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Determinants of Debt Behavior. A quantitative study among Generation Y individuals in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

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Abstract
The aim of this paper was to examine the determinants of debt behavior by generation Y. Despite various studies done on savings and debt behavior of students, the relationship between financial education, debt attitude, peer influence and power prestige towards debt behavior among generation Y in Uzbekistan is still unclear. There is a dearth of studies relating to the debt behavior of generation Y individuals in Uzbekistan. This quantitative research collected primary data using self-administered questionnaires, which were sent to generation Yindividuals in Uzbekistan. Data collected from 107 respondents was analyzed using SPSS statistical tool. Based on multiple regression analysis, it was found that only power prestige had a significant impact on debt behavior of generation Y individuals. Financial education, debt attitude and peer influence did not show a significant influence on debt behavior. The findings shed further light on the role of financial education, attitude, peer influence and power prestige in debt behavior. The information provided by this research can help authorities to develop measures to address the rising level of debt. This is the first study of its kind to examine debt behavior among Generation Y individuals in Uzbekistan.

Keywords*: Financial education, attitude, peer influence, power prestige, debt behavior*

Introduction

The student debt crisis is today a serious concern for many countries. In addition, as reported by CBS News, there is no plan in sight to resolve this student debt crisis (Strassmann, 2019). The student debt crisis is here with no end in sight and absolutely zero plan to tackle this at the federal level. The statistics for year 2019 showed that student debt level in the United States reached $1.5 trillion and there are 44 million borrowers in 2019 (Friedman, 2019). In 2017, student debt stood at an average of $28,650 compared to only $12,750 in 1996 (Bryant, 2019). This indicates the growth in student debt have doubled within ten years. It was reported in The Guardian that the average student debt in United States of America stood at an average of $37,000, but it is higher in the UK where the average is $55,000 (Bryant, 2019). Furthermore, the default rate in the United States at 11.4% is alarming. CBS News reported that the average household with student debt owes almost $48,000 and 5.2 million borrowers are in default (Strassmann, 2019).

Uzbekistan is located in central Asia and has a population of 32.9 million in 2019(The World Bank, 2019). Currently the GDP of Uzbekistan is US$32.9 billion and the current GDP per capita is US$1,535 (The World bank, 2019). The economic growth of Uzbekistan accelerated to 5.1 percent in 2018, reflecting the high value-added growth in the industry and construction sectors. Economic growth is projected to be 5.3 percent in 2019 and to converge to about 6 percent by 2021. However, in Uzbekistan, higheducation expenses depend on public budget but most states are no longer affording to finance higher education. Financial inclusion is low in Uzbekistan and loans constitute 2.4% of the GDP. However, the largest source of borrowed funds in Uzbekistan are relatives and friends'. In 2017, more than 13.8% of male and 12.1% of female respondents in Uzbekistan stated that they had borrowed from friends and relatives (Ahunov, 2018).Financial literacy rate in Uzbekistan is much lower compared to rate of the othertransition economies (Ahunov, 2018). In addition, there is no strategy by the Government to promote financial literacy in Uzbekistan. Therefore, Uzbekistan needs to improve its financial consumer protection and promote financial literacy. This study to examine the debt behavior among generation Y individuals and will contribute knowledge on the financial well- being and stability of the individuals.

Debt and savings behavior among generation Y individuals have received the attention of several scholars and researchers.Generation Y refer to individuals born between 1980 and late 1990s. This means, the individuals are currently aged 19 to 38 years (DeMeuse, and Mlodzik, 2010). As reported by CNBC, millennials have $42,000 in debt but most of it is not from student loans (Leonhardt, 2019). One of the key challenges faced by generation Y or millennials is high debt caused by high cost of education (Tan, 2014). Student debt accounted for 16 percent of the debt and credit card debt balances. This make up high levels of debt among millennials (Leonhardt, 2019). Debt levels of millennials also affects the overall economy of the country. Millennials are now forming a large percentage of the workforce and based on a survey by University of Michigan, high level of debts has reduced millennials spending, delayed marriage and increased educational debt (Tanzi, 2019). A study by National Financial Capability Study (NFCS) done in 2015 showed that millennials possess lower levels of objective financial knowledge (Kim, Anderson, and Seay, (2019). With low financial education, borrowers are likely to borrow at higher interest rates (Lusardi and Tufano, 2015). Thereafter, these borrowers with low financial knowledge are more likely to default on mortgage payments (Gerardi, Goette, and Meier 2013).

Several researchers and scholars have focused on the debt behavior and savings behavior of students and millennials. Studies have shown that lower financial education leads to lower financial knowledge (Gale and Levine, 2011; Xiao et al., 2011). Therefore, millennials with low financial knowledge are more likely to make financial mistakes (Benjamin, Brown, and Shapiro, 2013). Furthermore, as stated by Xiao et al. (2011), lower level of financial knowledge will influence risky credit behaviors and accumulation of credit card debts. Therefore, financial education is one of the key solutions to decrease debt and improve savings behavior (Brown et al., 2016). Brown et al. (2016) found that financial education decreased dependence on nonstudent debt and improved repayment behavior. Previous studies have shown that peer influence, attitude and power prestige can influence financial behavior of millennials. A study by Xiao, Barber, and Shim (2008) revealed that peers can negatively affect the financial behavior of individuals. Behavior intention plays an important role in financial behavior, and as highlighted by Xiao et al. (2011), instilling positive attitude is one of the strategies to influence a positive financial behavior. Wang et al. (2011) also stressed that one of the cause of credit card debts are attitude variables. Palan et al. (2014) investigated the misuse of credit cards and found positive and significant effects for power prestige.

Despite the growing negative consequences of debt behavior, there is a dearth of studies that have examined the combined influence of financial education, attitude, peer influence and power prestige on the debt behavior of generation Y individuals. This study further acknowledges that additional effort need to be undertaken to enhance financial literacy of generation Y individuals and determine the factors that influence their debt behavior. This study addressed the deficiency in research by examining the determinants of debt behavior among generation Y individuals that will be useful for authorities who intend to help generation Y individuals to change their behaviors and reduce debt. To the knowledge of the researcher, this is the first study of its kind that will examine the determinants of debt behavior among generation Y individuals in Uzbekistan. This study will provide additional knowledge to authorities and marketers to implement measures and programs to tackle the growth of debt among generation Y individuals.

Literature review

Generation Y Debt Behavior

The term generation Y and millennials have been used interchangeably. Generation Y refer to individuals born between 1980 and late 1990s. According to Strauss and Howe, millennials are individuals born in 1982 and will be in the graduating class in year 2000. Debt is defined as the consumer debt that is used for individual purchase rather than investment such as a consumer debt is the balance on a credit card (Financial Dictionary, 2019). According to Lusardi and Tufano (2015), debt is linked with repayments with high interest rates that results in financial distress of the borrowers (Lusardi and Tufano, 2015). Debt behavior refers to knowledge of finances or financial literacy to manage money.There are several components of financial literacy. The most important component of financial literacy is on how to effectively manage money. Knowledge is important because with better knowledge, individuals can manage debts and improve their financial well-being (Braunstein and Welch 2002). Fox, Bartholomae and Lee (2005) stated that financial literacy is the broader application of knowledge that is necessary for effective decision making by individuals. Another component is decision making skills. Financial decision making skills have been referred to as knowledge needed to make better and informed decisions by individuals (Rhine and Toussaint- Comeau 2002). Confidence to plan for future financial needs is another component and this refers to understanding about investing and financial planning (Koenig 2007). Almenberg et al. (2016) pointed out that one of the debt behavior is that the borrowers are uncomfortable with debt. Furthermore, individuals who are deemed as uncomfortable with debt, normally have lower debt-to-income ratios.

In recent years, the financial debt in millenials and young generation has increased. As reported by Business Insider, nearly 45% of millenials have student loan debt. In the United States, the student-loan debt reached a national total of $1.5 trillion in 2019 and the average student-loan

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debt is $29,800 (Hoffower, 2019). According to a report by Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, 81% of early-adult households carry a collective debt of nearly $2 trillion that is made up mainly of student-loan debt and credit-card debt. Millenials are also facing financial woes in Asia (Hoffower, 2019). As reported by the StarOnline, the debt accumulation amongst Malaysia's millennials or Generation Y individuals is unprecedented (Martin, 2017). The millenials face finacial stress and many of them are living beyond their means and trapped in emotional spending. Students with credit card debt are struggling to pay it off. In addition, the high loan debt is preventing them from accumulating savings (Hoffower, 2019). Past researchers have identified several reasons for the growth of dept levels. Several researchers have cited financial education and financial literacy as one of the key reason for the high level of debt. Almenberg (2016) pointed out that there is a positive relationship between attitudes of borrowers toward debt and parents'attitudes.

Relationship between financial education and debt behavior

Financial education plays a critical role in the financial literacy and debt behavior of individuals. Lack of financial education results in lower financial knowledge and other related consequences (Gale and Levine, 2011; Xiao et al., 2011). Consumers with limited knowledge of financial products have difficulties making long term financial decisions. This can lead to negative consequences to individuals and the long-term stability of financial and economic systems (OECD, 2013). Brown et al. (2016) pointed out that financial education will lead to lower level of reliance on nonstudent debt and subsequently improve the repayment behavior of individuals. In addition, people are more likely to make financial mistakes if they have lower level of financial literacy (Agarwal and Mazumder, 2013). Furthermore, individuals who lack financial literacy are more prone to pay higher interest rates and fees on borrowings (Lusardi and Tufano 2015). They are also more likely to default on the repayment of their borrowings (Gerardi, Goette, and Meier 2013). However, the study by Skornik (2018) revealed that financial literacy programs were not related to lower default rate of borrowings. Kaiser and Menkhoff (2017) highlighted that financial education has a significant impact on financial behavior and financial literacy. However, the results of the study further revealed that financial education was less effective for low income individuals. Another study by Mandell and Klien (2009) raised some questions concerning the effectiveness of financial literacy. The study revealed that financial education did not lead to higher levels of financial literacy and better financial behavior. Based on the literature review, the hypothesis as shown below was developed and tested.

H1: There is a positive relationship between financial education and debt behavior of generation Y individuals in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Relationship betweendebt attitude and debt behavior

Consumers attitude can be related to the Theory of Planned Behavior. According to the Theory ofPlanned Behavior, consumers' intention to execute different kinds of behaviors can be predicted by the consumers' subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and their attitudes towards a particular behavior. (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen (1991) argued that an individual's attitude and personality traits have an influence on specific behaviors only indirectly by influencing some of the factors that are more closely linked to the behavior in question. The Theory of Planned Behavior can be adapted to the area of financial choices made by individuals. Koroppet al. (2014) pointed out that choices can be affected by norms, attitude and perceived behavioral control. Another theory that is applicable is the double entry mental accounting theory. Prelec and Loewenstein, (1998) pointed out that pleasures of consumption can be eroded by the apprehension of making payments. Coversely, the strain of making payments can be buffered by hope or anticipation of the benefits that this payments finance ((Prelec and Loewenstein, 1998). Past studies have identified consumers' attitude as one of the factors that

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affect their financial behavior. A study by Norvilitis et al. (2003) found that lower level of financial knowledge had the highest impact on debt. In addition, attitudes toward possessions was one of the positive predictors of debt. Another study by Zhu and Meeks (1994) revealed that specific attitude toward credit was one of the determinant of balances outstanding in credit card accounts. Livingstone and Lunt (1992) further confirmed that credit card attitudes were one of the predictors of the amount of debt. Wang Lu and Malhotra (2011) also confirmed that attitudes relating to money, debt and credit cards was related to usage of revolving credit use and petty installments. Kidwell, Brinberg and Turrisi (2003) examined the influence of social psychological variables that were important for decision making relating to money management. This study further confirmed that attitude was one of the determinant of money-management behavior. Another study by Sotiropoulos and d'Astous (2013) showed that consumers attitude towards overspending using credit card does not impact a person's propensity to overspend on credit cards. A study by Walker (1995) revealed that negative attitudes toward debt had a positive influence on an individual plunging into debt. A study by Almenberg et al. (2018) revealed that debt attitude was negatively correlated with indebtedness. Most past studies pointed towards the effect of attitude towards debt behavior. This indicates the need to undertake research to develop more effective finance or debt interventions. Hence the following hypothesis was developed for testing:

H2: There is a relationship between debt attitude and debt behavior of generation Y individuals in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Relationship between peer influence and debt behavior

Peer influence can be explained by the Social Cognitive Theory. The Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura highlighted the significance of environmental, behavioral and individual factors in the learning process (Bandura, 1977). This theory emphasizes the continuous and reciprocal interaction between environmental, behavioral and individual factors. Based on this theory, behavior can influence cognitive and vice versa. Therefore, in accordance with this Social Cognitive Theory, past research has revealed that peers are a strong source of influence on individuals (BrechwaldandPrinstein, 2011). However, the peer influence may spur either healthy or destructive behaviors (Brown, Bakken, Ameringer, and Mahon, 2008). According to Social Learning Theory, individuals tend to learn social behaviors from their peers (Bandura, 1986). Studies have shown that the impact of peer influence differs among younger and older people. A study by Gardner and Steinberg (2005) showed that risk taking and risky decision making had stronger influence from peers whereas adults had a weaker effect. This indicates that peer influence is much stronger on adolescents. A study by O'Loughlin and Szmigin (2006) pointed out that students are living in an environment where acquiring debt is normal. In addition, their attitude and behavior to credit and debit was influenced or framed by their peers.Peers were shown as main contributors of financial advice that influenced the decision making of individuals (Hong et al., 2004; Brown et al. 2008). Therefore, peer influence can be a significant predictor of debt behavior and the following hypothesis was tested to confirm the cause and effect relationship.

H3: There is a relationship betweenpeer influence and debt behavior of generation Y individuals in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Relationship between power prestige and debt behavior

Power prestige is one of the dimensions of money attitude that was defined by Yamauchi and Templer (1982). Past research has revealed that people who regard money as device to get attention or impress other people normally have high scores on power prestige. This can also be viewed from the value perspective where consumers place a value on particular possessions. The personal value of consumers is reflected by the possessions that they hold (Richinset al., 1994). Patterns of consumption will normally be the result of consumer values.

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These people see money as a status symbol or as a symbol of success(Tokunaga, 1993). This was supported in a study by Wang, Lv and Jiang (2011). The study found that the power-prestige dimension had a positive relationship with the frequency of revolving credit use. Belk (1998) argued that individuals show their status or social power by exhibiting their wealth which is an indicator of status and power. A study by Markovich and DeVaney (1997) pointed out that consumers are likely to buy expensive products through the usage of revolving credit provided by credit cards. Wang, Lv and Jiang (2011) further explained that growth in demand that is not matched by growth in income leads to usage of revolving credit and payment of higher interest rates. A study by Roberts and Jones (2001) looked at consumer culture and the attitude of consumers towards money. The study further confirmed money attitudespower-prestige influences consumers' usage of credit card and compulsive buying. Therefore, compulsive buying via usage of credit card is to satisfy the consumer need for social status. Consumers use money as a tool of power and prestige.On the contrary, a study by Pinto, Mansfield, and Parente (2004) did not indicate a significant relationship between self-esteem and credit card debt. Based on literature review, the following hypothesis was developed for testing:

H4: There is a positive relationship between power prestige and debt behavior of generation Y individuals in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Methodology and Research Design

This research was classified as a basic research and the main aim was to increase the scientific knowledge and understanding the research area (Saunders et al., 2012). The philosophical approach of the natural scientist namely positivism was applied and hypothesis were developed for testing. In this quantitative study, cross sectional data was collected using a survey method. The primary data that was gathered using a self-administered questionnaire was analyzed using the SPSS version 19 tool.

Population and Sample size

For all research questions it was impractical to collect data from the entire population and the researcher selected a sample (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Non probability sampling was used as it is practical and through convenience sampling technique, data was collected from the sampling elements. The target population were millennials in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Ideally, the sample size need to be calculated based on the formula by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). However, due to time constraint, the formula by Tabacknick and Fidell (2013). The proposed formula is "50+8m" where m is the number of variables. Therefore, in this research, the sample size should be 90 (50+40).

Instrumentation

Self-administered questionnaires were used by the researcher to collect data. There were two parts in this questionnaire. The first part was to collect demographic information about the participants. In Part B the 5-point Likert scale was used to collect the responses from the participants. The questions on financial education, peer influence, attitude and power prestige were adapted from a study by Isomidinova and Singh (2017). The scale that was modified by Roberts and Jones (2001) based on a study by Yamauchi and Templer (1982) was used to measure power prestige.

Data collection and analysis

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, (2012) administration of questionnaires must be appropriate and should match to the type of the survey. In this study, self-administered questionnaires were sent electronically and a covering letter was attached. After a period of one month, a total of 110 questionnaires were gathered and checked. Based on checking and editing, 3 questionnaires were incomplete. Finally, there were 107 good questionnaires that were used in this analysis. The editing and coding was done and thereafter, the data was transferred into the data file provided by the SPSS software tool. The researcher generated both descriptive and inferential statistics. The description of respondents was done based on the descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing was based on the inferential statistics. The multiple regression analysis was done to acquire

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insights on the relationship between the constructs on this study used (Pallant, 2010).

Results

Demographic Profiles of the respondents

In this study there were 107 respondents. Out of the 107 respondents, there were 57 (53.3%) male respondents and 50 (46.7%) female respondents. Based on age range of participants, 83 (77.6%) respondents were 20-24 years old followed by 11 (10.3%) who were 25-29 years old. The other respondents were 30 years old or older. This study is on millennials and most of the respondents were students (112 students). Another 88 respondents were employed.The other 71 respondents were either unemployed or housewives.

Descriptive and Normality Testing

The descriptive statistics and the distribution of data is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Debt Behavior	107	1.00	5.00	2.5093	1.02096
Education	107	1.75	5.00	3.7407	.75620
Attitude	107	1.75	5.00	3.5444	.77537
Peer Influence	107	1.00	5.00	3.0654	.85115
Power Prestige	107	1.00	5.00	2.4206	1.11359

The descriptive statistics of dependent variable and the independent variables in this study were calculated using SPSS. As stated by Tabachnick and Fiddell (2013), the mean presents the average value of the data set. The descriptive statistics shows that the dependent variable namely debt behavior has a mean value of 2.5093 and standard deviation of 1.02096. Financial Education has mean value of 3.7407 and standard deviation of 0.75620. Attitude has the mean value of 3.5444 and standard deviation of 0.77537. Peer influence has a mean value of 3.0654 and standard deviation of 0.85115. Power prestige has the mean value of 2.4206 and standard deviation of 1.11359. This shows high level of positive responses from the participants.

Reliability

The objective of doing a reliability analysis was to test the goodness of data and the quality of the data in the questionnaire (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated by comparing the reliability of a summated multi-item scale and not single-item question. The Crobbach alpha coefficient value was calculated by using SPSS. According to George and Mallery (2003), as a rule of thumb, the values above .8 are good and values below 0.5 are unacceptable. The closer the coefficient alpha value is to 1.00 the greater the internal consistency. In this research, the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.845. The values of all the variables are shown below. According to Hinton et al. (2004), Cronbach alpha coefficient scale in the range of 0.5-0.75 is considered moderately reliable. Thus reliability of data in this study is not violated.

Table:2 Reliability analysis of Variables

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Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Debt Behaviour	4	.776
Financial education	4	.642
Attitude	4	.515
Peer influence	4	.622
Power prestige	4	.829

Multiple Regression Analysis and Model Fit
The overall model fit is shown in the table below. In this study, multiple regression was used to determine the overall fit of the model. In addition, the relative contribution of each independent variable to the total variance was determined through multiple regression testing.

Table 3: Overall Model Fit

Multiple R	.626
Coefficient of Determination (R square)	.392
Adjusted R square	.368
Sig. F change	.000
F Value	16.410
Sig (ANOVA)	.000

The table 3 shows the model summary and indicates the goodness of fit measure among the variables. As explained by Field (2009), the value of 'R' encompass the values of the multiple correlation coefficient between the predictors and the dependent variable. The value 'r-square' explains the variability in the dependent variable which is accounted for by the independent variables in this study (Field, 2009). A value of .392, means that the predictors account for 39% of the variation in debt behavior of the respondents. The value of F is 16.410 which is highly significant ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the model significantly predicted the outcome of this study (Field, 2009).

The researcher also checked multicollinearity. In a multiple regression, a very high R square may be an indicator of multicollinearity. In this study, the value of r-square is .392 and this is considered low. To determine the existence of multicollinearity, the researcher also examined the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) as shown in the table. Both the tolerance and VIF shown in the table are within acceptable range (Hair et al., 2009). Therefore, the data is not contaminated by multicollinearity.

The beta or 'b' value shows the individual contribution of each independent variable (Field, 2009). As shown in the table, all the 'b' values are positive and this indicate positive relationships (Field, 2009). The researcher looked at the test of significance and this allowed the researcher to level of confidence with the results of this study. The value of t-statistic should be less than -2 and more tha 2 (Aiken et al., 1991). For the hypothesis to be rejected, the significance or p-value should be more than 0.05 (Pallant, 2010). The p-value for financial education is .680 ($p>0.05$) and the t-statistic is .498 ($t<2$). Although the beta value is positive, the hypothesis is rejected. The p-value for attitude is .325 ($p>0.05$) and the t-statistic is .990 ($t<2$). Although the beta value is positive, the hypothesis is also rejected. The p-value for peer influence is .676 ($p>0.05$) and the t-statistic is .419 ($t<2$). Although the beta value is positive, the hypothesis is also rejected. The p-value for power prestige is .000 ($p<0.05$) and the t-statistic is 6.218 ($t>2$). The beta value is also positive and the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, power prestige is the only significant predictor of debt behavior among millennials in Uzbekistan.

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Table 5: Multiple Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.110	.478		2.319	.022		
	Financial Education	.077	.114	.057	.680	.498	.839	1.192
	Attitude	-.112	.113	-.085	-.990	.325	.812	1.232
	Peer Influence	.052	.123	.043	.419	.676	.566	1.768
	Power Prestige	.557	.090	.607	6.218	.000	.625	1.599

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study revealed that only power prestige had a positive and significant influence on debt behavior of generation y individuals in Uzbekistan. The results are consistent with past studies that found a positive relationship between power-prestige and debt behavior. As explained by Yamaguchi and Templer (1982), power-prestige encompasses aspects of prestige, status, attention, supremacy or superiority and acquisition. In short, some people use money to impress others. A positive and significant score means money is a status symbol and millennials are status seeking. Other studies also found a relationship between power prestige and debt behavior (Wang, Lv and Jiang, (2011). Similar to the findings of this study, Belk (1998) also pointed out that people show their status or social power by exhibiting their wealth which is an indicator of status and power. Similarly, Markovich and DeVaney (1997) also argued that people are likely to be in debt behavior and purchase expensive products through the usage of revolving credit provided by credit cards.

This study hypothesized that financial education is a positive predictor of debt behavior by generation Y individuals. The results of this study deviated from most past studies that have shown a significant relationship between financial education and debt behavior. Although, some studies have found a significant relationship between financial education and debt behavior but there were some studies that found no significant relationship between financial education and debt behavior. For instance, Brown et al. (2016) pointed out that financial education will lead to lower level of reliance on nonstudent debt and subsequently improve the repayment behavior of individuals. With financial education, individuals are less likely to make financial mistakes such as taking loans at high cost (Agarwal and Mazumder 2013). However, the study by Skornik (2018) revealed that financial education programs were not related with lower default rate. Kaiser and Menkhoff (2017) further highlighted that financial education was less effective for low income individuals. Another study by Mandell and Klien (2009) raised some questions concerning the effectiveness of financial literacy. In Uzbekistan, one of the reasons to justify the result may be the lower income as most of the respondents were students.

It was hypothesized debt attitude is related to debt behavior of generation Y individuals. Surprisingly, an inverse relationship was revealed between debt attitude and debt financial behavior. This indicates that debt attitude was not positively related to debt behavior of generation Y individuals. In short, the generation Y individualstake a negative attitude toward debt and do not have high tolerance of debt. This makes them understand the consequences of debt and they are sensitive towards debt. However,in this study the relationship was not significant. Past studies

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have also shown a relationship between attitude and debt behavior. For instance, a study by Walker (1995) showed that negative attitudes toward debt had a positive influence on an individual plunging into debt. Another study by Almenberg et al. (2018) further revealed that debt attitude was negatively correlated with indebtedness.

It was further predicted in this study that peer influence had a positive impact on debt behavior. However, the results of this study deviated from past studies. For instance, a study by Gardner and Steinberg (2005) revealed that risky decision making behavior by adolescents had stronger influence from peers' whereas adults had a weaker effect. This indicates that peer influence is much stronger on adolescents. The deviation of the results may be due to the profile of the respondents. As pointed out by Alhabeeb (1999), the influence of peers is subject to the level to which an individual is exposed to peers. In this study, most of the respondents were generation Y individuals who were not easily influence by their peers. In a similar study by Jorgenson (2007), peers had less influence than parents. This may be due to early start of the influence by parents (John, 1999). As explained by Jorgenson (2007), individuals who were subjected to early influence by parents had higher level attitude, financial knowledge and behavior scores

There are several implications that originated from this study. This study provides practical and social implications for government, policy makers and loan borrowers. Firstly, government authorities and individuals should recognize the consequences of debt on individuals, families and the overall economy. The government should pay special attention to the level of debt and provide more education and knowledge on good financial behavior practices. Policy makers need to understand the pitfalls and consequences of debt and develop credit policies and that can be effective. In addition to financial education, another suggestion is the development and circulation of documentation on the social media to highlight responsible financial behavior among millennials. Collaboration between educational institutions and policy makers is another way to instill positive financial behavior in millennials.

There were also some theoretical and academic contributions of this study on debt behavior among generation Y individuals. There were four predictors in this study and only power prestige was found to be a significant predictor of debt behavior among generation Y individuals. This indicates the significant role of power prestige which is closely related to money as a status symbol. This is the first study among generation Y individuals in Uzbekistan.

There were also some limitations in this study. The first limitation was that the respondents were generation Y individuals in Tashkent, Uzbekistan only. In addition, the respondents were not randomly selected. This was a cross sectional study that was conducted electronically. Therefore, any generalization drawn from this study can be applied only to the target population and other individuals or groups that closely resemble the participants of this study. Future research should include a larger sample and respondents from other towns or areas. In addition, the different segments of society such as employees in different sectors can provide better results. Testing based on demographic differences such as gender and age canprovide different findings. For instance, the debt behavior between males and females may differ. Inclusion of moderating variables such as age is also recommended for future research. Lastly, an in-depth study based on a qualitative approach is recommended. Open ended questions and face to face contact with the respondents can provide more in depth information.

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