



SLOAN WORK AND FAMILY
RESEARCH NETWORK
BOSTON COLLEGE

Questions and Answers about Generation X/Generation Y: A Sloan Work & Family Research Network Fact Sheet

Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets which provide statistical answers to some important questions about work–family and work/life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics compiled about Generation X/Generation Y. [Last updated: December 2006.]



How many people comprise Generation X and Y?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “Today this group (Generation X) comprises just 20 percent of the U.S. adult population compared to Baby Boomers’ 41 percent share” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 9).
- ✔ **Fact 2** In 2003, people between the ages of 20 to 24 comprised 7.1% of the population (20,728,000) and people ages 25 to 29 years old comprised 6.6% of the population (19,168,000) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004–05).



How important is it for Generation X and Y to spend time with their families?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “[F]ifty percent of Gen–Y and 52 percent of Gen–X are family–centric compared with 41 percent of Boomers” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 3).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “Gen–X fathers spend significantly more time with their children than Boomer fathers with children of the same age, an average of 3.4 hours per workday versus an average of 2.2 hours for Boomer fathers– a difference of more than 1 hour” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 4).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “...young men and their older counterparts differ markedly in their work priorities, with men ages 21 to 39 placing a much higher priority on having time to spend with their families” (Radcliffe Public Policy Center with Harris Interactive, 2000, p. 2).
- ✔ **Fact 4** “A majority (70 percent of men ages 21 to 29 and 71 percent of men ages 30 to 39) said they want to spend more time with their families and would be willing to sacrifice pay to do so” (Radcliffe Public Policy Center with Harris Interactive, 2000, p. 3).

✔ **Fact 5** “For men in their 20s and 30s, and for women in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, the most important job characteristic is having a work schedule that allows them to spend time with their families” (Radcliffe Public Policy Center with Harris Interactive, 2000, p. 2).



Do Generation X and Y experience work–life balance?

✔ **Fact 1** “Almost one–third of (Generation X) respondents (29 percent) report that the interference of their job on their personal lives is ‘severe’ or ‘very severe’, another 43 percent (of Generation X respondents) describe this interference as ‘moderate’” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 15).

✔ **Fact 2** “Forty–five percent of those (born between 1964 and 1975) who plan to leave their organization in less than 3 years · ‘leavers’ · feel that their expectations around work/life balance were not met, compared to 28 percent of ‘stayers’ · those who plan to stay at least 10 years” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 4).

✔ **Fact 3** “...(Generation X) Americans are more likely than (Generation X) Canadians to report difficulties attending to certain aspects of their personal lives because of their jobs” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 17).

✔ **Fact 4** “Although fully 60 percent of college–educated Gen–Y, Gen–X and Boomer employees who experience low levels of negative spillover from job to home would like to have jobs with more responsibility, only 39 percent (21 percentage points less) who experience high levels of negative spillover want jobs with more responsibility. Findings are the same for men and women” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 6).



Are flexible work arrangements available and important to Generation X and Y?

✔ **Fact 1** “Among U.S. respondents (born between 1964 and 1975), women (83 percent) are much more likely than men (69 percent) to report that flexible work arrangements are important to career advancement and satisfaction” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 31).

✔ **Fact 2** “With the exception of a flexible arrival and departure time · used by about one–third of (Generation X) respondents · far more (Generation X) respondents, both men and women, would like to use one or more flexible work arrangements than currently use them” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 18).

✔ **Fact 3** “(Generation X) women are much more likely than men to believe they will work part–time in their current organization during the next five years (19 percent compared to 2 percent)” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 34).

✔ **Fact 4** “...roughly equal proportions of young women and men in this age group (Generation X) work flexible schedules. In addition, 25– to 34–year old women were more likely than women of other ages to have this kind of flexibility in their jobs” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 13).

✔ **Fact 5** “(Generation X) women with children use reduced work schedule/part–time arrangements more than (Generation X) men with children (15 percent compared to 1 percent)” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 34).

- ✔ **Fact 6** “The vast majority of 25–to 34–year old women worked only partly at home, with just 4 percent reporting that they had worked exclusively from home” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 13).
- ✔ **Fact 7** “According to information collected in May 1997 CPS supplement, about 3 million women aged 25 to 34 who worked full–time held jobs that allowed flexibility in their work schedules (numbers in thousands)” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 12).
- ✔ **Fact 8** “(Generation X) Americans are more likely than (Generation X) Canadian counterparts to leave for more control over their work schedules (66 percent compared to 50 percent, respectively), flexibility (59 percent compared to 46 percent, respectively), the ability to work fewer hours (48 percent compared to 37 percent, respectively), and/or the ability to telecommute (50 percent compared to 32 percent, respectively)” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 25).



Are Generation X and Y loyal to their employers?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “Almost one–third of (Generation X) respondents (29 percent of women and 32 percent of men) report that they intend to stay with their current organization for more than 10 years; 20 percent intend to stay between three to five years; 16 percent intend to stay between five to ten years” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 24).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “More than four in five 18– to 29–year–old workers report having a strong sense of loyalty to their companies” (Saad, 2003, p. 1).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “We find that Gen–X employees in 2002 are no more likely than their age counterparts (23–37 years old) in 1977 to plan to leave their current employers within the next year (43% somewhat or very likely)” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 25).
- ✔ **Fact 4** “...Gen–Y employees in 2002 are significantly more likely (70% somewhat or very likely) to plan to leave their current employers in the next year than their age counterparts (under 23 years old) in 1977 (52% somewhat or very likely)” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 26).



How has women’s roles in the workforce and at home changed over the generations?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “About three–quarters of women aged 25 to 34 years participated in the labor force in the year 2000, compared with a little more than half in 1975” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 3).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “...women aged 25 to 34 years in 2000 were less likely to be married than their counterparts 25 years earlier and less likely to be mothers. In 1975, more than 3 out of 4 women in this age group were married, by 2000, the proportion had dropped to 3 out of 5” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 6).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “Young women were working more hours and more weeks out of the year in 1999 than were their counterparts 25 years ago...” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 3).

✔ **Fact 4** “Married women aged 25 to 34 years—particularly those who had children— were far more likely to be in the labor force in 2000 than 25 years earlier” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 3).

✔ **Fact 5** “In 1975, 76 percent of women in the 25–to 34–year age group had children; this figure had declined to 60 percent by 2000. Also, as the average age of childbearing rose, women aged 25 to 34 were far less likely to have older children, but they were nearly as likely to have children under age 3 as were their counterparts a generation earlier” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 6).

✔ **Fact 6** “Average weekly hours for young women working in nonagricultural industries increased by 2.5 hours over the period, rising from 35.4 in 1976 to 37.9 in 2000, while men’s average weekly hours grew only slightly, from 43.2 hours in 1976 to 43.9 hours in 2000” (DiNatale & Boraas, 2002, p. 10).

✔ **Fact 7** “Among college–educated women of Gen–Y, Gen–X and Boomer ages in 1992 and 2002, 57 percent wanted to move into jobs with more responsibility in 1992 versus only 36 percent in 2002 • a decline of 21 percentage points” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 5).



What are society’s perceptions of women’s roles as employees and mothers?

✔ **Fact 1** “Eighty–two percent of Gen–Y employees agree that ‘a mother who works outside the home can have just as good a relationship with her children as a mother who is not employed’ versus 60 percent of Matures” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 5).

✔ **Fact 2** “Sixty–three percent of Gen–Y employees disagree that it is much better for everyone involved if the man earns the money and the woman takes care of the home and children, compared with 49 percent of Matures” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 13).

✔ **Fact 3** “Among married couples with children, mothers are spending the same amount of time doing things with and taking care of their children on days when they are working today as they did 25 years ago (3.3 to 3.4 hours)” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 10).



How have things changed for men?

✔ **Fact 1** “Among college–educated men of Gen–Y, Gen–X and Boomer ages in 1992 and 2002, 68 percent wanted to move into jobs with more responsibility in 1992 versus only 52 percent in 2002 • a decline of 16 percentage points” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 5).

✔ **Fact 2** “In 2002, married men spend significantly more time on workdays (1.9 hours) doing household chores than married men did 25 years ago (1.2 hours)” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 9).



How many hours are people working and how have work hours changed over the past 25 years?

✔ **Fact 1** “When we compare 2002 Gen–X employees with their age counterparts in 1977, we find that 2002 Gen–X employees actually work significantly more paid and unpaid hours per week (45.6 hours on average) than

employees of comparable ages in 1977 (42.9 paid and unpaid hours per week on average)” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 5).

✔ **Fact 2** “Matures and Gen-Y employees work significantly fewer hours ·an average of 39 and 35 hours, respectively. It should be remembered that 48 percent of Gen-Y employees are still enrolled in school” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 25).

✔ **Fact 3** “There is no statistically significant difference between Gen-Y in 2002 and their age counterparts (18–22 year olds) in 1977 with respect to the total paid *and* unpaid hours they work per week” (Families and Work Institute, p. 25).

✔ **Fact 4** “Employees in the Boomer and Gen-X generations work the longest (paid and unpaid) hours at their main or only jobs ·an average of 45 and 44 hours per week, respectively. There is no statistically significant difference in the hours members of these two generations work” (Families and Work Institute, 2004, p. 25).

✔ **Fact 5** “...(Generation X) men with children in dual-career relationships are more likely to work 50 or more hours per week than their female counter parts (50 percent compared to 42 percent)” (Catalyst, 2001, p. 5).

The Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. You can find a topic page for **Research/Teaching** dedicated to Generation X/Generation Y at:
<http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/academics.php> (choose ‘Generation X/Generation Y’ from the Topics List).

If you are interested in this topic from the **State Policy** or **Workplace Practice** perspective,

- a) go back to our home page www.bc.edu/wfnetwork/
 - b) click on the appropriate user group
 - c) and choose ‘Generation X/Generation Y’ from the Topics List
2. Our database of academic literature contains the citations and annotations of literature related to the issue of Generation X/Generation Y. You can connect to this database at:
http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=BCL_WF



References

Catalyst. (2001). *The next generation: Today's professionals, tomorrow's leaders*. New York: Catalyst.

“Phase II: Short questionnaire fielded to 300 women and 150 men professionals and managers born between 1964 and 1975 at each of the participating U.S. organizations to construct the survey.

Phase III: 30-minute telephone interviews with 39 of the questionnaire respondents (16 men and 23 women).

Phase IV: Survey sent to approximately 3,000 women and 1,500 men (born between 1964 and 1975) throughout 10 organizations representing a range of industries, garnering a 30 percent response rate. (Thirty-two percent of women and 27 percent of men responded). Two of the participating companies are based in Canada; the remaining eight are based in the U.S." (p. 6).

DiNatale, M. & Boraas, S. (2002). The labor force experience of women from 'Generation X.' *Monthly Labor Review*, 125(3), 3–15.

Most of the data in this chapter were derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The Current Population Survey (CPS) is conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. "(It) is a monthly nationwide survey of a scientifically selected sample representing the non-institutional civilian population. The sample is located in 754 areas with coverage in every state and the District of Columbia and is subject to sampling error. At the present time, about 60,000 occupied households are eligible for interview every month; of these between 6 and 7 percent are, for various reasons, unavailable for interview." (U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2003). No. 605. Persons Doing Job-Related Work at Home: 2001. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/pop.pdf>, p. 1–2).

"While the primary purpose of the CPS is to obtain monthly statistics on the labor force, it also serves as a vehicle for inquiries on other subjects. Using CPS data, the Bureau issues a series of publications under the general title of Current Population Reports, which cover population characteristics (P20), consumer income (P60), special studies (P23), and other topics. Estimates of population characteristics based on the CPS will not agree with the counts from the census because the CPS and the census use different procedures for collecting and processing the data for racial groups, the Hispanic population, and other topics. Caution should also be used when comparing estimates for various years because of the periodic introduction of changes into the CPS. Beginning in January 1994, a number of changes were introduced into the CPS that effect all data comparisons with prior years. These changes include the results of a major redesign of the survey questionnaire and collection methodology and the introduction of 1990 census population controls, adjusted for the estimated undercount. Beginning with the 2001 CPS Annual Demographic Supplement the independent estimates used as control totals for the CPS are based on civilian population benchmarks consistent with Census 2000. In March 2002, the sample size of the Annual Demographic Supplement was increased to approximately 78,000. These changes in population controls had relatively little impact on derived measures such as means, medians, and percent distribution, but did have a significant impact on levels." (U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2003). No. 605. Persons Doing Job-Related Work at Home: 2001. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/pop.pdf>, p. 1–2).

For more information about this survey, go to <http://www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm>

Families and Work Institute. (2004). *Generation & gender in the workplace*. Watertown, MA: American Business Collaboration.

The findings in this report were drawn from the Families and Work Institute National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW).

"The NSCW surveys representative samples of the nation's workforce once every five years (1992, 1997, 2002). Sample sizes average 3,500, including both wage and salaried employees and self-employed workers" (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002, p. v).

Several of the questions in the National Study of the Changing Workforce were taken from or based upon questions in the Quality of Employment Survey (QES) conducted three times by the Department of Labor from 1969 to 1977. Although the NSCW is more comprehensive than the QES in addressing issues related to both work and personal life and has a stronger business perspective, having comparable data from over a 25 year period has provided a unique opportunity to look at trends over time. The 2002 NSCW uses 25 years of trend data to examine five topics in depth: women in the workforce; dual earner couples, the role of technology in employees' lives on and off the job, work-life supports on the job, and working for oneself versus someone else (Highlights of the National Study of the Changing Workforce, 2002).

To read the Executive Summary or the press release, and to purchase the full report as a PDF E-product, please visit <http://www.familiesandwork.org/announce/2002NSCW.html>.

Radcliffe Public Policy Center with Harris Interactive. (2000). *Life's work: Generational attitudes toward work and life integration*. Cambridge, MA: Radcliffe Public Policy Center.

"The *Life's Work* study was conducted for the Radcliffe Public Policy Center by Harris Interactive, Inc. and funded by Fleet Boston Financial. The final results are based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,008 adults aged 21 and over. Interviewing was conducted between January 18 and February 2, 2000" (p. 2).

Saad, L. (2003, October 14). Are young employees harder to manage? *Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing*, p.1–5.

"Data are based on a combination of three Gallup Polls, each of approximately 580 adults aged 18 and older who are employed full time or part time. Interviewing dates were Aug. 4-6, 2003, Aug. 5-8, 2002, and Aug. 16-19, 2003. For the total sample of 1,754 employed national adults, the maximum margin of error attributable to sampling is ± 3 percentage points. For the sample of 316 young workers (aged 18 to 29), the maximum margin of error attributable to sampling error is ± 6 percentage points. For the sample of 896 (aged 30 to 49), the maximum margin of error attributable to sampling error is ± 4 percentage points. For the sample of 542 older workers (aged 50+), the maximum margin of error attributable to sampling error is ± 5 percentage points." (p. 5)

U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States (2004-05). *No. 11. Resident population by age and sex: 1980 to 2003*. Washington DC: U.S. Census Bureau.

The chief source of these data is the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The sample includes employed full-time wage and salary workers 16 years old and over in the US., and excludes the self-employed. Data relate to the primary job. For description of data sources, see <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/03statab/labor.pdf>
