**Willingness to Self-Censor**

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**Introduction**

The present study examines the relationship between an individual’s age and country of origin compared to their scores on the Willingness to Self-Censor Scale (WTSC) (Hayes et al., 2005). The WTSC measures an individual’s willingness to censor their opinion based on the situation they are in. The goal of the present study is to examine the WTSC scores of 460 people living in the United States (*n* = 231) and the United Kingdom (*n* = 229) and determine the effect of maturity and country of origin on their WTSC scores. Participant’s shyness will also be measured and used to test specific hypotheses regarding the WTSC. In a similar study done regarding the implications of WTSC scores, researchers hypothesized that individuals who score high on the WTSC will withhold their opinion more, especially in hostile situations (Hayes et al., 2005). Hayes and colleagues also hypothesized that WTSC scores will be independent of shyness and that the effect of climate of opinion will have a greater effect on those with higher WTSC scores (Hayes et al., 2005). In the present study it is being hypothesized that, first, individuals who are part of Generation X and Generation Y will have higher WTSC scores than individuals who are part of the Baby Boomer and Prebaby Boomer Generations. Second, there will not be a difference in WTSC scores between the Baby Boomer and Prebaby Boomer Generations. Third, there will not be a difference in WTSC scores between Generation X and Generation Y. Finally, after controlling for shyness, WTSC scores will still be related to which generation participants belong to.

**Results**

**Preliminary Analyses**

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare WTSC scores between participants from the United Kingdom (*M* = 2.97, *SD* = .50) and participants from the United States (*M* = 2.94, *SD* = .58). The results of the t-test revealed that there was no significant difference between the two groups of participants, *t* (458) = -.465, *p* = .642, 95% *CI* [-0.123, 0.076], *d* = -0.04.

A second independent samples t-test was conducted to compare shyness scores between participants from the United Kingdom (*M* = 2.91, *SD* = .921) and participants from the United States (*M* = 2.77, *SD* = .995). The results of the t-test revealed that there was no significant difference between the two groups of participants, *t* (458) = -1.58, *p* = .114, 95% *CI* [-0.317, 0.034], *d* = -0.15.

**Analysis of Variance**

**Figure 1**

*Bar graph of mean WTSC scores as a function of participant generations (n=460)*

Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated

*Note: error bars indicate 95% confidence interval*

In the present study, it has been hypothesized that participants from Generation X and Generation Y will have higher WTSC scores than participants from Baby Boomer and Prebaby boomer generations. It has also been hypothesized that there will be no difference in WTSC scores between the Baby Boomer generation and the Prebaby Boomer generation, as well as no difference in WTSC scores between Generation X and Generation Y. A one-way analysis of variance of variance (ANOVA) was conducted measuring the relationship between WTSC and age cohort (generation of participant), assuming unequal variance. The ANOVA revealed a significant effect between participant generation and WTSC scores, *F* (3,456) = 12.19, *p* < .001, *ηp2*= 0.074. The first planned contrast grouped Baby Boomers and Prebaby Boomers and grouped Generation X and Generation Y, and compared the groups WTSC scores, *t* (138.85) = -5.71, *p* < .001, this contrast demonstrated a significant. The second planned contrast compared WTSC between Baby Boomers and Prebaby boomers, *t* (214.45) = 0.962, *p* = .337. The third contrast compared WTSC scores between Generation X and Generation Y, *t* (79.64) = -.846, *p* = .40. The results of the ANOVA revealed that in the present study the generation of the participant has a significant effect on their WTSC scores. The results of the planned contrasts indicate that there was a significant difference between WTSC scores for Generation X grouped with Generation Y compared to Baby boomers grouped with Prebaby Boomers, while there was no significant difference between the second and third paired contrasts.

**Analysis of Covariance**

In the present study, it has been hypothesized that after controlling for shyness, WTSC scores will still depend on which generation participants belong to. A one-way between-subject analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to compare the effect of age cohort on WTSC scores, after controlling for the effect of age cohort on shyness. It was determined that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was met after analyzing the interaction between shyness and age cohort, *F* (3) = 2.44, *p* = 0.064. Because the interaction between age cohort and shyness was insignificant, the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was met. Shyness was significantly related to WTSC scores, *F* (1, 455) = 150.51, *MSE* = 0.21, *p* < .001, partial *η2* = 0.249. After controlling for shyness, age cohort was significantly related to WTSC scores, *F* (3, 455) = 3.74, *MSE* = 0.21, *p* = .011, partial *η2* = 0.024. Post hoc tests using Bonferroni adjustment method revealed that, after controlling for shyness, Generation X had significantly higher WTSC scores when compared to the Baby boomer generation (Adjusted *MDiff* = 0.153, *p* = .02). Alternatively, neither of the differences between Generation Y and Generation X (Adjusted *MDiff* = 0.019, *p* = 1) nor between Generation Y and Baby boomers (Adjusted *MDiff* = 0.172, *p* = .165) nor between Generation Y and Prebaby boomers (Adjusted *MDiff* = 0.143, *p* = .544) nor between Generation X and Prebaby boomers (Adjusted *MDiff* = 0.124, *p* = .251) nor between Baby boomers and Prebaby boomers (Adjusted *MDiff* = 0.029, *p* = 1) were significantly related to each other. The results of the ANCOVA and post-hoc tests reveal that in the present study, Generation X demonstrated significantly higher WTSC scores compared to the Baby boomer generation, while all other comparisons were not statistically significant.

**Conclusion**

The results of the present study indicate that the first hypothesis was proven correct, as there was a significant difference in WTSC scores when comparing Generation Y and Generation X to Baby boomers and Prebaby boomers. However, the second hypothesis was not proven as there was no significant difference when comparing Generation X and Generation Y WTSC scores. The third hypothesis was also not proven to be true, as there was no significant difference between Baby boomers and Prebaby Boomers WTSC scores. Finally, it was found that shyness was significantly related to WTSC, but after controlling for shyness age cohort was still significantly related to WTSC scores, proving that the final hypothesis was correct. Specifically, there was a significant difference in mean WTSC scores between Generation X and the Baby boomer generation, while no other significant relationship was found between age cohorts. Therefor, the data tell us that participants shyness was in fact related to their WTSC scores and that even after controlling for shyness, the age of the participant was still related to their WTSC score.

**References**

Hayes, A. F., Glynn, C. J., & Shanahan, J. (2005). Willingness to self-censor scale. *PsycTESTS Dataset*. https://doi.org/10.1037/t59102-000