

# Attitudes to Work of Generation Y Students in Hospitality Management: A Comparative Analysis of Students in the United States and the United Kingdom

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**ABSTRACT.** Students currently in college are predominantly from "Generation Y" (GEN Y), born between 1975 and 1995. As GEN Y members enter the work force in large numbers, it is imperative that

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employers gain deeper insights into their mindset, particularly their attitudes towards work. This study addresses the issue by studying the attitudes to work of college students in hospitality management in two countries, the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK). Work attitude is recognized as a multidimensional construct. The study found GEN Y students in both the USA and the UK to be largely positive in their attitudes to work and to exhibit relatively low levels of cynicism about work and promotion. Furthermore, the study found that with increasing age and work experience, students' positive work attitude was enhanced, while their negative attitudes were ameliorated.

**KEYWORDS.** GEN Y, work attitudes, work involvement, work value, work ethics, work cynicism, promotion cynicism, career stage

## INTRODUCTION

Students currently in college are predominantly from "Generation Y" (GEN Y), born between 1975 and 1995. Many researchers have said that this generation is different from previous ones, as it has been shaped by different forces and events. As GEN Y members enter college and the work force in large numbers, it is imperative that educators and employers gain deeper insights into their mindset. Employers are particularly interested in their attitudes towards work. Such attitudes have been shown to impact a host of human resource issues such as absenteeism, turnover, deviant behaviors, and quality and quantity of work. The hospitality industry, being labor intensive, is certainly impacted by each one of these issues.

Attitudes to work have not been addressed in the literature in sufficient detail. Furthermore, the specific issues of attitudes toward work of college students preparing for careers in the hospitality industry have not been addressed by any study in the past. Additionally, no study has attempted to look at this issue from a multicontinent perspective. Given the tremendous costs and related problems associated with human resource management

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in the hospitality industry, this study aims to address this gap in the literature and propose research-based solutions.

The purpose of the study was to explore the attitudes towards work of GEN Y students in a hospitality management program in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) using multiple measures. Furthermore, the purpose of the study was also to examine the relationship between attitudes to work and demographics and other relevant variables. Additionally, the study aims to present these issues in a comparative framework that highlights commonalities and differences between these two groups of students.

## ***LITERATURE REVIEW***

### ***Generation X and Generation Y***

Research has found considerable differences between Generation X and Generation Y in their attitudes to work. Tang, Furhnam, and Davis (2002) conducted a study of work-related attitudes in Taiwan, the USA, and the UK. They found that workers in the USA strongly believed, more than workers in the UK, in money as an achievement and motivational factor. Members of Generation X were born from 1960 to 1975 and were considered lazy and cynical by Filipczak (1994), who characterized Generation X in the USA as more collaborative, less hierarchical, more altruistic, more comfortable with women bosses, more skilled in management, and more tech savvy, balanced, candid in their communications, and self-reliant. Generation Y is just entering the work place. They think visually, want immediate gratification, and emphasize fun and excitement. Generation Yers are not shy to tell others what they want. They have had better education, are more tech-savvy, and value personal creativity. Generation Yers have been treated more as individuals than any other generation. A summary table (McGarvy, 1999) is provided (See Figure 1).

In this study we are exploring the work attitudes of the undergraduates of hospitality management in the USA and UK specifically in terms of the emerging Generation Y (GEN Y) demographics. College undergraduates fall generally in an age range of 18–25 years. We have extended our GEN Y demographics to include 18–26 years old due to the demographics of our samples. This emerging segment has a very strong presence in the overall job market and provides industry, as well as management, new challenges to consider as they enter the workforce.

FIGURE 1. Work-related GEN Y characteristics in the USA &amp; UK.

| USA                                  | UK   |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| - Think visually                     | - Self-based   |
| - Want immediate gratification       | - not afraid to ask for what they want and demand it right now |
| - Want fun and excitement in the job | - greater fluidity in their professional careers               |
| - Balanced                           | - more loyal to their lifestyle than their jobs                |
| - Candid in their communications     | - transparent, committed, adult-to-adult relationships         |
| - Self-reliant                       |  |
| - Rule-shy                           |  |
| - Value personal creativity          |  |

### *Work Attitudes*

The challenge of retaining qualified employees is of definite concern in both countries, USA and UK, due to the substantial economic impact of turnover rates on the bottom line (Brien, 2004; Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Simons & Hinkin, 2001). The hospitality industry in particular is often plagued by an overall negative image of temporary employment options, even for highly motivated individuals (Brien, 2004). Career development in both countries is based on generally similar plans. Low-skilled employees are hired at the entry level, and promotions are predominantly sourced from within the company after employees gain skills and experience. This is generally perceived as the appropriate strategy to develop the skills, sensitivity, maturity, and understanding necessary to meet the needs of the consumer base.

Employee attitudes are an indicative factor as to whether an organization will succeed in the future (Alas, 2005; Hurst, 1995). We are recognizing attitudes to work as a multidimensional construct by segmenting it into the following composite categories of consideration: positive work attitude, negative work attitude, work cynicism, promotion cynicism, work value, work ethics, job involvement, and work motivation. These composite scales have been adopted from previous research in order to gain the benefit of developed field-tested techniques.

Our objective is to develop an empirical base to gain a deeper understanding of the work attitudes of undergraduates in hospitality management departments across national borders. Undergraduate-level students are struggling through a transitional period, as their identities and social processes are adapting and rapidly processing in an environment ripe with

influences and opportunities (Holmes, 1999; Jameson & Holden, 2000; Perrone & Vickers, 2003).

## DEFINITIONS

The process of clarifying the components of work attitude is necessary due to the misuse of the variables (Kanungo, 1982). There has been inconsistent use of the terms *work* and *job* in sociological and psychological research that has complicated the understanding and development of work phenomena. Although the concepts can be explored with similar constructs, they differ significantly in their scope. *Job* is considered more of a component of a specific occupational experience, whereas *work* is viewed as a general and complex concept that involves the consideration of specific intrinsic and extrinsic components, such as involvement and motivation (Blood, 1969; Dubin, Champoux, & Porter, 1975; Faunce, 1959; Kanungo, 1982; Lodahl & Kejner, 1965; Wollack, Goodale, Wijting, & Smith, 1971). An individual is likely to have many *jobs* over their lifetime, as they *work* for a living. An individual's attitude to work is formed by a complex interaction of their life experiences in many different jobs, as well as their perceptions of the role of work in their life.

### *Work Attitude*

Our work attitude construct is defined by the measures of work involvement, work ethics, work values, and work motivation. In general, attitude is a psychological component that expresses an individual tendency towards an expression of either positive or negative degree of inclination to a particular entity (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). An attitude will incline an individual toward one certain way of reacting instead of another due to a previous experience (Cooper & Croyle, 1984).

### *Work Attitude Variables*

Six dimensions of work attitudes are included in this study: positive work attitudes, negative work attitudes, work value, two scales of work involvement, work motivation, and work ethic. Work motivation has two subcategories of economic and social motivations. Negative and positive work attitude scales are based on 31 items established by Stone and Josiam (2000) as significant regression variables for adolescent work attitudes. The negative work attitude was further segmented into two composites

labeled *work cynicism* and *promotion cynicism*. Work cynicism involves the perception of work as a necessary evil to be completed with minimal effort. *Promotion cynicism* is the viewpoint of job promotion as an avoidable evil, being more likely to increase stress and workload rather than providing any additional benefits. Positive work attitude was clarified into "positive job attitudes, work ethic, job satisfaction, social motivations for work, and economic motivations for work" (Stone & Josiam., 2000, p. 545). These questions related to overall work attitude also implied work as a "central life interest," correlating with studies conducted by Dubin (1956) and explored by Faunce (1959) as occupational involvement. Maurer (1968) combined the scales of Dubin and Lodahl and Kejner to revisit the analysis on industrial supervisors initiated by Dubin (1956), where it was concluded that the two scales measured similar work values. We are measuring *work involvement* on scales adopted from Kanungo (1982), who used these measures extensively in regards to work alienation and job satisfaction.

### ***Work Value and Work Ethic***

The measurements of work value and work ethic are often used interchangeably; however, we are defining them in terms of two separate indicators of attitude. Our work value measurement items were adopted from "life interest variables" used in the 1972 National Longitudinal Survey on a high school senior class (Cappelli, Constantine, Chadwick, 2000). The difference then between measure of work values and our adopted work ethic measurements is the specific reference to Protestant Work Ethic theory introduced by Weber (Blood, 1969). Three items were adopted to indicate the individual's reflection on "work success, children's opportunities, and steady work" according to the factor of work importance. These measurements relate directly to a consolidated item listing of viewpoints projected by the Protestant faith on the "ethical" approach to viewing work in relation to one's life.

### ***Career Stage***

We have explored the influence of experience on the cognitions of attitudes by taking into consideration career stage in terms of work experience within chosen major (Cron, 1984; Flaherty & Pappas, 2002; Super, 1957). Cron (1984) developed a framework for a career stage theory from the initial development by Super (1957). The framework proposes an individuals career stage experience as (1) exploration, (2)

establishment, (3) maintenance, and (4) engagement. Flaherty and Pappas (2002) found a potential correlation between career stage and job attitude and motivation. Our research focus is on undergraduate students who fall in the demographic segment of GEN Y. They can be then categorized primarily in the exploration stage of their careers. We have chosen to identify the following items as relevant to describing the career stage of our sample: class or year in college, current job status, number of years of work experience within their chosen major, and whether the individual was currently working in a position related to their chosen major. Current job status has the potential to affect an individual's attitude towards work, due to the challenges of balancing this additional responsibility with that of furthering their higher education (Polson & Nida, 1998).

### ***OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY***

The specific objectives for this study were to:

1. Determine the **attitudes to work** of GEN Y hospitality management college students in both the USA and the UK using multiple measures from the literature such as:
  - a. **Positive Attitudes to Work**
  - b. **Negative Attitudes to Work**
    - i. **Work Cynicism**
    - ii. **Promotion Cynicism**
  - c. **Work Involvement**
  - d. **Work Values**
  - e. **Work Ethic**
  - f. **Economic Motivation for Work**
  - g. **Social Motivation for Work**
2. Determine the relationship between different measures of attitudes to work.
3. Determine the relationship between demographics of the students and their work attitudes in both the USA and the UK.
4. Identify the **job factors** of students in both the USA and the UK and the relationship between these factors and job attitudes.

- Type and amount of prior work experience,
  - Type of job and amount of current working hours,
  - Layoff experience
5. Determine the relationship between parents' demographics, their job factors, and work attitudes of students in both the USA and the UK.

### *METHODOLOGY*

A questionnaire was developed for the study, using guidelines and scales from applied research in the areas of job satisfaction, job factors, work/job/occupational attitudes, and human resource management. The population was defined as GEN Y students enrolled in bachelor's degree programs in hospitality management in the USA and the UK.

The questionnaire included a brief introduction and instruction in the beginning. Since multiple scales were used, the following section gives the scales used and two sample statements for each of the scales.

1. **Positive Attitude to Work scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of ten variables measured on agreement level with the description of the work attitude using a four-point scale.
  - Sample statements:
    1. A worker should feel responsible to do a decent job whether or not his/her supervisor is around.
    2. There is nothing as satisfying, as doing the best job possible.
2. **Negative Attitude to Work scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of thirteen variables measured on agreement level with the description of the work attitude using a four-point scale.
  - Sample statements:
    1. Workers are entitled to call in sick when they do not feel like working.
    2. Most people today are stuck in dead-end, go-nowhere jobs.
3. **Work Cynicism Scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of ten variables measured on agreement level with



the description of the work attitude using a four-point scale. This was a subscale of the Negative Attitudes scale.

- Sample statements:
  1. To me, working is nothing more than making a living.
  2. Hard work really doesn't get you much of anything in this world.
- 4. **Promotion Cynicism Scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of three variables measured on agreement level with the description of the work attitude using a four-point scale. This was a subscale of the Negative Attitudes scale.
  - Sample statements:
    1. A promotion to a higher-level job usually means more worries and should be avoided for that reason.
    2. A worker is better off if he/she is satisfied with a job and is not concerned about being promoted to another job.
- 5. **Work Value scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of eight variables measured on agreement level with the description of the item using a four-point scale.
  - Sample statements:
    1. Hard work makes one a better person.
    2. A good indication of a person's worth is how well they do their job.
- 6. **Work Involvement scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of six variables measured on agreement level with the description of the item using a four-point scale.
  - Sample statements:
    1. Work should be considered central to life.
    2. Life is worth living only when people get absorbed in work.
- 7. **(Personal) Involvement in Work scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of four variables measured on a seven-point bipolar scale using word pairs.
  - Sample items: (To me work, in general, is:)
    1. "Trivial . . . to . . . Fundamental"
    2. "Unimportant . . . to . . . Important"

8. **Work Ethic scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of three variables measured on the importance level with the description of the item using a four-point scale.
- Sample statements: (It is important to me to be:)
    1. Successful in my line of work.
    2. Being able to give my children better opportunities than I have had.
9. **Economic Motivation for Work scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of two variables measured on agreement level with the description of the item using a four-point scale.
- Sample statements:
    1. A person should choose one job over another mostly because of higher wages.
    2. A person should choose a job which pays the most.
10. **Social Motivation for Work scale:** This composite variable was constructed using the mean of three variables measured on agreement level with the description of the item using a four-point scale.
- Sample statements:
    1. A person who holds down a good job is the most respected person in the community.
    2. My friends would not think much of me if I did not have a good job.
11. **Job Factors:** Nature and amount of present job, previous jobs, and questions regarding being subject to a layoff at work or having a father or mother being laid off from work.
12. **Demographic** data about the respondent and their parents.

Data was collected utilizing a survey that was handed out to students in classes in a major hospitality management program in the Southwestern USA and in England, UK. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. No compensation was provided. In the USA, 202 usable surveys were returned, while in the UK, 125 usable surveys were returned. This data was statistically processed utilizing the SPSS statistical software.

## FINDINGS

### *Demographics*

In both countries, the majority of the respondents were female. The female representation was more pronounced in the UK, where only a third of the students are male. All respondents were in the GEN Y age group. Differences in age between USA and UK may be attributable to the specifics of the population in these two hospitality departments surveyed. Racially, we can see differences between the students in the USA and the UK. In the USA, 68.8% of students were White American compared to only 42.4% of the students in the UK, who were White British. Again, this may have been a function of sampling, perhaps also a reflection of greater number of racial and ethnic minorities in the UK as residents and as international students. It can be seen that in the USA, hospitality management students were not receiving as high grade point averages (GPA) as students in the UK. Only 11.4% of students in the USA achieved a 3.5 or higher, compared to 15.2% of students in the UK receiving the same marks. There was also a disparity of those obtaining a 2.51–3.5 GPA. Of USA students 54.0%, compared to 78.4% of UK students, achieved these scores. In the UK, the access to higher education is more restricted than in the USA. Because more students are afforded the opportunity to attend university in the USA, the selection of students is more relaxed than in the UK, perhaps explaining the lower GPAs. It appears that the UK is getting a more academically talented pool of students than the USA. However, it should be noted that in both the USA and the UK, GPA was a self-reported measure. Furthermore, the academic measures are different in each country and have been transformed into equivalent measures for purposes of comparison. It is possible that these two issues could have resulted in differing GPAs. Demographic details are given in Table 1.

### *Objective 1: Examine College Students' Multidimensional Work Attitudes*

Hospitality management students in both countries reported a high score on Positive Attitudes to Work and Work Ethic and a correspondingly low score on Negative Attitudes to Work. They were not cynical either about work or about promotion. However, students reported comparatively lower scores on Work Involvement. The results are seen in Table 2.

TABLE 1. Profile of respondents

|                                 | Frequency<br>USA/UK | Percents (%)<br>USA/UK |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                   |                     |                        |
| Male                            | 83/41               | 41.1%/32.8%            |
| Female                          | 119/84              | 58.9%/67.2%            |
| <b>Age</b>                      |                     |                        |
| 18-20                           | 59/66               | 29.2%/52.8%            |
| 21-25                           | 12/49               | 63.0%/39.2%            |
| 26-30                           | 15/6                | 7.5%/4.8%              |
| <b>Race</b>                     |                     |                        |
| White American/British          | 139/53              | 68.8%/42.4%            |
| Others                          | 63/71               | 31.2%/56.8%            |
| <b>Grade Point Average(GPA)</b> |                     |                        |
| 1.50-2.50                       | 43/5                | 21.3%/4.0%             |
| 2.51-3.50                       | 109/98              | 54.0%/78.4%            |
| 3.5-4.0                         | 23/19               | 11.4%/15.2%            |

TABLE 2. Mean score of students' work attitude, work involvement, and work value

|   |                          | Scale Range | MEAN<br>USA/UK |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1 | Positive Attitude Scale  | 1 to 4      | 3.39/3.06      |
| 2 | Negative Attitude Scale  |             | 1.92/2.11      |
| 3 | Work Cynicism Scale      |             | 1.86/2.12      |
| 4 | Promotion Cynicism Scale |             | 1.97/2.05      |
| 5 | Involvement Scale        | 1 to 7      | 5.30/5.09      |
| 6 | Work Involvement Scale   | 1 to 4      | 2.27/2.24      |
| 7 | Work Value Scale         |             | 2.85/2.77      |

The results indicate that both USA and UK hospitality management students had very similar opinions on various dimensions of work attitudes. It is seen that the USA students were marginally more positive about their work attitude than their UK counterparts. However, the difference was minimal. Also, both groups of students felt that their involvement in work should be restrained. It appears that, in both the UK and the USA, students valued a work-life balance.

*Objective 2: Determine the Relationship Between Students' "Positive Work Attitude/Negative Work Attitude" and "Work Motivation, Work Value, Work Ethic, and Work Involvement"*

Not surprisingly, Table 3 shows that in both the USA and the UK strong and significant negative correlations were found between Positive Attitudes to Work and Negative Attitudes to Work. Work Ethic was found to be positively correlated to Positive Attitudes. In both countries, however, there were no significant correlations between Positive Attitudes to Work and Work Value and Work Involvement scores, suggesting that these measure different constructs.

In both the USA and the UK, those with stronger positive attitudes to work were likely to be significantly less cynical about work and promotion. The differences lie in the categories of Work Involvement and Motivation—Economic. In the USA, students with higher Positive Attitude scores reported less involvement in work and were less motivated by money. UK students with positive attitudes were more likely to be motivated by money and more involvement in work.

Correlation analysis with USA and UK students' Negative Attitude shows that American students with stronger Work Ethic had lower Negative Attitude. This is to be expected. While the relationships between negative attitudes and related variables were somewhat mixed, Economic motivations were significantly correlated with negative attitudes in both countries. This suggests that money-minded students were more cynical about work, and viewed work from a purely monetary perspective. The results are in Table 4.

TABLE 3. Relationship between "Positive Attitude" and other variables

| Average Positive Attitude Score | r values USA/UK | Sig. Level USA/UK | Significant? USA/UK |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Work Cynicism                   | -.454/-.527     | .00/.00           | Yes/Yes             |
| Promotion Cynicism              | -.289/-.265     | .00/.003          | Yes/Yes             |
| Work Value                      | .051/.265       | .480/.003         | No/Yes              |
| Work Involvement                | -.052/.089      | .470/.328         | No/No               |
| Motivation—Social               | .168/.311       | .017/.000         | Yes/Yes             |
| Motivation—Economic             | -.106/.050      | .135/.581         | No/No               |
| Work Ethic                      | .289/.248       | .00/.005          | Yes/Yes             |

TABLE 4. Relationship between "Negative Attitude" and other variables

| Average Negative Attitude   | r values<br>USA/UK | Sig. Level<br>USA/UK | Significant?<br>USA/UK |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Average Work Value          | .204/.080          | .004/.380            | Yes/No                 |
| Average Work Involvement    | .231/-.023         | .001/.799            | Yes/No                 |
| Average Motivation—Social   | .068/.040          | .337/.658            | No/No                  |
| Average Motivation—Economic | .241/.286          | .001/.001            | Yes/Yes                |
| Average Work Ethic          | -.311/-.127        | .000/.157            | Yes/No                 |

*Objective 3: Determine the Impact of Gender, Race, and Age on College Students' Work Attitude, Work Value, Work Involvement, and Work Motivation*

The ANOVA analysis shows us that there were no significant differences between the genders in both the USA and the UK in regards to their Work Attitude, Work Value, Work Involvement, and Work Motivation. This commonality of attitudes between males and females in the two countries is to be expected, for one main reason: culturally, both countries have afforded women equal rights in the work place. With equal rights come equal opportunities. Over time, then, it is not surprising to see a convergence of values in relationship to work issues.

Across the board, it appears that the women from the UK and the USA were very much alike in their attitudes towards work, as were the men. It is interesting to see that in the USA, both men and women had marginally higher scores on positive attitudes and lower scores on negative attitudes compared to the UK. Furthermore, both genders were likely to be more money-minded in the UK. The results of the analysis are show in Table 5.

In analyzing the differences in race among hospitality management students in the UK and the USA, we see only one significant difference within a country. This difference appears within White British and Others within the UK. The data shows that White British were significantly less motivated by the economic factor than others attending school in the UK. This difference could be explained by the cost associated with students who were not White British. They could have been foreign students or first-generation immigrants. These students would then be more motivated to recoup their expenses in future earnings and therefore more money motivated than White British. Also, there are big differences seen between those of "Other" race, country to country in regards to motivation. In the USA, many people

TABLE 5. Gender differences in attitudes toward work

| Attitude            | Females USA/UK | Males US/UK | F USA/UK  | Sig. USA/UK |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Positive Attitude   | 3.38/3.09      | 3.43/2.98   | 0.74/2.41 | 0.390/0.123 |
| Work Cynicism       | 1.81/2.08      | 1.93/2.21   | 3.41/2.17 | 0.066/0.144 |
| Promotion Cynicism  | 1.97/2.02      | 1.97/2.13   | 0.00/1.42 | 0.986/0.235 |
| Work Value          | 2.82/2.79      | 2.89/2.73   | 1.83/0.49 | 0.178/0.483 |
| Work Involvement    | 2.25/2.26      | 2.29/2.21   | 0.34/0.45 | 0.558/0.503 |
| Motivation—Social   | 2.54/2.43      | 2.57/2.32   | 0.15/1.05 | 0.696/0.308 |
| Motivation—Economic | 2.36/2.42      | 2.31/2.37   | 0.22/0.26 | 0.640/0.612 |

TABLE 6. Racial differences in attitudes toward work

| Work Attitude           | White American/<br>White British | Other Race<br>USA/UK | F         | Sig.      | Sig.<br>Differences? |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| Positive Attitude       | 3.38/3.09                        | 3.48/3.03            | 1.62/1.05 | .205/.308 | No/No                |
| Work Cynicism           | 1.85/2.05                        | 1.80/2.19            | 1.23/2.74 | .269/0.10 | No/No                |
| Promotion<br>Cynicism   | 1.92/2.05                        | 1.89/2.06            | 2.94/0.02 | .088/0.89 | No/No                |
| Work Value              | 2.82/2.70                        | 2.90/2.70            | 3.82/2.56 | .052/0.11 | No/No                |
| Motivation—Social       | 2.52/2.36                        | 2.41/2.41            | 1.27/0.28 | .261/0.56 | No/No                |
| Motivation—<br>Economic | 2.32/2.18                        | 2.05/2.55            | 0.62/14.2 | .433/0.00 | No/Yes               |

of the "Other" race may not have been motivated by money as much as their counterparts in the UK because they were more likely to be first-generation higher education students. Again, the Average Positive Attitude score was lower for the British within the "White" and "Other" categories. USA students had a more positive outlook on their jobs, and this is seen across races as well. Table 6 shows the results.

Age correlations, as they related to attitude, motivation, and value, are interesting to note. There were significant relationships between age and positive attitude, negative attitude and promotion cynicism, and work value in USA students. In the UK, age was significantly correlated to work value and work involvement.

Looking at it from a country-to-country perspective, we see several differences between UK and USA students. In the USA, increasing age was associated with stronger positive attitudes. However, in the UK, positive attitude was negatively associated, but not significantly, with an increase in age. Perhaps UK students have a grimmer outlook on their future job opportunities

TABLE 7. Relationship between age, attitudes, and motivations

| Age                 | r USA/UK   | Sig. Level<br>USA/UK | Significant?<br>USA/UK |
|---------------------|------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Positive Attitude   | .153/-.050 | .030/.589            | YES/NO                 |
| Work Cynicism       | -.065/.120 | .361/.189            | NO/NO                  |
| Promotion Cynicism  | -.165/.072 | .020/.433            | YES/NO                 |
| Work Value          | .174/.199  | .015/.030            | YES/YES                |
| Work Involvement    | .077/.324  | .285/.000            | NO/YES                 |
| Motivation—Social   | .088/.102  | .216/.270            | NO/NO                  |
| Motivation-Economic | -.129/.150 | .071/.100            | NO/NO                  |

and realize this as they continue with their studies. In the USA, students may expect better jobs and careers upon completion of their degrees.

Economic motivation was shown to increase with age in the UK and to decrease with age in the USA. However, in both countries, the relationships were not significant. It appears that students in the USA were likely to be less motivated by money as they age. If they have found a career that is a good fit for them, they are happier with employment based on factors other than money. In the UK, as one's age increases, they are more likely to be motivated by money. This inference could be based upon differences in the cost of living of the survey participants. It is possible that Denton, Texas, in the USA does not have as high of a cost of living index as Surrey, UK, does. Therefore, if students are to have a better life for themselves, they are likely to need more income if attending school in the UK versus the USA. Indeed, the reasons for these measured differences in economic motivations need to be explored in greater detail. The results of the correlations are in Table 7.

Correlation analysis found that older students in the USA reported significantly higher scores on Positive Attitudes to Work and Work Values compared to younger students and were significantly less cynical about promotion at work. In both countries, Job Factors, such as work experience and number of hours worked, did not have any significant relationship to any of the attitudinal variables.

#### *Objective 4: Identify Job Factors of Students and Determine the Impact of Job Factors on Attitudinal Variables*

From the Job Factor profile seen in Table 8, it is clear that there were many differences between the USA and UK students. An overwhelming



TABLE 8. Job factor profile of respondents

|                            | Frequency<br>USA/UK | Percents (%)<br>USA/UK |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Current Job Status</b>  |                     |                        |
| Working                    | 149/53              | 73.8%/42.7%            |
| Not Working Currently      | 53/71               | 26.2%/57.3%            |
| <b>Current Job Level</b>   |                     |                        |
| Staff/Worker               | 107/42              | 76.9%/87.5%            |
| Supervisor/Manager         | 32/6                | 23.1%/12.5%            |
| <b>Job Status in Major</b> |                     |                        |
| Yes                        | 99/17               | 66.6%/30.3%            |
| No                         | 49/39               | 33.3%/69.7%            |
| <b>Lay-Off Experience</b>  |                     |                        |
| Student                    | 29/13               | 14.4%/10.9%            |
| Father                     | 59/17               | 29.2%/14.4%            |
| Mother                     | 23/11               | 18.3%/9.2%             |

majority of the USA students were working, while working students formed the minority in the UK. Furthermore, of those working, a substantially higher percentage was working at the supervisor/manager level in the USA. In addition, about two-thirds of the USA students were working in jobs in the hospitality industry, while only one-third were so employed in the UK. It appears that layoffs at work were more likely to be experienced by students and their parents in the USA than in the UK.

ANOVA analysis revealed that students currently working in the USA were significantly less likely to report higher levels of work cynicism and promotion cynicism. Perhaps their workplace experiences had been positive and shown them the value of hard work in both the long and short term. However, no significant relationships were identified between Job Factors and attitudinal variables in the UK.

In both countries, parental educational levels had no impact on the work attitudes of students. A small, but measurable, segment of the students had personally experienced a layoff, as had a similar segment of their mothers and their fathers in both countries. However, in both the USA and the UK, no significant attitudinal differences were found between those with personal or parental layoff experience and those without such an experience. It could be that the students felt a degree of autonomy from the experiences of their parents, or that they were too young when their parents were laid off and were therefore not impacted by it.

### *IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS*

This study will help the hospitality industry to address human resource management issues in the coming years as GEN Y students enter the workforce in ever greater numbers.

Students from the UK and the USA had differing Positive Attitudes. As Wood (1992) indicated, the UK has a number of seasonal hospitality jobs that are highly pressurized, stressful, and low paid. As students of hospitality management, UK students realize that the field they are entering has its drawbacks. Furthermore, a less positive attitude may be attributed to tipping differences. It is customary in the hospitality segment of the USA for employees to be tipped. In the UK, this is not the case. Therefore the earning potential of the USA student population is greater than that of the UK population. Although not as pronounced, the differences in the negative attitudes of the UK and USA students can be attributed to the same things. If one has a lower positive attitude score, they can be expected to have a higher negative attitude score. This is true in our analysis.

Although not significant, UK students appeared to be less involved in their work. It was found by McGarvy (1999), that the population in the UK valued their lifestyle more than their career to a greater degree than the population of the USA. Results of money motivation show mixed results based on previous work by Tang et al. (2002). In our studies, it was shown that indeed White Americans were more money motivated than White British. This supports Tang's findings that US workers strongly believe, more than UK workers, that money is an achievement. On the other hand, though, "others" from the USA were shown to be less motivated by money than "others" in the UK.

The UK and USA have very similar cultural values and practices. As a result, we see very few significant differences in the attitudes and the factors that shape the attitudes of UK and USA students towards work. Both countries have similar views on a number of different things, including various aspects of work attitude. Indeed, in his seminal work on international differences on work-related attitudes, Hofstede (1980) found the cultural distance between USA and UK to be very low on the continuum on various measures.

### *LIMITATIONS*

The major limitation of this study flows from the samples that were used. The sample size is very small in relation to the number of hospitality

management students in the USA and the UK. Also, in both countries, the study was only administered to students at one university. If other universities were included in the survey, we may see differences in the outcomes, as attitudes of students may vary by region, based on larger socioeconomic factors. Finally, this was a cross-sectional, one-shot study. Longitudinal studies over a period of a few years would yield a larger database, from which one could draw inferences with greater confidence.

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