# Conscientiousness and Resilience in Millennial and Generation-Z Employees

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## Abstract

Conscientiousness and Resilience are two vital traits for the efficient and effective functioning as well as for the growth and productivity of an employee in an organisational setting. Thus, the following study attempts to throw light on the interplay of these two variables that enable employees to thrive in today's work environment; thereby providing an impetus for other studies happening in the field of industrial psychology that venture into the rapidly changing dynamics of the modern-day work arena; seeking to explore the new heights of organisational excellence. The study was conducted on a population sample of 200 employees- 100 from Millennial and 100 from Conscientiousness from the organised sector, attempting to study the differences in levels of Conscientiousness and Resilience, as well their level of correlation and influence. The study found that there was no significant difference in the levels of conscientiousness among millennial and Gen-Z employees. It also proved that there was a significant difference in levels of resilience among Millennial and Gen-Z employees. The study also gave evidence for a significant correlation between the two variables. It also proved that there was a significant influence of Conscientiousness on Resilience among Millennial and Gen-Z employees.

**Keywords:** Conscientiousness, Resilience, Millennials, Generation-Z, Employees

## 1. Introduction

In the fast-evolving landscape of the contemporary workplace, the dynamics of employee characteristics and their impact on professional success have become subjects of critical inquiry. As the torchbearers of the digital age, Millennials and Generation Z individuals are at the forefront of this transformation. Born between the early 1980s and mid-2010s, these generations have been shaped by distinct socio-cultural experiences, technological advancements, and economic realities. Within this context, two key traits that hold paramount significance in the realm of occupational achievement are conscientiousness and resilience.

Conscientiousness and Resilience are two variables that deserve much attention and detailed research, with reference to the rapidly changing global political, economic, industrial and ecological scenarios. In the face of unexpected turbulence and chaotic instances such as the COVID-19 pandemic, resilience holds the key to attain progress and move forward. At a time when many tend to be unwilling to take up commitments and shoulder responsibilities with a supreme sense of self-discipline and ethics, it is of paramount importance to study about the level of conscientiousness and how it can be improved to enhance the ethical approach of individuals. Individuals with higher levels of resilience and conscientiousness can

exhibit higher levels of discipline, order, commitment and productivity, especially in an organizational setting.

Resilience is defined (by the American Psychological Association) as 'the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional and behavioural flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. Conscientiousness was defined by Roberts, B.W et al. (2009), as 'the propensity to follow socially prescribed norms for impulse control, to be goal directed, planful, able to delay gratification and to follow norms and rules'. It encompasses traits such as diligence, organization, and dependability, all of which play a pivotal role in sustaining high levels of job performance and contributing to a positive work environment.

Generational cohorts provide researchers an efficient mechanism to study the transformations in perceptions and perspectives over time. They generate a way to understand how various formative experiences, which includes world events and technological, economic and social shifts and advancements, interact with the life-cycle and aging process to carve individuals' views of the world around them (Dimock, 2019). Millennial (also known as Generation Y or Gen Y) is a term used to describe a person belonging to the demographic group of those born between 1981 and 1996 (Chan, C.K.Y., et al., 2023). Generation Z (also known as Gen Z) is a term used to describe a person belonging to the demographic group of those born between 1997 and 2012 (Chan, C.K.Y., et al., 2023). An employee can be defined as a person employed by another person or by an organization for wages or salary.

Millennials and Gen Z make up a large part of today's global work force, each group having their own unique skills and characteristics. We can distinguish their work habits, communication and things that make them happy at work and then see what each generation can bring and how organizations can benefit from them.

In the dynamic landscape of the contemporary workforce, understanding the psychological attributes that contribute to professional success is paramount. This research delves into the intricate interplay of conscientiousness and resilience among Millennial and Generation-Z employees, exploring how these traits shape their attitudes, behaviours, and overall workplace performance. As these two generations navigate an evolving professional landscape, uncovering the nuanced connections between conscientiousness and resilience offers valuable insights for employers, policymakers, and educators alike. Through a comprehensive examination, this paper aims to illuminate the impact of these traits on career trajectories, job satisfaction, and adaptive responses to challenges, providing a foundation for fostering a resilient and conscientious workforce in the years to come.

**Need For the Study**:

India has one of the largest millennial populations (34%), together with Gen Z, they are estimated to comprise 50 % of India's population by the year 2030. In an organizational setting, learning more about the differences and similarities between millennial and Gen-Z employees, and especially their levels of conscientiousness and resilience can help to analyse their approach to work, and can help employers and organizations make better decisions in recruiting, retaining and managing employees from these two demographics. This research seeks to delve into the nuanced relationship between conscientiousness and resilience among Millennials and Generation Z employees, with the aim of unravelling how these traits converge to influence their workplace experiences, job satisfaction, and career progression. By shedding light on this interplay, we hope to not only enhance our understanding of these dynamic generations but

also provide valuable insights for employers, HR practitioners, and career development professionals seeking to optimize the potential of their workforce in an ever-changing professional landscape.

## 2. Review Of Literature

Through the work titled Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins, the stark differences in the ways in which Millennial and Gen-Z individuals differ from each other depending on the number of socio-cultural transformations, technological advancements, and environmental changes was highlighted (Dimock, 2019). The following study also stems from the urge to delve deeper into the complexities and also to identify the similarities that can be observed between members of the Millennial as well as the Gen-Z cohorts.

To dive deeper into the relations between the different attributes of personality as well the emotional intelligence of the Millennial cohort, Ordun, G., et al. (2016) conducted a study in which 237 undergraduate students in Turkey were employed. Results proved that there was a seemingly significant correlation between use of emotion as well as conscientiousness amongst Millennials.

In his work, Harari T. T. E., et al. (2023) points out the difference in the levels of Resilience amongst members of the Millennial cohort and the Gen-Z cohort, in terms of coping with a global crisis (COVID-19), specifically regarding resilience in times of crisis, personal values and attitudes during that time. Data were gathered in a cross-sectional study; 958 participants participated.

The findings of a correlation study of the Big Five personality traits with resilience and life satisfaction in 132 undergraduate and postgraduate students, conducted by Mansi Singh and Sanjay Singh (2022) suggest that there is a positive correlation between levels of conscientiousness and resilience. Although this study provides information about the relationship between resilience and all five traits in college students, it did not attempt to assess the levels of the same variables in employees or people beyond the age of 18-25 years.

In a study conducted by Oddgeir Friberg et al. (2006), 482 applicants for the military college were administered with psychometric tools to assess resilience (RSA), personality factors (Big 5 PF), cognitive abilities (Raven's Advanced Matrices) and social skills (TSIS). The results obtained proved that there was positive correlation between levels of resilience (RSA- structured style) and conscientiousness.

The moderating effects of the Big Five personality trait of conscientiousness on mentoring and career resilience relationship in the Indian context were empirically examined in a study conducted by Ridhi Arora and Santosh Rangnekar (2016). The data were collected from 254 participants employed in public and private sector organizations in North India. Consistent with expectations, the authors found that the relationship between both categories of mentoring (psychosocial and career mentoring) and career resilience is stronger for the managers who score high on conscientiousness in contrast to those with low scores on this factor.

The goal of a study done by María de las Olas Palma-García et al. (2017) was to explore the relationship between personality characteristics and the development of resilience in the context of social work. 479 students and professional social workers took part in this study. The results confirmed the influence and predictive ability of personality traits on the resilience of students and social workers.

Slight differences were observed between the personality traits Neuroticism and Conscientiousness amongst generations including both Millennials as well as Gen-Z in a study conducted by L Italia (2020) that studied the values in the workforce; exploring the similarities and differences between women from different generations.

Gen-Z was found to be less resilient than other generations in a study done by Konstantinou, G., et al. (2023) that aimed at studying how depression differs amongst people from different generations. The study suggested that resilience manifested quite disparately across age groups, thus shedding light on the possibility that older adults were more likely to exhibit a greater level of resilience, in comparison to younger adults which could be considered to be caused by their aggregate experiences of life as well as their essential support networks.

A meta-analysis conducted by Oshio, A, et al. (2018) integrated a number of studies scrutinizing the relationships between the Big Five Personality traits and Resilience. It worked towards probing how the relationships differ depending upon the two types of psychological resilience and resiliency as well as ego-resiliency. Around 30 research studies with a net sample size of 15,609 which suited the inclusion criteria to be used for this particular review. The findings of this meta-analysis indicated that the population correlation coefficients with Resilience were above 0.40 for Conscientiousness.

Campbell-Sills, et al. (2006) conducted a study on a sample of 132 college students in San Diego University, California, USA, that attempted to shed light on the relationship between resilience, personality, coping, and psychiatric symptoms in young adults. The psychometric tools used for the study included the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale, NEO Five-Factor Inventory, Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, as well as the Brief Symptom Inventory. It was observed that there was a significant correlation found to exist between levels of resilience and conscientiousness among the participants of the study.

**Research Gap**:

Though there are many studies that have attempted to shed light on these variables individually, it could be observed that there is a significant lack of research in understanding the interplay of these two variables. There are also very less studies that have attempted to compare and contrast the levels of both these variables amongst millennial as well as Gen-Z individuals. Another gap in knowledge found to exist in the studies previously done in this field is how both conscientiousness and resilience impact the lives of employees working in organisations. Thus, this particular study would be a humble attempt to venture into these unexplored trails, uncover unknown possibilities and provide new insights regarding the aforementioned areas of research.

## 3. Method

**Research design:**

In this study, a descriptive research design is used. Questionnaires on conscientiousness and resilience will be circulated online considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria and a total sample of 200 will be collected (100 from millennials and 100 from Generation-Z).

**Research problem:**

To understand the factors of conscientiousness and resilience in millennials and Generation-Z employees.

**Statistical Technique:**

The statistical techniques used for the study will be inferential and descriptive statistics. Measures of descriptive statistics used will be mean and standard deviation. Measures of inferential statistics used will be correlation, linear regression, and independent t-test using SPSS software.

**Variables:**

- Conscientiousness: It can be characterised as the inclination to adhere to rules and conventions, be goal-directed and methodical, be able to postpone satisfaction, and obey socially imposed norms for

impulse control.

- Resilience: It is the practice of successfully adjusting to demanding or tough life circumstances, particularly by exhibiting mental, emotional, and behavioural flexibility and adjusting to both internal and external expectations.

**Demographic variables:**

- Millennial is a term used to describe an individual who falls into the age group of 43 to 28 years; those born in the years 1981–1996, inclusive.
- Gen Z refers to individuals who fall under the age group of 27 to 12; those born between 1997 and 2012.

**Sampling Technique:**

Convenient sampling technique was chosen for this study considering the cost effectiveness and easy access to potential participants chosen from residents of the city of Bengaluru, Karnataka.

**Research objectives:**

- To compare the levels of conscientiousness in millennial and Gen-Z employees.
- To compare the levels of resilience in millennial and Gen-Z employees.
- To study the influence of conscientiousness on resilience in millennial employees.
- To study the influence of conscientiousness on resilience in Gen-Z employees.

**Hypotheses:**

- H01: There is no significant difference in levels of conscientiousness between millennial and Gen-Z employees.
- H02: There is no significant difference in levels of resilience between millennial and Gen-Z employees.
- H03: There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and resilience among millennial and Gen-Z employees.
- H04: There is no significant influence of conscientiousness on resilience among millennial and Gen-Z employees.

**Population Sample:**

The study was conducted on a sample of 100 millennials and 100 Gen-Z employees, who work full-time or part-time in organisations.

**Inclusion criteria:**

- For millennials: Individuals born from 1981 to 1996, belonging to any socio-cultural background or financial status, residing in India, not diagnosed with any psychological disorders.
- For Generation-Z: Individuals born from 1997 to 2012, belonging to any socio-cultural background or financial status, residing in India, not diagnosed with any psychological disorders.

**Exclusion criteria:**

Employees without a minimum work experience of 6 months.

**Tools used for study:**

- To assess level of Conscientiousness: Unfolding Five Factor Model (UFFM-I), a 20-item scale developed by Carter et al. (2014). This 20-item measure looks at the orderliness and industriousness facets of conscientiousness and uses a 6-point scale which ranges from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measure was designed to address the issues that Carter et al. (2014) had with

how other personality tests were scored. Instead of the typical dominance model of measurement the UFFM-I Conscientiousness Scale uses an ideal point mode.

- To assess level of Resilience: Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ), a 12-item self-report measure of psychological resilience. Each respective item is measured through a 5-Likert scale point system. The scoring scheme is between 1 and 5, with 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. It was designed to assess the ability of individuals to cope with stress and adversity in their lives. The NMQ has been extensively tested and is considered to be a reliable and valid assessment tool (Cronbach's alpha=. 800).

**Statistical Analysis:**

The statistical techniques used for the study were inferential and descriptive statistics. Measures of descriptive statistics used are mean and standard deviation. Measures of inferential statistics used are correlation and linear regression using SPSS software.

**Ethical considerations:**

The following ethical considerations have been taken into account:

- Informed Consent: Participants have been informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and their rights as participants. All participants have been provided with an informed consent form, which outlines the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- Confidentiality and Privacy: Participants' confidentiality and privacy have been protected. All data collected have been kept anonymous and confidential, and the data has been stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.
- Risk Assessment: The study has not posed any physical or psychological harm to the participants. There were no identified risks associated with this study.
- Fair Selection of Participants: Participants have been selected fairly without any bias or discrimination based on any characteristic such as race, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
- Debriefing: At the end of the study, participants have been debriefed and provided information about the purpose of the study and their contributions to the research.

## 4. Results and Discussion

**Table 1 Descriptive statistics of demographic details**

| Variables | N | Minimum Statistics | Maximum Statistics | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 100 | 1 | 2 | 1.57 | .497 |
| Gender | 100 | 1 | 3 | 1.18 | .382 |

**Table 2 Difference between levels of conscientiousness between millennial and Gen-Z employees**

| Variables | Millennials | | Gen-Z | | Z | Sig. value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | |
| **Conscientiousness** | 61.51 | 9.64 | 62.45 | 7.17 | -1.01 | **.311** |

It can be inferred from Table 2 that the mean value as well as the standard deviation of the level of Conscientiousness of Millennial employees are 61.51 and 9.64, as well as that of the Gen-Z employees are 62.45 and 7.17 respectively. It can also be inferred that the Z value as well as the Significance value are -1.01 and .311 respectively, which is greater than 0.05, therefore there is no significant difference in

the levels of conscientiousness among millennial and Gen-Z employees. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in levels of conscientiousness between millennial and Gen-Z employees, is accepted.

**Table 3 Difference between levels of resilience between millennial and Gen-Z employees**

| Variables | Millennials | | Gen-Z | | Z | Sig. value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **M** | **SD** | **M** | **SD** | | |
| **Resilience** | 41.55 | 5.32 | 43.96 | 5.21 | -3.58 | **.000** |

It can be inferred from Table 3 that the mean value as well as the standard deviation of the level of Resilience of Millennial employees are 41.55 and 5.32, as well as that of the Gen-Z employees are 43.96 and 5.21 respectively.  It can also be inferred that the Z value as well as the Significance value are -3.58 and .000 respectively, which is less than 0.05, therefore there is a significant difference in levels of resilience among Millennial and Gen-Z employees. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in levels of resilience between millennial and Gen-Z employees is rejected.

**Table 4 Correlation between Conscientiousness and Resilience.**

| Variables | N | M | SD | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conscientiousness | 200 | 61.98 | 8.49 | - | |
| Resilience | 200 | 42.75 | 5.39 | .334** | - |

**$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

It can be inferred from Table 4 that the mean and the standard deviation values of Conscientiousness are 61.98 and 8.49, as well as that of Resilience are 42.75 and 5.39 respectively.  It can also be inferred that the correlation coefficient is .334, and the significant value is 0.000, which is less than 0.01. Therefore, there was a significant correlation found between the two variables, and thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and resilience among millennial and Gen-Z employees is rejected.

**Table 5 Regression Table Predicting Resilience with Conscientiousness**

| Variable | R | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Resilience** | .302 | .091 | .087 | 19.922 | **.000** |
| **Conscientiousness (Constant)** | | | | | |

It can be inferred from Table 5 that, the R, $R^2$, and $\Delta R^2$ values are .302, .091, and .087 respectively, and also the F and p values were found to be 19.92 and .000 respectively which is less than 0.01. Therefore, there is a significant influence of Conscientiousness on Resilience among Millennial and Gen-Z employees. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of conscientiousness on resilience among millennial and Gen-Z employees is rejected.

**Discussion:**

This study aimed to examine the levels of conscientiousness and resilience amongst Millennial as well as Gen-Z employees and to study the relationship between the variables in both the groups, and also to study

the influence of Conscientiousness on Resilience.

The study found that there was no significant difference in levels of conscientiousness between millennial and Gen-Z employees. This is not in accordance with the findings of certain studies that were previously done in this field, such as that of L. Italia (2020) whose study proved that there were slight differences in the levels of conscientiousness amongst Millennial and Gen-Z populations.

It was also found that there was a significant difference in levels of resilience among Millennial and Gen-Z employees. However, these observations were not found to be in accordance with the findings of many other researchers who have studied these paradigms in the past, including the study conducted by Konstantinou, G. et al. (2023) which stated that Gen-Z individuals were found to have lesser levels of resilience in comparison with their older counterparts. It was also identified that there was a significant correlation found between the two variables, and thus, it could be understood that there was a significant relationship between conscientiousness and resilience among millennial and Gen-Z employees. This is in accordance with the findings of a study done by Campbell-Sills L, et al. (2006), which suggested that there was a significant correlation found to exist between levels of resilience and conscientiousness among the participants of the study.

Another key finding of this study was that there was no significant influence of Conscientiousness on Resilience to be found among Millennial and Gen-Z employees. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of conscientiousness on resilience among millennial and Gen-Z employees is rejected.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

### Summary

The study compared 100 millennial and 100 Generation-Z employees to gauge their conscientiousness and resilience using the Unfolding Five Factor Model (UFFM-I) and the Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ) respectively. It aimed to identify any relationship between the two traits and assess the impact of conscientiousness on resilience. Results showed no significant difference in conscientiousness levels between the two groups but did reveal a significant difference in resilience levels. Additionally, a significant correlation between conscientiousness and resilience was found, indicating conscientiousness's influence on resilience among both millennial and Gen-Z employees.

### Conclusion:

This was a comparative study aiming to understand the perception of conscientiousness and resilience in 100 millennial and 100 Generation-Z employees, by administering the Unfolding Five Factor Model (UFFM-I) to assess the level of conscientiousness and Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ) to assess the level of resilience. This research attempted to discover if there was any significant relationship between the two. It also looked into the influence of conscientiousness on resilience amongst the employees. The study found that there was no significant difference in the levels of conscientiousness among millennial and Gen-Z employees. It also proved that there was a significant difference in levels of resilience among Millennial and Gen-Z employees. The study also gave evidence for a significant correlation between the two variables. It also proved that there was a significant influence of Conscientiousness on Resilience among Millennial and Gen-Z employees.

**Implications:**

The results of this study propose the following implications, such as:

- It can help in supporting organizational needs. By identifying individuals with strong discipline, work ethics, and resilience, organizations can make informed decisions in candidate selection, ensuring they recruit employees who are better equipped to handle stress and contribute positively to the workplace. Additionally, this insight enables targeted training programs to enhance these traits in employees who may initially have lower levels, fostering their growth and development within the organization's human resources.

- Another implication of this study is its contribution to the advancing research in psychology. This research serves as a valuable foundation for future studies within developmental, industrial, and organizational psychology.

- By investigating the dynamics of resilience and conscientiousness, researchers can deepen their understanding of how these traits impact workplace performance, employee well-being, and organizational outcomes. This, in turn, can lead to the development of more effective interventions, strategies, and best practices for promoting resilience and conscientiousness in various professional settings.

**Limitations:**

Some of the limitations of this study include the following:

- The prevalent gender disparity in Conscientiousness and Resilience. This research was unable to discern variations in levels of conscientiousness and resilience across different genders, highlighting a gap in understanding how these traits manifest differently among men and women or other gender identities.

- Another limitation of this study lies in its lack of Generalizability. The findings from this study lack applicability beyond the specific context of employees in Bengaluru, limiting the extent to which they can be extrapolated to broader populations or different geographical regions.

- A major drawback which can be observed in this study include the unidentified external factors. This study failed to identify any additional external variables that might influence the relationship between conscientiousness and resilience, suggesting a need for further exploration into potential mediating factors that could impact these traits.

- Another limitation of this research study is its insufficient sample size as well as its Duration Constraints. The study suffered from a relatively small sample size compared to other research in the field, potentially compromising the reliability and robustness of the findings. Conducting the study on a larger and more diverse population over an extended period could have enhanced the validity of the results by providing greater statistical power and allowing for the detection of more subtle trends or patterns.

**Suggestions for future research:**

- A more in-depth examination could focus on how variables differ within Generation X, born post-1960, shedding light on unique traits or challenges faced by this age cohort compared to others.

- Another scope for future research would be to examine the impact of external Factors. Researchers might investigate the influence of additional variables, like social media or artificial intelligence usage, on conscientiousness and resilience levels, potentially uncovering nuanced interactions and effects.

- Gender disparities in Traits is another important aspect to be studied in this field of research. Future investigations could delve into how levels of conscientiousness and resilience vary between genders, providing insight into potential disparities and contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of these traits across diverse populations.

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