	0.9999
Generation X vs. Generation Z	-0.132	-0.285	-0.281	0.321	0.8100
Generation X vs. Millennials	-0.177	-0.377	-0.371	0.538	0.9948
Generation Z vs. Millennials	-0.045	-0.092	-0.091	0.051	0.9949

Result :

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in the use of problem-focused coping strategies across generations. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences among generational groups, $F(3, 92) = 0.58$, $p = .633$, $\eta^2 = .018$. This indicates that approximately 1.8% of the variance in problem-focused coping strategy usage can be attributed to generational differences, representing a very small or negligible effect size. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances indicated a violation of the assumption of equal variances, $F(3, 92) = 3.39$, $p = .021$, suggesting that the variances among groups were not equal. This violation should be considered when interpreting the ANOVA results. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé test revealed no statistically significant differences between generations ($p > .05$ for all comparisons). Effect size measures, including Cohen's *d* and Hedges' *g*, were very small, indicating minimal practical differences in the use of problem-focused coping strategies across generations.

E. Descriptive Statistics for Coping Strategies by Gender

F. Coping Strategy	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Missing	Missing (%)
Adaptive/Constructive Coping	96	0.42	0.589	0	0.00
Constructive Coping (Male)	45	0.36	0.638	0	0.00
Constructive Coping (Female)	51	0.47	0.537	0	0.00
Avoidant/Passive Coping	96	0.26	0.484	0	0.00
Avoidant/Passive Coping (Male)	45	0.22	0.512	0	0.00
Avoidant/Passive Coping (Female)	51	0.29	0.456	0	0.00
Emotion-Focused Coping	96	0.17	0.373	0	0.00
Emotion-Focused Coping (Male)	45	0.22	0.416	0	0.00
Emotion-Focused Coping (Female)	51	0.12	0.322	0	0.00
Problem-Focused Coping	96	0.33	0.471	0	0.00
Problem-Focused Coping (Male)	45	0.35	0.463	0	0.00
Problem-Focused Coping (Female)	51	0.29	0.478	0	0.00

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

Result :

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for coping strategies employed by respondents, categorized by gender. Overall, the mean score for Adaptive/Constructive Coping was 0.42 (SD = 0.59) across the entire sample. Men reported a mean of 0.36 (SD = 0.64), whereas women reported a slightly higher mean of 0.47 (SD = 0.54), suggesting that women may engage in adaptive coping strategies marginally more than men. For Avoidant/Passive Coping, the total sample had a mean of 0.26 (SD = 0.48). Men reported a mean of 0.22 (SD = 0.51), while women reported a mean of 0.29 (SD = 0.46), indicating a slight tendency for women to utilize avoidant coping strategies more than men. Regarding Emotion-Focused Coping, the overall mean was 0.17 (SD = 0.37). Men had a higher mean score of 0.22 (SD = 0.42) compared to women, who had a mean of 0.12 (SD = 0.32), suggesting that men may employ emotion-focused coping strategies more frequently than women in workplace stress contexts. In terms of Problem-Focused Coping, the total sample mean was 0.33 (SD = 0.47). Men reported a mean of 0.35 (SD = 0.46), slightly higher than women, who reported a mean of 0.29 (SD = 0.48), indicating a marginally greater use of problem-solving approaches among men.

F. Spearman's Rho Correlation Between Age and Coping Strategies

Coping Strategy	Age	Adaptive/Constructive Coping	Avoidant/Passive Coping	Emotion-Focused Coping	Problem-Focused Coping
Age		0.101 (p = 0.1630)	-0.411 (p = 0.0000)	0.102 (p = 0.1624)	-0.019 (p = 0.4279)
Adaptive/Constructive Coping	0.101		-0.146 (p = 0.0776)	-0.343 (p = 0.0003)	-0.412 (p = 0.0000)
Avoidant/Passive Coping	-0.411	-0.146 (p = 0.0776)		-0.250 (p = 0.0070)	0.143 (p = 0.0822)
Emotion-Focused Coping	0.102	-0.343 (p = 0.0003)	-0.250 (p = 0.0070)		-0.198 (p = 0.0268)
Problem-Focused Coping	-0.019	-0.412 (p = 0.0000)	-0.143 (p = 0.0822)	-0.198 (p = 0.0268)	

Result :

Table 2 presents the results of Spearman's rank-order correlation analyses examining the relationships between age and various coping strategies among respondents. No significant correlation was found between age and Adaptive/Constructive Coping ($\rho = 0.101$, $p = .1630$), indicating that age does not significantly influence the use of adaptive coping strategies in the workplace. However, a significant negative correlation was observed between age and Avoidant/Passive Coping ($\rho = -0.411$, $p < .001$), suggesting that older individuals are less likely to employ avoidant coping strategies. This finding implies that as individuals age, they tend to engage less in avoidance or withdrawal behaviors when facing workplace stressors. Similarly, Emotion-Focused Coping demonstrated a significant negative correlation with age ($\rho = -0.343$, $p < .001$), indicating that older respondents are less inclined to use emotion-focused approaches to manage workplace stress or conflict. In contrast, Problem-Focused Coping showed a very weak and non-significant negative correlation with age ($\rho = -0.019$, $p = .4279$), suggesting no clear relationship between age and the use of problem-solving strategies in the workplace.

IV. DISCUSSION

• Adaptive Coping

Based on the results of the ANOVA for adaptive coping, although there was a trend toward differences in scores across generations, these differences were not statistically significant. This suggests that Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Z, and Millennials tend to employ relatively similar adaptive coping patterns when facing toxic workplace situations. However, Levene's test revealing heterogeneous variances indicates that there is variability in coping strategies among generations, which may reflect differing levels of experience or context within each group. Since conventional ANOVA assumes homogeneity of variances, this violation suggests that the ANOVA results should be interpreted with caution. The lack of significant differences in post hoc tests between any generational pairings, combined with small effect sizes, further supports the conclusion that intergenerational differences in adaptive coping strategies are minimal in practice and may not be clinically or socially meaningful. Implicitly, these findings suggest that generation is not a primary predictor of how employees adopt adaptive coping strategies in toxic workplace contexts. Other factors—such as social support, organizational culture, or individual characteristics—likely play a more dominant role.

• Avoidant Coping

A one-way ANOVA followed by post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant generational differences in avoidant coping strategies in toxic workplace environments. Specifically, Generation Z used avoidant coping significantly more often than Generation X and Millennials. A key finding was that Generation Z exhibited higher levels of avoidant coping than Generation X ($p = .026$) and Millennials ($p = .012$). Additionally, the comparison between Baby Boomers and Generation Z approached significance ($p = .050$), although it did not meet the conventional threshold of $p < .05$. Levene's test indicated a violation of

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

homogeneity of variances, suggesting that variability in avoidant coping differed across generations. These differences in variance may reflect generational distinctions in workplace experience, stress perception, or psychological resources. These findings align with existing literature noting that younger workers—particularly Generation Z—are more prone to maladaptive coping behaviors like avoidance under workplace stress. As digital natives, Generation Z often faces blurred boundaries between personal life and work, leading to increased pressure and greater reliance on avoidant strategies. In contrast, Generation X displayed comparatively lower use of avoidance, which may be attributable to greater work experience and adaptive resilience. Taken together, the results suggest that Generation Z—being younger and newer to the workforce—is more likely to engage in avoidant coping in toxic workplace conditions than other generational cohorts. This propensity toward avoidance may have long-term negative effects on psychological well-being and job performance.

- **Emotion-Focused Coping**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate differences in emotion-focused coping across generations. Although some trends were observed, the results did not reach statistical significance, $F(3, 92) = 2.51$, $p = .064$, $\eta^2 = .076$, suggesting that Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Z, and Millennials employ emotion-focused coping strategies in relatively similar ways when managing workplace stress. However, Levene's test indicated unequal variances ($F(3, 92) = 3.40$, $p = .021$), signifying that the variability of emotion-focused coping differed across generational groups—possibly due to differences in experience or context. Although ANOVA did not identify statistically significant differences, this variance heterogeneity suggests that practical differences may exist, particularly with older cohorts such as Baby Boomers who tended to display more pronounced emotion-focused coping responses. Effect size estimates for some comparisons were moderate (e.g., Cohen's $d = 1.014$ for Baby Boomers vs. Generation X; $d = 0.970$ for Baby Boomers vs. Generation Z), indicating that non-generational factors—such as life experience, job context, or organizational culture—may exert a stronger influence on emotion-focused coping than generational identity alone. Consistent with existing research suggesting that emotion-focused coping varies more within individuals than across age cohorts, these results imply that factors other than generation likely play a more substantial role in how individuals respond emotionally to toxic work environments.

- **Problem-Focused Coping**

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in the use of problem-focused coping strategies across generational cohorts. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences among generations, $F(3, 92) = 0.58$, $p = .633$, $\eta^2 = .018$, indicating that Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Z, and Millennials employ problem-focused coping in similar ways within toxic workplace contexts. However, Levene's test for homogeneity of variances indicated a violation of the assumption of equal variances ($F(3, 92) = 3.39$, $p = .021$), suggesting that the variability in problem-focused coping across generations was not uniform. Despite this, the combination of non-significant group differences and very small effect size suggests that all generational groups used problem-focused coping almost equivalently. These results imply that the use of problem-focused coping is likely influenced more by factors such as job role, work experience, or organizational culture rather than by generational membership. Therefore, even though variability exists, generational differences alone are not strong predictors of how individuals address workplace problems.

- **Descriptive**

A review of descriptive statistics indicated that although there were differences in coping strategy usage between men and women, these differences were not pronounced. Women reported slightly higher use of Adaptive/Constructive Coping than men, suggesting they may be more inclined to apply constructive approaches to manage workplace stress. For Avoidant/Passive Coping, women also had a marginally higher mean score, indicating a slight preference for avoidance or withdrawal under stress compared to men. Conversely, Emotion-Focused Coping showed that men were somewhat more likely to adopt this strategy than women, which may suggest a greater tendency among men to express emotions or rely on emotional processing during stress. Similarly, men scored slightly higher on Problem-Focused Coping, hinting that they may favor practical, solution-oriented methods. These modest gender differences may reflect differing social roles or gender-related characteristics influencing stress response styles. However, overall, both genders displayed similar patterns in coping strategy usage, suggesting that while gender might influence specific strategies, other factors—such as work experience, individual traits, or organizational culture—likely play a more substantial role in how people cope with workplace stress.

- **Spearman's Rho Correlation**

Based on the results of the Spearman's rho correlation analyses, age was found to significantly influence certain coping strategies, specifically Avoidant/Passive Coping and Emotion-Focused Coping. A strong negative correlation between age and Avoidant/Passive Coping suggests that older individuals are less likely to avoid or withdraw from high-stress workplace scenarios. In contrast, younger individuals tend to engage in these strategies more frequently, possibly due to less experience or lower resilience ($\rho = -.411$, $p < .001$). Similarly, a significant negative correlation was observed between age and Emotion-Focused Coping,

How Different Generation Handle the Toxic Workplace

indicating that older employees may prefer more rational coping methods and rely less on emotion-based approaches—a pattern likely related to life experience and improved stress regulation skills ($\rho = -.343$, $p < .001$). In contrast, no statistically significant relationship was identified between age and Problem-Focused Coping ($\rho = -.019$, $p = .428$), suggesting that employing problem-solving strategies appears age-neutral and may instead depend on factors such as job role or organizational context. Overall, these findings indicate that age plays a meaningful role in determining coping strategy usage. Younger generations tend to rely more on Avoidant/Passive and Emotion-Focused Coping, while older individuals demonstrate a shift toward other, possibly more adaptive, coping strategies. This insight can inform organizational stress management programs tailored to age-related coping preferences. These findings are consistent with previous theoretical models suggesting age-related shifts in coping styles, with younger adults favoring emotional and avoidant approaches and older adults moving toward problem-focused strategies

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to understand how different generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z—cope with toxic work environments through the coping strategies they use. Based on the analysis results, it was found that there are significant differences between generations only in avoidant coping strategies, where Generation Z is more likely to avoid conflict or pressure at work compared to Generation X and Millennials. This suggests a tendency among Generation Z to avoid conflict as a response to discomfort, which may be influenced by their younger age, limited work experience, or low psychological safety in the workplace. Meanwhile, adaptive coping, emotion-focused coping, and problem-focused coping strategies did not show statistically significant differences across generations. However, there are notable practical differences, particularly in emotion-focused coping, where Baby Boomers tend to rely more on emotional approaches when facing workplace stress. This reflects that long-standing life experiences and work values still influence how they react to stressful situations. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that while each generation has its own distinct characteristics, differences in coping strategies are not always clear-cut. Other factors such as work experience, organizational culture, and social support appear to play a more dominant role in shaping how individuals manage toxic work environments. Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand that stress management cannot be based solely on generational differences.

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