

# Generational Differences in Perception of Affective Climate Antecedents

Waratta Authayarat, Hiroyuki Umemuro

**Abstract**—This study aims to explore the differences and similarities in perceptions of affective climate antecedents at the workplace (intimacy, flexibility, employment stability, and team) among Japanese and Thai Generations X and Y. The samples in this study were Thai and Japanese workers who completed a work environment questionnaire and provided demographic information. Generational differences in perceptions (beliefs) of what factors contribute to affective climate were investigated using *t*-test analysis. Mean scores for each antecedent were ranked to determine how each generation in each group prioritized the importance of all affective climate antecedents. Japanese Generation Y perceived the importance of employment stability for affective climate of their workplaces to be significantly higher than did Japanese Generation X. Thai Generation Y considered flexibility with a higher priority than did Thai Generation X. Intimacy was perceived as highly important across generations and countries in regard to affective climate. Results suggest that managers should design workplaces for a mixture of diverse generations, resulting in a better affective climate. Differences in the importance of antecedents for affective climate among Generations X and Y in two countries were clarified. In addition, different preferences regarding work environment across Japanese Generations X and Y and Thai Generations X and Y were discussed.

**Keywords**—Affective Climate, Employee, Generational Differences, Workplace

## I. INTRODUCTION

THERE is a growing belief in academia that affect at workplaces can influence employee performance [1], [2] work teams [3], [4] and organizations [5], [6]. Employees with positive affect are likely to perform better on decision-making tasks [1], [2], search for more information and choices [7], and request more data if there is an insufficient amount to make decisions [1], [2]. Positive affect tends to broaden the scope of cognition and action [8]. Academic studies have proposed the affective climate concept, defined as shared affective experiences in the workplace (e.g. [9], [10]) and evidence of the effects of an individual's emotions on others (e.g. [6], [11]). Overall, the consequences of affective experiences have been widely reported and accepted, though causes of shared affective experiences at work have been less investigated [12].

Individual differences may influence satisfaction levels at work, resulting in variations in perception and valuation of the work environment [13]. Preferences in the work environment are influenced more by generational differences than by age and maturation [14]. Scholars report that generational blending can cause problems in the workplace because of differences in work values, worldviews, and ways of working, thinking or talking between generations. Although combining employees from different generations can be beneficial in regard to creativity [15], it also increases preferences or traits that differentiate employees' emotions towards work and what they desire from work [16].

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When members from various generations work side by side the challenge is how to adjust or maintain their positive affective experiences, especially because these experiences can be "contagious". The antecedents of affective climate may vary according to personality, gender, and other individual factors. However, employees blended in a multi-generational environment are likely to have different ideas about causes of affective climate. Thus, this study aims to examine differences in perception of affective climate antecedents across generations. A questionnaire-based investigation was conducted with samples from Generations X and Y among Japanese and Thai workers. Perceptions of essential antecedents of workplace affective climate were compared across generations and countries.

## II. RELATED WORKS AND HYPOTHESES

### A. Affective Climate

Reference [9] proposed the term "affective tone" of a group, defined as agreement of affective experiences within a group, using the average of team members' ratings of their own affect. In addition, "emotional climate" was introduced as the emotional reactions shared collectively when focusing on a common event in society [10]. Reference [6] proposed that an individual's emotion can influence others' emotion, behavior, and thought and involve multiple people in a process of reciprocal influence. Thus, the emotions from an original person can extend to the range of emotions present [6]. Finally, the validation that affective experiences can be transferred to other employees was proposed, called the concept of "affective climate" [11]. Based on validated evidence, in this study, we use affective climate definition of González-Romá and colleagues [11], referring to shared affective experiences by work group members.

Five dimensions or facets can explain affective climate. They are anxiety-comfort, depression-pleasure, bored-enthusiastic, tiredness-vigor, and anger-placid [17]. In the context of the workplace, these five dimensions describe affective well-being at work. Within the construct, the dimensions can reflect the frequency of positive affect and infrequency of negative affect [18], capture subtleties, complexities and changes in the experience of work [19], and measure the work domain [20]. The development of measurement strategies for affective climate has received much attention [17], [20]-[22].

Consequences of the affective climate in the workplace are remarkable. Undesired aspects of a workplace setting may decrease not only a particular individual's positive experiences at work, but also decrease others' positive experiences [23]. This is accomplished through sharing affective experiences [4], mimicking the emotions of others, and extending the range of emotions present [6]. This has been referred to as emotional contagion [24], [25]. The affective climate can also influence team process and outcome [9], team performance [3], and organizational spontaneity [26].

Reference [12] investigated workers' perceptions of affective climate antecedents by means of sharing many aspects of work environment, regarding the five dimensions of affective well-being at work [17]. They proposed eleven factors which people accepted of causing their shared affective experiences both negative and positive in workplace. They are intimacy, employment stability, flexibility, management policy, creative workplace, physical environment, firm, conflict, team, respect, and role, which representing general antecedents of affective climate.

### *B. Generational Differences*

Generation is defined as an identifiable group that shares birth years, age location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages [16]. A number of studies have reported birth year range and characteristics of each generation [27]. The theory of generational differences assumes an incomplete differentiation in people born in the boundary years of the generational range, known as the cusper generation [28]. As reported by [29], Baby Boomers' birth years range from 1940 to 1946 and end in 1960 to 1964. As for Generation X, birth years begin in the early 1960s and end in 1975 to 1982 [29]. Because of widely cited regarding generational characteristics and concerning the importance of the cusper generation, the range of birth years for each generation in this study followed the ranges in [28].

As the world changes, people who grew up in different time periods have differences in world vision, expectations, and values, resulting in differences in preferred methods of communication [30] and preferences in the work environment [14], [31]. Although these differences can be a source of creative strength and opportunities, they can also be a source of stifling stress and unrelenting conflict [32].

In workplaces, there are many employees from different generations working together. As the new generation, Generation Y, enters the workplace, researchers have cautioned about the impact of generational differences that can lead to misunderstandings [32], [33], differences in work values [29], [34], [35], differences in work environment preferences [31], [34], [36], and knowledge management [37]. This increased diversity in the workplace nowadays resulting from generational differences is significantly different from the past when only one or two generations worked together.

*Generation X.* Generation X was born between 1965 and 1980. Having been raised by busy parents, they are independent, self-reliant, and love freedom [32]. They have learned to take care of themselves [32]. Watching parents laid off from their company, they promise never to work that hard for an organization [38]. They want balance in their lives and informality in their work [28], with the corporation put in their hands [38]. Reference [28] found that Generation X values cherished friends at work.

Generation X expects the workplace to provide a social avenue for friendship development [39]. Thus, relationships with peers are important. They prefer a workplace that supports their skill development [14]. However, they have more of a commitment to their careers than to an organization [40].

As freedom lovers, Generation X wants leaders to leave them to function independently [41]. In turn, they are not good team players [16], [41] unless they can choose their own team members [32].

*Generation Y.* Generation Y was born between 1981 and 2000. They have narcissistic traits, resulting in problems in close relationships [42]. They focus more on individuals than groups [35]. For Generation Y, The Internet and other technology are always available on devices in their pockets [28].

They expect the world of work to be as diverse as the environment in which they grew up, surrounded by technology and creative hobbies. They are capable of learning several tasks simultaneously [28]. Generation Y workers want to continue their education and develop their work skills [32]. Through the Internet, they can go anywhere on the globe. They can constantly connect with friends and family outside work and are less likely to seek out friendships at work [35].

Similar to Generation X, they want jobs with flexibility that allow them to leave the workforce temporarily to travel or have children [35]. Reference [43] suggested that a job with flexibility is a basic need for Generations X and Y. They thrive on challenging work and creative expression and hate micromanagement [44].

*Cusper generation.* Between generations, there is a cusper generation. Cuspers include those who are born on the boundaries of generations, although there is no concrete agreement on boundary years. They tend to share the generational personality of both generations [28]. For example, Generation X/Generation Y cuspers tend to get along well with both generations of friends.

### *C. Hypotheses*

Investigations of emerging data regarding generational differences at work [14] and the broader scope of generational differences in traits and work preferences are important [28], [32], [35], [39], [43], [44]. When people are placed in work environments that do not fit them, normal daily work may be unpleasant and interpreted negatively, resulting in affective experiences such as boredom [31]. Generational differences increase differences in employees' emotions or affective responses (experiences) regarding work preferences [16]. In addition, emotions or affective responses can extend from one person to others [6] and create an affective climate at the workplace [11]. This study aims to investigate generational differences in perceived factors that contribute to affective climate. Four main hypotheses were developed to determine differences between two generations (Generation X and Generation Y) in the context of affective climate antecedents regarding previous evidences.

Positive relationships with others are critical in producing a happy and enthusiastic workforce [23]. Generation Y may be less likely to seek out friendships at work because of narcissistic traits [42] and preferences for technology or online friends [35], [45]. In contrast, Generation X searches for friends at work because of a need for feeling part of a family [28], [39].

Generation X tends to cherish friends as family at work, whereas Generation Y focuses on online friends [28]. Generation X's quest for a sense of being in a family draws them to teams [32]. Thus, they are likely to have positive affective experiences more often than Generation Y when working with others at work. Thus, the first and second hypotheses are the following:

H1. Generation X will perceive intimacy as a more important antecedent of affective climate than generation Y (H1a is for Japanese and H1b is for Thai).

H2. Generation X will perceive team as a more important antecedent of affective climate than generation Y (H2a is for Japanese and H2b is for Thai).

Flexibility or freedom at work, including flexibility in working hours, influences affective experiences and satisfaction with managers [46]. It is essential for employees to have "a sense of control over their professional career, which contributes to a sense of fulfillment and pride" [39: 609]. Generation X loves to perform tasks individually [41], while Generation Y wants freedom and autonomy at work [14], [32], [34], [35]. However, the degree of flexibility preferred at work seems different between generations. "Gen Y will carry over their activity-laden lives into the workplace, and like homework, the workplace will be just one of many important activities rather than top priority" [28: 117]. Generation Y looks for organizations that remain flexible for employees [47]. It is likely that the more flexible the workplace is, the more comfortable Generation Y is. Thus, the third hypothesis is this:

H3. Generation Y will perceive flexibility as a more important antecedent of affective climate than Generation X (H3a is for Japanese and H3b is for Thai).

Previous literature suggests that both Generation X and Generation Y value meaning in work [28], [32]. Usually, organizations provide training programs that allow employees to fulfill minimum job requirements as well as meet their full potential [35]. However, Generation X prefers training only when it improves their ability and upgrades their resume [28]. On the other hand, Generation Y represents newcomers [48] who have been used to doing many activities since they were young [28], [35]. They like obtaining new knowledge; doing several jobs simultaneously and performing them admirably [28]; and progressing in their career [48]. Generation Y seeking a job consider "opportunity to learn and grow" and "opportunity for advancement" high priorities [49], implying the stability in their work life. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is this:

H4. Generation Y will prioritize employment stability as a more important antecedent of affective climate than will Generation X (H4a is for Japanese and H4b is for Thai).

### III. METHOD

#### A. Participants

The sample comprised 142 participants who were employees of 15 moderately large companies in Thailand and Japan. They were employed in a wide range of jobs, including human development (38.0%), electronics (33.8%), vehicle manufacturing (9.9%), publishing (7.7%), and others (10.6%). Based on the definition of [28], participants' ages were categorized into three generations: Baby Boomers

(1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980), and Generation Y (1981–2000). To clearly delineate mean generational differences, we removed cusper generation participants. Thus, we eliminated participants who were born in the two years at the beginning and end of a generation group [36].

#### B. Measurements

*Affective climate antecedents.* Participants reported perceived work environment antecedents of affective climate with a questionnaire previously developed and tested for internal reliability [12]. It comprised 53 items representing various aspects of workplace that were considered as related to work climate such as antecedents of various climate types [4], [50], [51], job orientation [52], psychological climate dimensions [53], and reasons for staying or leaving companies [49]. Participants were asked to rate the items in terms of their influence on affective climate at workplace (1 = not at all to 7 = very much). The items could be divided eleven work environment antecedents for affective climate according to the factor structure identified in previous research [12]. Participants were also asked to provide personal information regarding gender, age, race, current working position, affiliation, and working experience in the current job.

### IV. RESULTS

There were 8 Japanese samples representing Baby Boomers, but none in the Thai samples. Therefore, the Baby Boomer generation was excluded from analysis. After removing 44 samples belonging to the cusper generation [36], total samples involved in this study were 134. 51.5% of participants were Japanese (male 23.9% and female 27.6%) and 48.5% were Thai (male 21.6% and female 26.9%). 75.0% of Japanese were Generation X (average: 37.1 years old, ranging from 32 to 43 years) and 25.0% were Generation Y (average: 25 years old, ranging from 23 to 27 years). 33.0% of Thai were Generation X (average: 35.7 years old, ranging from 32 to 43 years) and 67.0% were Generation Y (average: 24.6 years old, ranging from 21 to 27 years). The classification of work content was categorized according to the position classification standard of the United States Office of Personnel Management [54]. Samples represented various kinds of work content (professional 47.6%, administrative 28.2%, technical 10.5%, clerical 13.7%, and others 8.0%). We intentionally employed various kinds of work content so that we could report results as generally representing various workplace contexts.

#### A. Construct of Affective Climate Antecedents

A factor analysis was conducted on the participants' responses to the 53 question items. Table I shows the factor loadings after varimax rotation. The number of factors extracted was determined by the eigenvalues before the varimax rotation. Eleven factors were extracted from the 53 items with eigenvalues greater than one, consistent with [12].

The cumulative contribution for the eleven factors was 59.03%. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test score was 0.84, indicating meaningful and acceptable results. Barlett's test was also significant, revealing high correlations between variables and providing a reasonable basis for factor analysis.

TABLE I  
FACTOR LOADINGS OF AFFECTIVE CLIMATE ANTECEDENTS

Factor	Loading <sup>a</sup>	Factor	Loading <sup>a</sup>
<b>F.1 Management Policy</b>		<b>F.6 Creativity</b>	
Management style	.77	Opportunities for being creative	.83
Management policy	.73	Opportunities for being innovative	.80
Leader support	.65	Opportunities for problem solving	.55
Leader behavior	.65	Success	.43
Management-employee relationship	.55	Variety in duties	.40
Decision-making policy of the management	.54	Admiration	.35
Rules and work procedures	.48	<b>F.7 Conflict</b>	
<b>F.2 Intimacy</b>		Relationship conflicts	.67
Relationships among colleagues	.69	Task conflicts	.59
Friendliness	.69	Pressure to work	.54
Warmth	.69	Gossip in workplace	.50
Work group cooperation	.67	<b>F.8 Firm</b>	
Cohesion	.64	Firm Size	.80
Team support	.42	Firm Age	.77
<b>F.3 Employment stability</b>		<b>F.9 Team</b>	
Career advancement	.75	Team size	.69
Reward-performance relationship	.68	Team tenure	.61
Personal development and growth	.63	Expectation from team members	.37
Payment	.63	<b>F.10 Respect</b>	
Fairness	.45	Your contribution	.50
Personal knowledge and skill	.39	Respect from others	.50
Fit to job/ Fit to my interest	.37	<b>F.11 Role</b>	
<b>F.4 Physical environment</b>		Being a superior	.55
Technology support for completing work	.80	Role ambiguity	.46
Material and equipment support	.77	Nature of job	.39
Facilities at workplace	.67		
Job stability	.49		
Physical work environment condition	.49		
<b>F.5 Flexibility</b>			
Freedom	.87		
Independence	.65		
Flexibility	.60		
Autonomy	.55		
Trust	.53		

Note: Loadings < 0.35 were omitted.<sup>a</sup>The biggest loading for each item factor is given.

#### *B. Generational Differences in Perception of Affective Climate Antecedents*

Work environment mean scores representing the degree of importance of affective climate antecedents were computed by average score of each factor items, called as composite score, and compared between generations of both Thai and Japanese participants. Independent *t*-tests were conducted to investigate generational differences in perceived importance of these antecedents.

Tables II and III show the means, standard deviations, and results of *t*-tests on work environment mean score of each factor for Japanese and Thai participants, respectively.

#### *C. Japanese Samples*

The results of *t*-tests on the score of perceived importance of intimacy by Japanese samples showed no significant difference between generations. H1a was rejected. This result was consistent with [55] who also used Japanese samples.

On the other hand, Generation X perceived the importance of team on affective climate significantly higher than did Generation Y ( $t = 2.643$ ,  $df = 59$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). H2a was supported. Generation Y perceived the importance of employment stability on affective climate marginally higher than did Generation X ( $t = -1.98$ ,  $df = 59$ ,  $p = 0.053$ ), which is in line with previous findings [28], [35], [48]. H4a was supported. Results for flexibility (H3a) unexpectedly showed Generation X perceived the importance of flexibility higher than Generation Y. However, the explanation was discussed in the discussion section.

#### *D. Thai Samples*

Mean scores for intimacy were not significantly different between Generations X and Y. H1b was also rejected for Thai participants. Mean scores for the importance of team (H2b), flexibility (H3b), and employment stability (H4b) on affective climate were not significantly different for Thai participants. Although there was not enough evidence to support H1, H2, H3, or H4 from *t*-test analysis, some explanations are discussed in discussion part.

TABLE II  
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND RESULTS OF *t*-TESTS FOR JAPANESE PARTICIPANTS

Factor	Japanese				Factor	Japanese			
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
<b>Intimacy</b>					<b>Firm</b>				
Gen X	46	5.217	0.805	-.869	Gen X	46	3.141	1.421	.941
Gen Y	15	5.448	1.125		Gen Y	15	2.767	1.033	
<b>Flexibility</b>					<b>Conflict</b>				
Gen X	46	5.245	0.743	.538	Gen X	46	5.152	0.754	-1.342
Gen Y	15	5.125	0.760		Gen Y	15	5.500	1.173	
<b>Employment Stability</b>					<b>Team</b>				
Gen X	46	4.902	0.860	-1.978 <sup>+</sup>	Gen X	46	4.044	1.201	2.643 <sup>+</sup>
Gen Y	15	5.375	0.590		Gen Y	15	3.100	1.198	
<b>Creativity</b>					<b>Respect</b>				
Gen X	46	4.835	0.825	-1.615	Gen X	46	5.080	0.933	-.336
Gen Y	15	5.227	0.785		Gen Y	15	5.178	1.126	
<b>Management Policy</b>					<b>Role</b>				
Gen X	46	4.938	1.037	.091	Gen X	46	4.681	1.068	.338
Gen Y	15	4.911	0.886		Gen Y	15	4.578	0.886	
<b>Physical Environment</b>									
Gen X	46	4.141	1.043	.558					
Gen Y	15	3.967	1.085						

Note: <sup>\*</sup> Significant at 0.05 level, <sup>+</sup> Significant at 0.10 level.

TABLE III  
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND *t*-TESTS FOR THAI PARTICIPANTS

Factor	Thai				Factor	Thai			
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
<b>Intimacy</b>					<b>Firm</b>				
Gen X	19	5.263	1.032	-.063	Gen X	19	3.868	1.580	-2.061 <sup>*</sup>
Gen Y	38	5.278	0.742		Gen Y	38	4.645	1.208	
<b>Flexibility</b>					<b>Conflict</b>				
Gen X	19	5.237	1.026	.706	Gen X	19	4.618	1.212	1.713
Gen Y	38	5.056	0.850		Gen Y	38	4.059	1.137	
<b>Employment Stability</b>					<b>Team</b>				
Gen X	19	5.296	1.145	.774	Gen X	19	4.079	1.228	-.333
Gen Y	38	5.063	1.038		Gen Y	38	4.197	1.282	
<b>Creativity</b>					<b>Respect</b>				
Gen X	19	4.968	1.090	.287	Gen X	19	4.789	1.166	.291
Gen Y	38	4.884	1.023		Gen Y	38	4.702	1.022	
<b>Management Policy</b>					<b>Role</b>				
Gen X	19	5.281	1.193	2.213 <sup>*</sup>	Gen X	19	5.000	0.956	1.111
Gen Y	38	4.610	1.020		Gen Y	38	4.667	1.118	
<b>Physical Environment</b>									
Gen X	19	4.737	0.984	-.070					
Gen Y	38	4.757	1.016						

Note: <sup>\*</sup> Significant at 0.05 level, <sup>+</sup> Significant at 0.10 level.

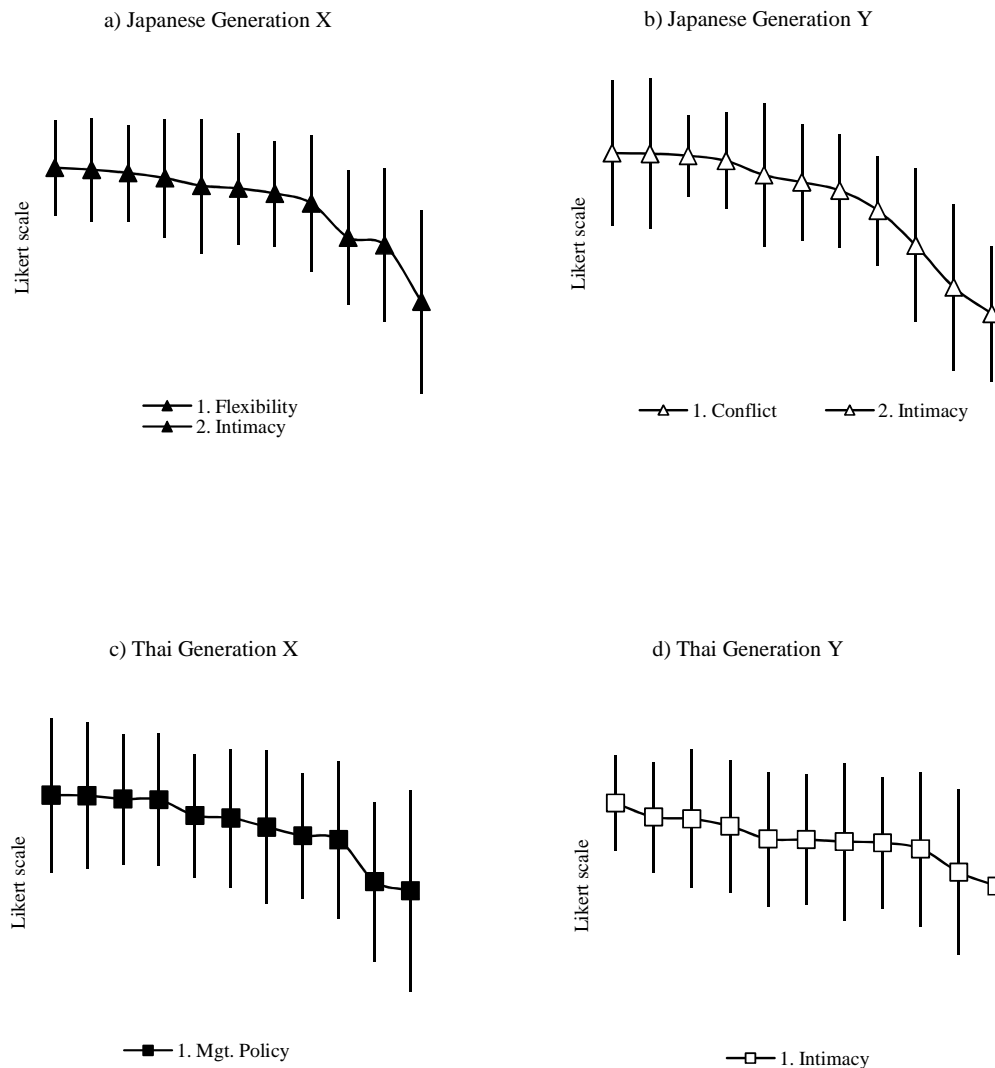


Fig. 1 Work environment aspects ordered by the average mean score of perceived importance

#### *E. Generational Differences in Order of Mean Scores for Perceived Importance of Affective Climate Antecedents*

In order to show which factors were perceived as more highly important for each generation of Thai and Japanese participants, mean scores for each factor were ranked from the highest to the lowest. Fig. 1 shows the means and standard deviations for factors ordered from the highest average to the lowest. The ranking of mean scores is commonly used in research using Likert scales, and a mean and standard deviation is often reported for each of the Likert scale questions [56].

Fig. 1 (panels a and b) show Japanese generational differences in the order of scores for perceived importance of affective climate antecedents. Japanese Generations X and Y both rated intimacy and conflict (conflict was not a focus of this study) among the top three important factors. This confirmed rejection of H1a. As expected regarding significant differences of *t*-test result (H4a), employment stability was ranked higher (3rd place) by Generation Y. It is likely that Generation Y perceived employment stability more important than did Generation X. In contrast, perceived importance of flexibility was opposite to expectation (H3a).

It was clear that Generation X perceived flexibility (1st rank) more important than did Generation Y (6th rank).

Fig. 1 (panels c and d) show results for Thai participants. Generations X and Y rated intimacy and employment stability among the top three important factors. Consistent with results for the Japanese samples, intimacy was one of the most important factors for affective climate in both generations of the Thai samples. Unlike Japanese samples, Thai Generation Y perceived importance of flexibility (2nd rank) higher than did Generation X (4th rank) as we expected in H3b, though the difference was not statistically significant. The two generations perceived importance of team equally (10th rank). Intimacy, team, and employment stability were perceived as equally important, inconsistent with our expectations (H1b, H2b, and H4b, respectively). The results of H3b showed in this analysis was in line with expectation.

## V. DISCUSSION

The major purpose of this study was to investigate generational differences in the perception of affective antecedents (intimacy, flexibility, employment stability, and team) in both Japanese and Thai workers. The first major finding revealed differences in perceived importance of flexibility and employment stability, between generations, consistent with Western findings. The importance of intimacy was not significantly different between generations for both countries, perhaps reflecting the influence of Eastern culture. The second finding was that the order of importance of affective climate antecedents was different between generations and between countries. The following paragraph discusses the main findings and implications.

### *A. Generational Differences in Japanese Samples: Flexibility, Employment Stability, and Team*

The results for flexibility suggested that managers must be careful when applying findings from Western countries to Japan. Managers should provide flexibility for Japanese Generation X at work, even more than for Generation Y. Generation X participants were over 33 years old in this study and would be expected to be senior workers. This may reflect a need for control and responsibility at work.

On the other hand, Generation Y is a newcomer to organizations. That generation more highly prioritizes future direction (employment stability) and considers flexibility less important than does Generation X. This echoes previous findings that Generation Y is new to the workplace and occupies young positions, thus career progression seems to be more important to them [48]. Generation X ranked team higher than did Generation Y. This reflects the increasing degree of individualism in the new generation [35]. To evoke positive affective experiences for Japanese employees, managers should seriously consider opportunities for Generation X to control their own work or pick their own team members. For Generation Y, employment stability such as future promotions should be considered.

### *B. Generational Differences in Thai Samples: Flexibility*

Thai Generation Y perceived flexibility of higher importance than did Generation X. This result is consistent with findings in Western studies [28], [47] but opposite to

results for Japanese samples. This implies that parents of Thai Generation Y may have provided many activities (e.g. music, sports, and extra privately taught classes), in a similar way to Western Generation Y [28]. Because of the instability of Thailand's economy and the high unemployment rate since 1997 [57], which may not improve anytime soon, Thai Generation X has experienced being laid off and having to look for a job during the economic crisis. Thus, it is speculated that Generation X encourages their children (Generation Y) to develop multifunctional skills so that they can be prepared for difficult economic times. Generation Y has been committed to a packed schedule of activities since they were children. This increases the need for flexibility in that generation.

Generations X and Y agreed on the importance of employment stability. In terms of where to work, Generation Y preferred more brand name companies than did Generation X. As senior workers, Generation X emphasized a commitment to the management of organizations. Thus, the presence of workplace flexibility, employment stability, good management policies, and brand name companies may improve affective climate in workers. These factors might lead to a low turnover rate in Generation Y and improve performance in Generation X.

### *C. Similarities across Generations and Countries*

Results for intimacy showed that Generations X and Y in both countries similarly prioritized intimacy as one of the most important factors, referring to feelings of warmth and positive relationships among colleagues. This finding confirms previous study that relationships with colleagues is a high need related to having a good job among Japanese generations and most probably can apply to East culture [55]. Management should provide opportunities for workers to be close to each other and have contact easily, especially in Eastern cultures. In turn, this may facilitate a more positive affective climate at the workplace.

### *D. Influence of Culture*

Although, there were differences and similarities within country samples, the differences across countries could not be ignored. In this study, among the top three important factors, the elements of intimacy and conflict were shared by Japanese Generations X and Y, while intimacy and employment stability were shared by Thai Generations X and Y. Thus, this implies that the influence of cultural or country differences affect the perceived importance of affective climate antecedents.

The five dimensions of national cultures [58] could explain these differences across Japan and Thai cultures. Japan is known as a country with uncertainty because of being located in the ring of fire, thus prone to natural disasters. This creates a uniqueness in the Japanese culture. They prepare well for all uncertainties, not only natural disasters, including in their work lives. At work, harmony among colleagues is preferable. Conflict is strictly discouraged and avoided in order to keep positive relationship among people. Japanese society is known for having high uncertainty avoidance. Thus, this society is likely to use informal rules to control the rights and duties of employers and employees, and more internal regulations control the work procedure [59].

It is likely that Japanese samples agreed that affective climate would be better if intimacy can encourage and conflict can be eliminated. On the other hand, in countries with weak uncertainty avoidance, people commonly think that rules should be established only in case of absolute necessity [59]. Thai's culture is among one of those. Thus, conflict is not received much attention because Thais believed that problems can be solved anytime without rules.

Thailand has a higher score on the power distance index (PDI) than Japan [58]. This implies that Thai people with less power expect inequality in the society or institution (e.g. organization or family). Employment stability includes not only job stability or advancement, but also payment, the reward-performance relationship, and fairness in the workplace. In organizations with steep hierarchies there is a gap between salaried individuals at the top and bottom of the organization [59]. This large power distance is likely to generate negative affective experiences in people who perceive themselves as less powerful. Thus, this result shows that managers should be concerned about fairness in the workplace as well as workers' authority. A flat hierarchical structure might help reduce the perceived distance between individuals at the top and bottom of the organization.

#### *E. Implications*

Managers must be aware of the importance of human affect, generational preferences, and cultural differences. Young generations (e.g. Japanese Generation X and Thai Generation Y) expect flexibility at work. Managers should adopt strategies that focus on task results more than on attendance. For example, managers might allow employees to work remotely or be absent from work temporarily [35]. For young generations, their future at work seems very important, as seen in Generation Y in both countries in this study. Managers must implement a progressive plan from time to time to assure them they have a bright future at work.

In workplaces with people from Japan and Thailand, managers should assess the differences and commonalities among employees through close communication, such as interviews with individual workers. This information should be reflected in management strategies. To promote understanding of each other and harmony, common preferences should be considered. For a positive affective climate, workplaces should be designed for a mixture of generations.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

In this study, we investigated perceived antecedents of affective work climate by people from different generations. Results indicate some similarities and differences across generations and countries.

One of the limitations of this study is the small number of samples due to our removing cusper generation participants, although this might have contributed to increased reliability of the results. In addition, removing the cusper generation provided true representatives of Generations X and Y with no mixed generation samples.

From this study, observed generational differences could not be identified as either cohort effect or age effect.

In order to determine, longitudinal investigations would be necessary. Another limitation might be that the participants' backgrounds were not well controlled. Although our results reported a pattern of generational differences from a general viewpoint, differences in backgrounds of participants might have influenced the perception of work environment factors.

Although this study examined generational differences in Eastern countries, samples were only from two countries. Thus, additional studies of cultural differences in patterns of generational differences, especially in Eastern cultures, are encouraged.

Further research should be conducted to assess participants' affective experiences at the workplace before and after data collection to see whether emotions, moods, or feelings may change over time. This study investigated people's perceptions (beliefs) regarding work environment factors that contribute to affective climate. Observations of work environment characteristics actually related to affective climate are still needed.

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