CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Having reviewed the existing literature and theoretical positions on multigenerational research, and locating the focus of the present study, the present chapter begins by presenting the conceptual framework of the study and reiterates the rationale for the study. This is followed by an explanation of the objectives and research questions addressed in the study, explanation of the methodology employed, and a discussion of the philosophical assumptions that drove these methodological choices.
The process of reviewing the existing literature in this field and identifying the gaps explicated in the previous chapter guided the research process in three major ways. To begin with, it enabled the researcher to get a better understanding of the gamut of theories, inconsistencies, confusions, and debates in the field of multigenerational research and the impact of generational differences on various work related attributes. Further, it helped to identify gaps in this knowledge, especially looking from the Indian context, which in turn helped in developing the rationale and objectives for this study and finally, it helped in conceptualizing the process of the research itself.

From the evidence presented in the two preceding chapters, it is clear that generational difference impact several aspects of work, including but not limited to attributes such as communication, leadership, career, learning, work preferences, morals and ethics, etc. Owing to the findings of the baseline study, and the existing research, focus of the research was placed on three of these: career, learning, and leadership. Figure 3.1 describes the way this study has been conceptualized, as derived from the literature review.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, due to lack of evidence based data on the composition of generations in the Indian workforce, the present study began by exploring the same. In this process, field reality was examined vis-à-vis the unique socio-cultural and historical factors that may have shaped generational identities. Subsequently, focus was laid on the three work-related attributes specified above, to explore intra-generational as well as inter-generational dynamics in the same. Here, in terms of career, the current study aimed to understand how various generational groups define career types, and to identify the markers of career success (subjective and objective for each generational group), and strategies to achieve them. From the leadership perspective, the study focused on the preferred leadership styles of various generations and the expectations regarding the role played by the leader. Finally, in terms of learning, the study focused on the preferred learning styles of each generational group.

**Rationale for the Study**

As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, work-related attitudes, behaviors, and preferences vary across individual differences. While these individual differences can be attributed to factors such as personality, socio-economic factors, etc, research in the
Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework of the study
recent decades has revealed generational differences as a major factor. These generational differences, caused by unique generational identities, affect several areas of work such as career, workplace flexibility, rewards and feedback preferences, motivation, teamwork preferences, leadership styles, and learning preferences. A substantial body of research supports the theoretical perspective that generational identities are a Gestalt of personal characteristics as well as the meaning making of the shared experiences of a generational group. Consequently, generational identities and classifications are now considered to differ across cultural backgrounds, owing to the varied socio-historical, political, and economic events that shape the experiences of generations. This necessitates the study of the composition of generational groups and their formative events in each context, including the Indian context. Though practitioners and researchers have suggested different classifications applicable to the Indian socio-cultural milieu, there is a lack of empirical research in this regard. Therefore, the researcher was motivated to conduct a comprehensive study on the generational composition of the Indian workforce.

Further, owing to the researcher’s own experiences while interacting with different generations in the industry, the researcher was keen to answer the question “How do Indian generational groups vary upon the work related attributes?” This sparked interest in multigenerational research. Subsequently, the plethora of Western studies on generational differences in work attributes, and the areas of focus identified in the exploratory baseline study helped the researcher focus on three key areas, namely, career, leadership, and learning. Thus, the rationale for the present study was to fill the research gaps in multigenerational research in the Indian context, by focusing on certain key aspects that were identified from the field reality of the Indian workforce.

Based on this rationale and the research gaps explicated in previous chapters, the following objectives were identified for this study.

**Research Objectives and Questions**

1. To identify generational groups in the Indian workforce.
2. To explore the formative events for each generational group in the Indian workforce.
3. To study the impact of generational differences on employees’ attitudes and preferences regarding career.
4. To explore preferred learning styles from a generational perspective.

5. To study follower expectations and preferred leadership styles from a generational perspective.

Here, it is important to note that the generation group classification that will be identified from Objective 1 will be utilized only as a base for identifying the generations and discussing their differences for Objectives 3, 4, and 5. The impact of the social, economic, political, and historical events identified as a part of Objective 2, on the work-related attitudes of career, learning, and leadership will not be explored or discussed, in order to limit the scope of this study and to ensure its manageability.

Based on these objectives, the following research questions were identified:

a. How can the different generations be classified in the Indian context?

b. Which socio-historical events affected the formation of generational identities in India?

c. Do people from different generations define careers differently?

d. How do people from different generations define career success?

e. What are the various subjective and objective criteria used by different generations to define career success?

f. How are career trajectories and mobility patterns different across generations?

g. What are the short and long term career aspirations of generational participants?

h. Which strategies are employed by individuals from different generations to achieve career success and development?

i. What are the generational participants’ perspectives towards career management?

j. Who according to generational participants are leaders?

k. What are the preferred leadership qualities and styles for different generations?

l. What according to the generational participants is the role played by leader in managing follower’s performance, learning, and career development?

m. What are the preferred learning styles of different generations?

Before explaining the methodology employed to answer the research questions enumerated above, it is necessary to acknowledge that the philosophical position of the researcher affected the chosen methods and meaning making of the data in the present study.
Therefore, the researcher’s philosophical position regarding the research questions and methodology used has been discussed in the next section.

**Philosophical Underpinnings of the Study**

Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested that the philosophical assumptions of an inquiry paradigm should be explored in terms of answers to three questions:

1) The ontological question: What is the nature of reality and what can be known about it?
2) The epistemological question: What is the relationship between the knower and what can be known?
3) The methodological question: How can the knower find out about that which can be known?

Based on these, the researcher examined her own beliefs regarding the present study before designing the methodology. In terms of the ontological and epistemological position, the present study was based on the tenets of Social Constructionism and Symbolic Interactionism. The aim of the present inquiry was to understand individual and collective reconstructions coalescing around consensus. The underlying assumption for this was that individuals construct meaning from their social reality, which is a factor of their interaction with other social elements. Social Constructionism is based on the notion that all knowledge about the natural world is only a construction of reality based on social interactions, thus suggesting that the concept of “an objective reality” does not exist. Thus, the “knower” and “known” are presumed to be implicitly tied together by social interactions. Burr (1995) explained the common assumptions of various perspectives that stem from Social Constructionism, e.g., critical psychology, poststructuralism, discourse analysis, etc. Below is an explanation of some of these assumptions, and how they were applied in the present study:

1. A critical stance to knowledge: This assumption suggests that individuals have a critical stance towards reality, rather than just accepting it as the ultimate truth. It suggests that our view of the world is affected by the meaning we make out of it, by interpreting, challenging, and restructuring conventional knowledge. Thus, it stresses on individual constructions of the reality, rather than an “objective” one. In the context of the present study, rather than presuming the existence of generations classified
according to “objective” criteria such as age or kinship, generational identities have been examined from the perspective of the individual who is a part of it. Therefore, focus has been placed on identifying the socio-political events that each individual considers important. Further, in terms of the impact of these generational identities on career, leadership, and learning, the in-depth interview method and one-to-one engagement with the participants was used to unearth the individual’s meaning making process in this regard. Thus, the present study explores how individuals have constructed their reality regarding these experiences, along with the social dynamics that affect this meaning making process.

2. Historical and cultural specificity: This assumption acknowledges that the individual’s construction of his/her own reality is affected by the unique socio-cultural experiences he/she may have experienced in life. This has been the core assumption of the present study, which is clear from the fact that the study set out to explore how the unique socio-cultural, historical, and political events of India affected generational identities, rather than accepting any “universal” classification of generational groups.

3. Social processes sustain knowledge: In line with the assumption of non-existence of an “objective” reality that stems from the natural one, expressed in the first point, here the social constructivist perspective suggests that if not from the natural world, the reality stems from the society and social processes. This is to say that individuals’ constructions of reality are a result of their interaction with the society. Therefore, social interactions are the focus of any study prescribing to the Social Constructionist perspective, including the present one. As explained before, the study explored the nature of the formation of generational identities based on social interactions and events, and subsequently examined the interactions between different generational groups, and how it affected individual attitudes and expectations regarding career, leadership, and learning.

The methodological approach based on this philosophical position involves interaction with the problems and the actors involved, to achieve and understanding of the “why” and “how” of the complex social system. Thus, the philosophical underpinnings of the present study have been summarized in Table 3.1.
Table 3.1

*Philosophical underpinnings of the study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Epistemology</th>
<th>Axiology</th>
<th>Rhetorical structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Participants construct and co-construct their reality based on socio-political memories and critical events during their socialization period.</td>
<td>• Social Constructivist /Transactional /Subjectivist.</td>
<td>• Transactional knowing is inherently valuable.</td>
<td>• Remained close to the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This reality maybe multiple, socially constructed versions of the truth.</td>
<td>• Researcher engaged with the participants to recreate and reinterpret meanings.</td>
<td>• Participants’ experiences and voices were valued and represented.</td>
<td>• Made interpretations based on themes across participants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58
Research Design

Several multigenerational studies used quantitative methods to explore generational differences. However, to fulfill the above mentioned research objectives it was clear that a quantitative paradigm alone would not help explain all aspects of the study focus. To begin with, the composition of generational groups in the Indian workforce was a relatively unexplored area. Therefore, the researcher decided to first conduct a qualitative survey to identify the formative events that different generational groups considered salient (details of the methods have been explained in the next section). Subsequently, building on the landmark work of Schumann and Scott (1989), the qualitative findings were substantiated by a comprehensive quantitative survey on a large sample. With reference to generational differences in career, leadership, and learning, the researcher believed that the significance of these work attributes and individual differences in the meaning making, and the generational dynamics involved in the same, would be revealed only by an in-depth qualitative exploration.

Therefore, a mixed model was used as the method in the present study, in which both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed simultaneously. Owing to the main purpose of the study, i.e., to study individual experiences and interpretations related to generational factors and their impact on career, leadership, and learning, most of the objectives were met using qualitative methods. This was done, because, as suggested by Bryman (1988) the qualitative approach is “an approach to the study of the social world, which seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behavior of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied” (p. 46).

While the qualitative aspect helped understand the social-cultural and historical influences on generational identities in detail, the quantitative aspect identified the generational markers in a large sample. Based on order of execution and level of importance laid on the two methods, Creswell, et al. (2002) suggested six different types of mixed method designs. In the context of the present study, a ‘Concurrent Nested Approach’ was used. In this approach of a mixed method design, qualitative and quantitative methods are combined, but the study is guided by one principal method. The secondary method, though executed simultaneously with the predominant method, is considered to be embedded or nested in it. They further explained the concept of nesting
stating that, “nesting may mean that the embedded method addressed a question different from that addressed by the dominant method or that the embedded method seeks information from different levels” (Creswell, et al. 2002, p. 229). Thus, for the first two objectives of this study, the quantitative methods were nested in the qualitative approach. The researcher identified generational markers in the naturalistic setting, and explained the unique characteristics of each generation using case specific qualitative data. Creswell (2009) acknowledged this as one of the uses of the concurrent nested model. Thus, the quantitative data further accentuated and supported the findings from qualitative data.

In view of this design, the following were its salient features that are considered to have enabled explanation of a more holistic picture of the research problem:

1. The generational markers and the characteristics of each generation were identified using qualitative and quantitative methods.
2. Qualitative methods were used to gain a subjectivist viewpoint of how individuals from the different generations constructed meaning from the formative events.
3. Quantitative methods entailed identification of generational markers and salient socio-historical, economic, and political events that shaped generational identities in India, through a comprehensive questionnaire.
4. Finally, qualitative methods, in the form of in-depth interviews were used to extrapolate the intra-generational characteristics, and inter-generational differences in terms of their preferences regarding career, leadership, and learning.

The procedural aspects of the study have been further explained in detail in later sections.

**Research Methods**

The literature review revealed that several multigenerational studies conducted in different cultures were found to employ the methodology used by Schuman and Scott (1989) (e.g., Egri & Ralston, 2004; Yi, Ribbens, & Morgan, 2010 in China; D’Amato & Deal, 2007; D’Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008 in Europe; Thelen & Honeycutt, 2004 in Russia, and so forth). Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher decided to do the same in the present study. As the present study addressed varied aspects of generational differences in the Indian workforce, it involved several stages (summarized in Figure 3.2)
Figure 3.2: Stages of data collection in the study

Stage I
Exploring Formative Events and Collective Memories

Key informants:
60 participants from varied age-related groups.
Method:
Qualitative

Stage II
Survey on Collective Memories and Composition of Generations in the Indian Workforce

Key informants:
508 participants, ~100 each from 5 age-based groups used in Stage I.
Method:
Quantitative
10 participants from top management positions, from the baseline study.
Method:
Qualitative

Stage III
Examining Generational Differences in Career, Learning, and Leadership

Key informants:
60 participants from Stage I.
Method:
Qualitative
and a combination of methods and informants. Data from each stage was analyzed before the commencement of the next stage, and each subsequent stage was informed by the knowledge generated from the previous stage(s). To ensure clarity, the research methods have been explained according to these stages.

Stage I: Exploring Formative Events and Collective Memories

In keeping with the methodology used by Schuman and Scott (1989), the first stage of the main study explored the formative events across generations. For this purpose, participants were asked to report important national socio economic and political events they could remember from their growing up years, and to identify the ones they felt were the most memorable for their generation. Participants included 60 professionals from varied public and private sector industries from Mumbai and Delhi (see Table 3.2). These two cities were chose for convenience purposes.

**Sampling method.** Purposive sampling was employed due to two reasons. Firstly, the main focus of this study was to identify salient memories and understand organizational realities related to generational differences. Therefore, it was necessary to select participants who were aware of these factors, and could articulate them. Thus, within purposive sampling, “intensity sampling” was utilized, to identify information-rich cases (Patton, 1990). Secondly, this study required substantial investment of time from the participants. Each interview spanned about 90 minutes, and participants from this stage were also re-interviewed for Stage III of the study. Therefore, only participants who were willing to be a part of this time-intensive process were selected. Thus, participants who fulfilled the below criteria, and those who consented to participate in the study were selected.

**Inclusion criteria.** As this was an exploratory study, and there is no empirical research that explains the existing generational groups in the Indian context, it was decided to use an age-based classification at this stage. As explained in Chapter 1, though it provided limited insight on formative events, an age-based classification is more applicable to an organizational context, as the ages of entering and retiring from the workforce are more or less stable across industries. It is important to note that though individuals
generally enter the workforce only at around 20 years of age, the lowest age cutoff was decided as 15 years. This was because late adolescence and early adulthood are considered the critical periods for the formation of generational identity. Therefore, the sample was designed to include those aged 15 years and above, so as to get a clearer picture of the composition and memories of the youngest generation in the Indian workforce. Thus, the sample comprised participants belonging to one of five age-based groups, specifically, 15–24 years, 25–34 years, 35–44 years, 45–54 years, and at or above 55 years. To ensure equal representation of all age groups, 12 participants were selected from each group. Thus, the following inclusion criteria were used:

- Individuals aged 15 years or above.
- Individuals working currently, either in public and private sector organizations. Here, both Indian and international companies were included, as organizational factors are not considered to directly affect generational differences.
- Individuals with minimum 6 months of work experience were included because some minimal work experience is required to reflect on the expectations from work.
- For this stage, individuals from any designation were selected because here, the generational identities were explored, which were presumed to not be affected by organizational position.

**Exclusion criteria.** The following exclusion criteria were employed:

- Individuals aged less than 15 years were excluded from the sample.
- Retired individuals were excluded from the sample, mainly because they would not represent the present workforce.
- Entrepreneurs and individuals working in charitable or non-profit organizations were excluded as the main aim of this study was to examine the impact of generational differences on organizational policies from an HR perspective. As these organizations would have a very different structure as compared to corporate companies, they were excluded from the sample.
Table 3.2

*Sample characteristics for Stage 1 of the study (N = 60)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Type of Industry</th>
<th>Number of Participants (f)</th>
<th>Gender (f)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Telecom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warehousing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>FMCG</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Banking and Financial Institutions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E Commerce</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Oil and Natural Gas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telecom</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ITES</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods of data collection. As explained before, due to the exploratory nature of the study, as a first step, qualitative methods were used. Therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants to help them identify the salient national events in their life. Each interview spanned about 90 minutes. As suggested by several guidelines for conducting in-depth interviews (e.g., Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Patton, 2002; Prairie Research Associates, 2001), a general interview guide was used to conduct the interview, to ensure at all the important research questions were covered in the interview. According to McNamara (2009), the strength of the general interview guide approach is the ability of the researcher “…to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides more focus than the conversational approach, but still allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee.” After taking the ethical precaution such as seeking informed consent (described later in this chapter), as recommended by Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) the following precautions were taken while conducting the interviews:

1. Structure and flexibility were combined by using a general interview guide for the interviews. This allowed the researcher to cover all relevant topics and issues in the interview, while providing scope for probing and exploring the respondents’ perspectives in the interview.
2. The interview was interactive, ensuring that it happened in a conversational form, where the interview was guided by the interviewee’s responses. Thus, while the first question was asked by the researcher, following questions were determined by what the interviewee said.
3. The researcher used probes and follow-up questions to ensure that the respondents’ opinions, beliefs, reasons, etc. were sufficiently explored.

The same method was used for the interviews conducted in Stage III of this study.

Analysis. The interviews were transcribed, after which thematic analysis was conducted using the following steps, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

1. Familiarization of the data: The transcripts were reread several times to ensure familiarity with the data. Rather than interpreting the data or
applying codes, at this stage, the researcher immersed herself in the data, to ensure in-depth understanding of the same.

2. Developing initial codes: Using inductive reasoning, preliminary codes were developed. As this was one of the first attempts to empirically study generational identities in India, the analysis was data driven, rather than theory driven.

3. Identifying themes: Several codes were generated in the previous step. In this step, these codes were examined for commonalities and differences, and common codes were grouped into themes that defined the whole category.

4. Refining themes: The preliminary themes were examined, and the data was re-examined to ensure that all the relevant themes had been identified. These themes were then refined by examining relationships between them. Overlapping concepts were avoided by ensuring internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity of themes. In this case, the classification of the groups was identified.

5. Labeling: Finally, the themes were assigned labels that represented the core concept of the theme. In this case, the groups were labeled according to the formative events.

Three generations were identified in this stage (explained in Chapter 4). Based on these generations, the next stage was designed to substantiate this classification on a larger sample.

Please note that, throughout the three stages, the individual was the unit of analysis. As explained earlier, the focus of this study was to examine the meanings individuals attached to formative socio-cultural events they experienced, how this shaped their own idea of generational identities, and how it affected their personal attitudes related to work. Though it was later analyzed to explore specific patterns related to generational groups, especially in Stage III, the unit of analysis remained the individual. To reiterate, this was followed in all the three stages of the study.
Stage II: Survey on the Composition of Generations in the Indian Workforce

The aim of this stage was to provide quantitative evidence for the generations identified in Stage I and to explore generational memories in a large sample. Based on Schuman and Scott’s (1989) method, the entire working population was divided in five groups of 10 years of age range i.e., 15–24 years, 25–34 years, 35–44 years, 45–54 years, and 55 and above, and a sample of about 100 participants was surveyed from each group making it 500 participants. To allow for participant dropouts or missing data, a few extra participants were interviewed from each group, making the sample to 510. Finally, excluding some missing data, the final usable sample was 508.

**Sampling Method.** A multistage sampling method was employed for this stage. First, to ensure equal representation of public and private organizations, as well as varied industries, organizations were identified using stratified sampling. Then, within each of the organizations, participants were sourced using purposive sampling, to select participants who met the selection criteria, and those who consented to participate in the study.

**Inclusion criteria.** In addition to the inclusion criteria mentioned in Stage I, it was ensured that the participants belonged to the different age-based groups utilized in Stage I.

**Exclusion criteria.** The exclusion criteria were the same as Stage I.

**Sample Characteristics.** The final sample sample characteristics have been described in Table 3.3. Overall, it was attempted to strike a balance between the number of participants from each age-group, city, and sector of the organization. Other than that, it was observed that most of the participants were educated up to graduation level (67.32%) and most of them were males (72.44%). Further, it was also ensured that organizations from different industries were included. Thus, the final sample included participants from industries such as BFSI, IT &ITES, Consulting, Power, steel, oil & natural gas, FMCG, and advertising.

**Method of data collection.** A questionnaire was developed to help participants identify salient events from their adolescence and early adulthood. This was based on first
### Table 3.3

*Sample characteristics of the Stage II Sample (N = 508)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Age group (Years)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–24</td>
<td>101 (19.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>105 (20.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>102 (20.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>100 (19.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥ 55</td>
<td>100 (19.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>City of residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
<td>256 (50.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>252 (49.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>258 (50.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>250 (49.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>368 (72.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>140 (27.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>342 (67.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>166 (32.68)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Manheim’s (1952) assumption that adolescence and early adulthood is the critical period for the formation of generational identities. In this questionnaire, participants were asked to report five dominant memories from the “growing up years.” Subsequently, they were shown picture cards of salient events that occurred from 1955 to about 2005, and asked to identify which of those were salient for them. This period was chosen considering that it matched the period of adolescence and early adulthood for the target population of this study. These formative experiences and national events covered technological advances, socio-cultural experiences, famous personalities with whom the participants could identify, and political events of national significance (for instance, wars, economic events/reforms, political changes, etc.), which were selected from a comprehensive examination of the literature on these events. Thus, the questionnaire included 45 important events that occurred from 1955 to about 2005. To reiterate, the questionnaire comprised a section with non-aided, open ended items, as well as a section where the recall of memories/events was aided by picture cards. The questionnaire also included demographic information of the participants. The questionnaire and picture cards have been presented in Appendix A.

**Analysis.** The data was analyzed using IBM® SPSS® Statistics 21.0. To enhance the validity of the data analysis and to eliminate any distinctions between the raw data and the input data, data cleaning was performed (Polit & Beck, 2008). Descriptive statistics were calculated, including means, standard deviations (SDs), ranges, frequency distributions, and percentages to summarize the demographic characteristics. The frequency (and percentage) of identifying an event as salient was examined for each of the five age groups, and most commonly identified events were examined across generations. Further, age-based group differences were examined using the one-way ANOVA and post hoc analyses were conducted using the Tukey’s HSD. Once the salient collective memories that showed significant group differences were identified, further, logistic regressions were run to examine the impact of age, gender, and education. Based on the qualitative findings of Stage I and the analysis mentioned above, the existing generational groups in the Indian workforce were identified. Finally, to further verify if the age-group based salient memories identified in the previous analysis, the one-way ANOVA and Tukey’s HSD analysis were re-run for the three generational groups identified.
Additionally, after analyzing and triangulating the data from the survey and in-depth interviews, to re-inspect the three-group classification identified, and to assess its applicability to the industry, in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 participants from the baseline study. To check the relevance of the findings of the present study in the real field, it was necessary to select participants who would be experienced in observing and working with multiple generations. Therefore, this iteration process only included individuals from the top management.

As mentioned before, though the sampling for this stage was started at the organizational level, the unit of analysis remained the individual, as this stage aimed to identify the socio-political events that each individual considered salient during their growing years.

Thus, Stages I and II fulfilled Objectives 1 and 2. Subsequently, Stage III was conducted to fulfill Objectives 3–5, which has been described in the next section.

**Stage III: Examining Generational Differences in Career, Learning, and Leadership**

This stage aimed to unearth the generational dynamics in the three foci of the study, namely, career, learning, and leadership. As this required explorations of individual meaning making processes, as well as interpersonal dynamics, qualitative methods were employed. The sample was same as the one used for Stage I. All the 60 participants were contacted again, and in-depth interviews, of about 90 minutes each, were conducted with them. Here, it was expected that contacting the same respondents again would be difficult, however, to avoid this, the researcher informed them about the requirements for their participation, i.e., they were informed about being contacted twice for the in-depth interviews right at the outset, before they provided informed consent to participate in the study and give the researcher the required time. Therefore, the researcher did not have difficulty in contacting the same sample from Stage I, for the Stage III interviews.

The sample selection, data collection method, and analysis were the same as that explained in Stage I. The only difference was that the analysis was done to examine generational differences in the abovementioned areas, based on the group classification identified from Stages I and II. Again, the unit of analysis was first the individual, and then the groups. To explain, the researcher first examined individual experiences of generational
differences, and the perceived effect they believed it had on their attitudes and expectations regarding career, leadership, and learning. Once these aspects were examined, the researcher analyzed if there were any clear group-based differences in this meaning making. Therefore, subsequently, the unit of analysis for this stage was the generational group.

To summarize the above descriptions, the process of the entire study has been presented below:

**Research Procedure**

1. Literature review and existing generational classifications identified.
2. Baseline study.
3. Implementing Stage I on Generational groups and collective memories.
4. Simultaneously designing and piloting questionnaire for Stage II and implementing Stage II, i.e., survey on collective memories and generational groups.
5. Analysis of data collected from Stage I and II; re-examining the industry reality with reference to the findings.
6. Implementing Stage III on generational differences in career, learning, and leadership by repeating interviews with the sample of Stage I.
7. Analysis of data collected from Stage III based on the groups identified from Stages I and II.

**Ethical Considerations**

The researcher upheld the following ethical principles in this study:

**Informed consent and voluntary participation.** A signed informed consent was secured from all participants. To this effect, the participants were first explained the objectives and methods of the study. They were also informed of their right to voluntary participation and withdrawal from the study.

**Confidentiality.** The participants were assured that their identities would be kept confidential, and no identifying data would be reported in research report.
Nonmaleficence. Abiding by ethical recommendations of organizations such as the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2012) and American Psychological Associations (APA, 2002), which pertain to social research, it was ensured that the research methods, process, or reports, would not harm the participants in any way.

Access to data. The participants were assured that they would have access to the data, analysis, and interpretations of the researcher, and findings of the present study. In this regard, the study was accepted by the Research Council of the university the researcher belonged to.

Having explained the methodology employed in the present study, the following chapters present the findings and discuss them based on the existing body of research.