

2020

Strategies for Improving the Performance of Multigenerational Cohorts in the Construction Industry

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Jenean Harper Satterfield

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Strategies for Improving the Performance of Multigenerational Cohorts in the

Construction Industry

by

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MBA, The University of Akron, 2004

BS, The University of Akron, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

Many small construction companies struggle to motivate Generation X (Gen X) and Generation Y (Gen Y) employees to improve performance. Small business owners who maximize multigenerational employee performance will experience an increase in productivity. Grounded in the generational theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies 3 small construction business owners in Northeastern Ohio used to improve the performance of multigenerational cohorts in the construction industry. Data were collected through semistructured face-to-face-interviews and a review of relevant internal organization documents. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Key themes that emerged from the study were that technology and work/life balance heavily impact Gen X and Gen Y's performance. A key recommendation is for small construction company owners to consider the duration and frequency of meetings to maximize the performance of Gen X and Gen Y. The information provided by the participants may contribute to social change because owners are reminded that mentorship, emotional intelligence, active listening, and trial and error can be used to discern how to motivate each generation. The knowledge imparted may improve societal interaction as owners gain the insight to coach Gen X and Gen Y to appreciate and become more tolerant of each other inside and outside the workplace.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my father, Augustus L. Harper, MBA, CPA, a retired college professor who showed me by example that education is the key that unlocks many doors.

Acknowledgments

To my entire family who supported me and put up with all the late nights and early mornings, sincere thanks and much love.

Dr. Chad C. Sines, my mentor, and Dr. Olivia S. Herriford, my second committee member, both accompanied me on this long journey and often provided needed words of encouragement and guidance through correction in order to maximize my writing potential. Thank you!

This achievement would not have been possible without the patience of my two best friends who happen to be my husband, Rob Satterfield, and my brother, Byron L. Harper. Thank you both for always having my back and for being consummate shoulders to lean on. Thanks to my mom, Valerie C. Harper, who always taught me that I could do anything I put my mind to. My son, Brandon L. Harper, for praying with me each morning as we give thanks to Him who makes everything possible!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Construction workforces are increasingly becoming multigenerational. As the workforce ages, there is a need for owners to motivate different multiple generations simultaneously. The performance of employees is directly related to how they are motivated in the workplace and if they feel supported.

Background of the Problem

A construction workforce is most efficient if management addresses all characteristics of a multigenerational workplace. Multigenerational teams have been steadily increasing in existence (Fishman, 2016). Owners create a chasm when they neglect to identify different generational agendas (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014). Different generational agendas must coincide with a unified agenda that aligns with the company's mission (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Owners in the construction industry struggle to improve the performance of multiple generations in the workplace while simultaneously maintaining the policies currently in place. This study included interviews with three construction owners who had direct oversight of a multigenerational team to explore the strategies owners use to improve the performance of multigenerational cohorts in the construction industry.

Problem Statement

Owners encounter an unprecedented challenge to motivate four generations in a workforce that consists of a continuum between grandparents and recent high school graduates (Douglas, Howell, Nelson, Pilkington, & Salinas, 2015). The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that between 2016 and 2026, nearly 28 million older workers will leave

the labor force, and 39 million younger workers will enter (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). The general business problem is that some owners lack the ability to motivate employees with the unique characteristics and work ethics that identify their generational cohort. The specific business problem is that some owners in the construction industry lack strategies to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that construction owners use to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance. The target population included business owners of three small construction companies in Ohio who have successfully motivated multigenerational cohorts within their company and improved performance. The contribution to positive social change may be the enlightenment of business leaders about the unique characteristics and work ethics of multiple generations, which may increase productivity and organizational success. Researchers can further benefit from this study as its findings can provide information about the strategies for improving the performance more specifically of Millennials (Generation Y/Gen Y) and Generation X (Gen X). Society can benefit as different generational cohorts appreciate and become more understanding of each other inside and outside of the workplace.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative approach was suitable for my study because I explored strategies that construction owners use to motivate their employees to improve organizations'

performance. Qualitative research is a useful way to explore the lived experiences of individuals (Drisko, 2016), and researchers often have found that qualitative research is relevant in business settings (Baškarada, 2014). Yin (2016) posited that qualitative researchers could address multiple levels of analysis relating to data that arises from business settings. The quantitative researcher focuses on examining relationships or differences between two or more variables (Vogt, 2007). Quantitative research did not fit for this study because I did not seek to analyze variable differences or relationships. The mixed method combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Mabila, 2017). The mixed method was not appropriate for this study because I identified and explored strategies and did not analyze variables. Therefore, the qualitative method was appropriate for addressing the goals of this study.

There are several qualitative research designs, including narrative, ethnography, phenomenology, and case study (Moustakas, 1994). The narrative study usually involves chronological accounts (Bruce, Beuthin, Sheilds, Molzahn, & Schick-Makaroff, 2016). This study was not a chronology, so a narrative design was not the appropriate design. The ethnographical study design typically involves researchers' immersion with the culture of one or more groups (Patton, 2002). I focused on the strategies that owners use to motivate multiple generational cohorts, not the immersion of a cultural group, so the ethnographical design was not an appropriate fit. The essence of the phenomenological design calls for understanding personal experiences with phenomena (Willis, Sullivan-Bolyai, Knafl, & Cohen, 2016). I explored the experiences of others but did not focus on understanding the meaning of personal experiences, so the phenomenological design was

not appropriate. The appropriate design for this study was a multiple case study.

Researchers use case studies to catalyze the understanding of actual events that allow the researcher to explore the actual experiences of owners of organizations with managerial duties (Yin, 2016). The organization of multiple-case study usually involves two or more cases; hence, this study included three distinct business owners.

Research Question

What strategies do owners in the construction industry use to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance?

Interview Questions

1. How many different generational cohorts do you employ?
2. What are your strategies to motivate employees?
3. What are the differences in strategies you use to motivate each generational cohort?
4. How did you develop these motivational strategies?
5. What communication style works best to motivate each generational cohort in your workforce?
6. How do you measure the success of your motivational strategies?
7. What were the key barriers you had to address in order to implement the successful motivation strategies?
8. How did you address these barriers?
9. How has your workforce productivity changed as a result of these motivation strategies?

10. What would you like to add or further discuss about your successful motivational strategies that you employed to improve your organization's performance?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was generational theory. Strauss and Howe are the original theorists who explored generational cohorts and developed the generational theory in 1991. Strauss and Howe (1991) posited that generational theory describes characteristics of generation gaps and depicts a conceived recurring generational cycle in American history. Understanding the characteristics of each generational cohort will deepen perceptions (Strauss & Howe, 1991). The two authors theorized that all generations belong to one out of four cohorts, sequentially repeated in a set pattern. The vision of these authors enables one to chart a recurrent cycle within the nation's history. Lyons and Kuron (2014) noted that generational cohorts exist in the workforce as they do in society.

Generational cohorts have a collective set of memories, ideals, and experiences that affect both work and life (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). Ideals about work, authority, and engagement form as each generation matures (Van der Walt, 2018). Generational cohort members develop ideals based upon when they were born and their exposure to different events that happened within their lifetimes (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Generational theory had application to this study because understanding each generation in the workforce will help bridge the gaps between them.

Operational Definitions

Baby Boomers: Baby Boomers are the generational cohort born between 1946 and 1964. This generational cohort encountered post-World War II affluence, gained high levels of education, and financially prospered from the rapid growth of the economy in their working years (Benson & Hiller Connell, 2014). The Baby Boomers will remain in the workforce longer than other generations because they are determined and many are not financially ready to retire because they were better spenders than they are savers (Fishman, 2016). The age range of this generational cohort in 2020 is 56 to 74.

Generation X (Gen X): Generation X is the generational cohort born between 1965 and 1979. Some traits that typically describe this generational cohort are skeptical, independent, entrepreneurial, and that they value work-life balance (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). The age range of this generational cohort in 2020 is 41 to 55.

Generation Y (Millennials or Gen Y): Millennials are the generational cohort born between 1980 and 1995. Some traits that typically describe this generational cohort are globally oriented, tech-savvy, creative, and that they value meaning and diversity (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). According to Sibarani, Tjakraatmadja, Putro, and Munir (2015), Millennials are well educated, informed, and prefer 24x7 connectivity. The age range of this generational cohort in 2020 is 25 to 40.

Generational cohort: A generation or age group that travels through economic and historical environments as a unit (Hadijah & Badaruddin, 2015).

Traditionalists (Veterans): Veterans are the generational cohort born between 1922 and 1945. Al-Asfour and Lettau (2014) described this generational cohort as

dedicated hard-workers who have respect for authority. The age range of this generational cohort in 2020 is 75 to 98.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

An assumption is a fact that is not verifiable even though some believe it to be true (Gandy, 2015). My first assumption was that the participants of the study would answer the interview questions truthfully. The second assumption was that the participants had managerial interactions with at least two of the three generational cohorts and motivated each positively but by different means. The third assumption was that the participants were comfortable speaking about each generational cohort within their employ and their differences. The fourth assumption was that each business owner would commit to being completely candid and would participate fully in the study.

Limitations

Limitations are probable weaknesses that may affect the results of the study (Gibbons, 2015). A potential weakness of the study was that it did not address influences such as race or culture, and these factors could affect the participants' views of each generational cohort. Another limitation of this study was that it did not represent the newest generational cohort, Generation Z. Generation Z were born between the early 1990s and the mid-2000s, directly after Gen Y (Lanier, 2017).

Delimitations

Delimitations are factors that narrow the scope of the study (Patterson, 2014). The participants in the study were business owners of construction companies in a city in the

Midwestern United States. The data may be specific to the construction industry and the Midwestern region and may not transfer to other types of business organizations. For this study, I used purposive and snowball sampling, and the delimitations included three construction business owners of different trades. I limited my inquiry to the generational differences between Gen X and Millennials because within the construction industry, Baby Boomers and Traditionalists are usually not actively working in the field.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The results of this study may benefit owners in their daily interactions with different generational cohorts. This study may be of value to business leaders who can use the findings to affect employee retention, productivity, motivation, and workplace communication. The construction industry's employee retention could increase because of the findings of this study since construction owners may gain insight about the motivation of each generational cohort. Owners may use the information gathered to improve and change current policies and procedures to increase employees' satisfaction and retention. Workplace communication, employee motivation, retention, and productivity increase when managers of multigenerational teams positively motivate each generational cohort (Bennett, Pitt, & Price, 2012).

Implications for Social Change

Positive social change may be an outcome of this study if society members gain enlightenment about each generation's communication style preferences and work tendencies. Positive social change occurs when members of society change their behavior

for the betterment of society (Banks, Vera, Pathak, & Ballard, 2016). Technological, industrial, and economic advancements require society members to pass the knowledge from older generations to their succeeding generations. The enhancement of reciprocal respect within society should help to break down barriers among the different generations. The business strategies that leaders use for motivating the multigenerational workforce may apply outside of business because researchers may personally use the strategies identified to understand other generations. Researchers can further benefit from this study as its findings can provide information about the strategies for improving the performance of Millennials and Gen X. Society can benefit as different generational cohorts come to appreciate and become more understanding of each other inside and outside of the workplace. The findings of the study may enhance communications by breaking down the lines of demarcation among the generational cohorts, which could benefit society as a whole. Society and the economy will continue to prosper with the passing of the baton from generation to generation with a healthy respect for each other and our differences (Lewis & Wescott, 2017).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Literature Review Opening Narrative

The literature review consists of peer-reviewed articles, books, and other scholarly resources. *Ulrich's Periodical Directory* is instrumental in verifying that the articles included in this literature review are from recognized peer-reviewed journals. Within the 62 sources in this literature review, 56 are peer-reviewed articles, which represent 90%; 52 have a publication date less than 5 years old, which represents 85% of

the total sources.

I used the following databases to search for peer-reviewed articles applicable for this study: Google Scholar, Insight databases from the Walden University Library, Science Direct, Emerald Management Journals, Nursing Management, and ProQuest from the year 2014 through 2018. To locate articles with precise information, I used the following search criteria: *Baby Boomers, diversity, employee engagement, generational cohorts, generational differences, generational motivation, generations, Generation X, Generation Y, Millennials, multigenerational cohorts, multigenerational differences, multigenerational workforce, and performance management*. I continuously searched for articles using an EBSCO alert that deposited relevant articles into my Walden email weekly. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that construction owners used to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance.

The Strauss and Howe Generational Theory

Commended by Newt Gingrich, ex-house speaker, Al Gore, ex-Vice President of the United States, and an assortment of other national leaders, Howe and Strauss's work titled *Generations* (1991) has received acclaim as a splendid, though slightly alarming, review of the direction in which the nation is headed. Howe and Strauss (1991) suggested that the country gauges history by a string of generational profiles, commencing from the year 1584 and including every single era until the present-day children. Howe and Strauss boldly theorized that all generations belong to any one out of four kinds sequentially repeated in a set pattern. Their vision enables one to chart a recurrent cycle within the

nation's history – one characterized by secular challenges and religious revivals – from the colonial age until the 21st Century. The book is a historical account as well as an insightful leap that reorders history books, in addition to people's expectations regarding the current century.

Generations covered what came to be known as the Strauss–Howe generational theory, which delineates a theorized repetitive generational cycle within the history of the nation. The theorists established the basis for their hypothesis that presents U.S. history in the form of a succession of generational profiles dating back to the year 1584. A newer work, *The Fourth Turning*, expanded the generational theory paying attention to the nation's traditional fourfold generational kind cycle and repetitive mood periods (Howe & Strauss, 1997). Since then, the theorists have used various publications for expanding further on their idea.

Howe and Strauss (1991) used a combination of prediction and actual historical facts. The authors offered historical details on prior and current generations in addition to making several predictions, many which pertained to the Millennials (who, at the time of commencement of the authors' efforts, were children). Consequently, the authors lacked adequate historical data concerning this generation. The theorists' first work titled *Generations* (1991) explained American history as being a progression of generational profiles of Anglo-Americans between 1584 and the current period. A hypothesized repetitive generational cycle delineated the history of the nation. Howe and Strauss hypothesized a trend of four repetitive stages, generational forms and a repetitive cycle of secular challenges and religious revivals, from the colonial age until the 21st Century.

The term *social generation* may be defined as the sum of all individuals born across approximately two decades or across the duration of a single stage of life out of four stages: childhood, youth, midlife, and later life (Howe & Strauss, 1991). Howe and Strauss identified generations (between the year of birth and the last) by seeking cohorts of this duration who have conditions in common. People belonging to a generation have a common age location within history. Generational cohorts experience important social developments/movements and historical occurrences at the same stage of life. According to this perspective, individuals belonging to a given generational cohort are permanently molded by the age they are in during their childhood and youth, making them share particular behaviors and views. Cognizant of these shared characteristics and life experiences, individuals belonging to a given generational cohort would display a feeling of perceived belongingness with their generation as well (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Howe and Strauss claimed that their description of each generation stemmed from the efforts of a number of social theorists and authors (see Comte, 1858; Khaldun by Boulakia, 1971; Littré, 1877; Mannheim, 1993; Mentré, 1920; Mill & Robson, 1991; Polybius by Davidson, 1991; y Gasset, 2000).

Motivational Differences of Multigenerational Cohorts

Applying prior studies dealing with intergenerational gaps, Lyons and Kuron (2014) aimed to examine whether distinctions in motivational elements were, in fact, extant across different generations within organizations. Lyons and Kuron scrutinized cross-sectional gaps among three clusters of the U.S. workforce: Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y. The findings do not completely support the generational stereotypes

exhibited by popular media and works in the management discipline (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). There is an existence of a few deep-seated differences between numerous generational drivers (Douglas et al., 2014; Hendricks & Cope, 2013; Hillman, 2014). Age may account for these differences instead of generation (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014).

For acquiring improved insights into the determinants and profiles motivating Gen Y, Gen X, and Baby Boomers, Lyons and Kuron (2014) examined the three generations against five inspirational elements: idle time, compensation, increased responsibility, ability to advance, and work atmosphere. Differences discovered, though statistically significant, do not appreciably affect the organization; this is perhaps owing to the many stages of life exhibited by an age group. However, this does not eliminate the truth that different age groups possess different thinking, reflecting the distinct climate of their upbringing and the diversity of situations they experienced within their lifetimes (Shurrab, Abbasi, & Al Khazaleh, 2018). This may imply that while they are dissimilar as individuals, they are rather identical within the workplace setting. Several limitations manifest through current analysis, with additional studies recommended within the field. Lyons and Kuron acknowledged that companies must cultivate an atmosphere of attentiveness and respect for creating a bridge that links every age group towards developing and maintaining an industrious workforce.

Kian, Wan Yusoff, and Rajah (2014) discussed the mediator of corporate justice between generational diversification and motivation. Corporate justice denotes a shared accountability between corporate decision-makers, shareholders, and society to guarantee that the corporate decision-making process is impartial, civil, accountable, and just.

However, as most literature supports the variation for generational preferences regarding motivation and additionally supports package tailoring for better fitting within the generations, Kian et al. posited that corporate justice might continue impacting the result. Improved grasps of motivation models and generational problems might not suffice when it comes to improving personnel productivity because motivation packages received out of or for the corporations' contributions traverse societal interactions in which the employees compare for equity. Motivation package favorability typically decides subsequent performance (Kian et al., 2014).

The cross-sectional motivational and personality factor-related disparities over the three generations do not support generational stereotypes widely cited by media and management related literature (Wong, Lang, Coulon, & Gardiner, 2008). In particular, not many meaningful distinctions were evident among the three studied generations. Additionally, despite the noted differences, the participants were associated more with age as compared to generation. A limitation to the study conducted by Wong et al. (2008) was the use of cross-sectional information. For an additional examination of the problem, undertaking a longitudinal study for evaluating motivational drivers and personality preferences of diverse generations in which respondents share a common career stage or age group would prove interesting. The study's practical consequences included its highlighting of the significance of dealing with people by paying attention to personal differences instead of being dependent on generation-based stereotypes (Wong et al., 2008). This might fail to be as predominant as indicated by available literature. Human

resource personnel and management professionals should note the absence of generational dissimilarities though the claims of popular literature differ on the subject.

Workforce Motivation Theories

Ankli and Palliam (2012) recommended self-determination model/theory (SDT) as an all-inclusive motivational theory and further revealed SDT to be successful in motivating the workforce. Thus, motivation takes on another dimension, making it essential to consider problems linked to controlled motivation, independent motivation, and the concept of motivation being a performance determinant. Ankli and Palliam attempted to tackle the problem by first identifying fundamental assumptions concerning motivation. Individuals possess the ability to undertake responsible action, wish to achieve success at play and work, and naturally aspire to learn and understand things. In satisfying a mutually meaningful goal, job satisfaction reaches its height when one engages personality as a contributor to motivation. A person is most creative and inventive when inspired chiefly due to personal interest, internal satisfaction, and task-related challenges rather than incentives or external pressure (Ankli & Palliam, 2012).

Human resources (HR) workers and management must take into consideration issues linked to controlled motivation, independent motivation, and the concept of motivation as being a performance determinant (Ankli & Palliam, 2012). Diverse play-work-connected attitudinal linkages require diverse kinds of motivation. If the two become homogeneous, HR management contribution to motivation requires reexamination (especially SDT). Ankli and Palliam (2012) contributed to motivation-based scholarly literature slightly differently by deeming independence, relatedness, and

proficiency in SDT to be vital to psychological development, health, and optimal working in all disciplines. Extrinsic rewards mostly undermine intrinsic motivation (Ankli & Palliam, 2012).

Extrinsic motivation is associated negatively with job satisfaction whereas intrinsic motivation displays a positive association (Rasool, Jondong, & Sohail, 2017). For instance, call center workers exhibit greater extrinsic motivation and lesser intrinsic motivation as compared to nursing staff. In addition, the call center workers exhibit lower satisfaction levels as compared to nursing staff. Regarding the impacts of one group on the link of job satisfaction with extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, Rasool et al. revealed that people holding call center jobs more strongly link job satisfaction with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The relationship between job satisfaction and extrinsic motivation proved not to be significant. Every motivation theory is associated with, at least, extrinsic or intrinsic motivation (Rasool et al., 2017). Equity theory has a positive link with extrinsic motivation. The conclusion is that the expectancy theory has a positive link to intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation, thereby being more applicable to workers in call centers (Rasool et al., 2017).

Work culture or climate impact personnel motivation in every industry (Smithers & Walker, 2000). Construction site atmosphere indeed impacts employees' demotivation levels (Smithers & Walker, 2000). Numerous variables (e.g., lengthy work hours, an aggressive leadership approach, chaos and non-recognition of efforts) related appreciably to this outcome. Managers in the construction sector can cultivate a more appealing workplace atmosphere for personnel.

Motivation essentially guides all human tasks (Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016).

Motivation is a force that propels workers towards accomplishing corporate objectives.

Currently, corporate communication development saw communication as being among the most salient and prominent corporate activities capable of motivating personnel.

Contributing elements in shaping positive personnel motivation include facial expression, eye contact and body language. Leaders' interpersonal communication quality is evaluated based on the degree of satisfaction with information shared between the workforce and managers (Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016). Style of management, honesty, and sincerity when it comes to downward communication (as information managers communicate to subordinates) manifests through smooth superior-subordinate interaction.

Psychologists, behavioral scientists, leadership theorists, and sociologists have concentrated on analyzing human motivation, generally, and workforce motivation, specifically, for more than 100 years (Balzac, 2014). Insights into determinants of workforce motivation prove crucial to owners with an eye on the organizational bottom line as well as, more significantly, to national security when it comes to international marketplace competition (Balzac, 2014). Determining individual employee motivators will lead to greater collective societal advantages, social business success, and place America in a favorable competitive position within the international marketplace (Balzac, 2014).

Behavioral scientist, Herzberg (1959), put forward his motivator-hygiene (or two-factor) model which claims that certain job factors lead to satisfaction, while others

prevent dissatisfaction. Herzberg asserted that “No satisfaction” and “No Dissatisfaction” represent the opposites of “Satisfaction” and “Dissatisfaction”, respectively.

Herzberg’s hygiene factors constitute job factors central to workplace motivation. While hygiene factors fail to maintain long-term satisfaction, if these factors are absent in the workplace the result is dissatisfaction among colleagues. Thus, one definition of hygiene factors (or maintenance factors or ‘dissatisfiers’) is extrinsic elements whose reasonable existence within a workplace sufficiently pacify workers to ensure they do not end up dissatisfied (Sanjeev & Surya, 2016). Hygiene factors signify physiological requirements of individuals, such as wages, which must be justifiable, appropriate, and on par with the industry wage structure.

Other hygiene factors are administrative and corporate policies. Companies should maintain transparency and fairness (Herzberg, 1959), but policies ought not to be overly inflexible:

- Policies must incorporate holidays, breaks, dress code, and flexible work schedules;
- Physical workplace conditions are important since employees deserve a hygienic, secure, and clean work setting;
- Fringe benefits are expected and personnel are entitled to healthcare insurance, personnel help programs, and familial benefits;
- Personnel deserve properly maintained and up-to-date work equipment;
- Personnel expect a familiar, well-retained status as a member of the company;

- Workforce members ought to maintain appropriate, cordial dealings with colleagues, managers and juniors with no issues of discord or harassment present;
- A firm's workforce is entitled to job security guaranteed by the company.

Herzberg (1959) holds that hygiene factors are not motivators; motivators (or satisfiers) are those integral factors that give rise to positive satisfaction. Motivators drive personnel to deliver superior performance, and are intrinsic factors that people find rewarding. One may consider the motivators to be representative of psychological needs which provide added advantage. The motivators are identified by Herzberg:

- Recognition is when a worker naturally expects praise and recognition for his/her achievements within the workplace.
- A worker needs to possess a sense of accomplishment which will be dependent on his/her job. Every task completed leads to some 'fruit' or positive outcome that aids in the accomplishment of a set organizational goal or objective.
- Opportunities for promotion and growth is when a company provides its personnel with avenues for development for spurring them to give their best.
- Holding responsibility for one's duties is essential. Management needs to give personnel ownership of their jobs. This involves minimizing control though retaining accountability.

- One's job ought to be adequately interesting, thought-provoking, and meaningful for ensuring good performance and appropriate motivation.

Herzberg's (1959) theory has its shortcomings. First, it fails to consider situational variables. Herzberg hypothesized a link between productivity and satisfaction; however, his research only concentrated on the latter, neglecting productivity. Second, the theory is not very reliable. If analysis repeating the same steps yield different results; then the theory is not reliable. Third, Herzberg failed to employ an inclusive satisfaction measure. Consequently, his theory has an element of bias, because these are natural personnel reactions brought about by questioning them on their sources of workplace dissatisfaction and satisfaction. Personnel ascribe dissatisfaction to shortfalls in relations with colleagues, pay structure, corporate policy and other external factors. Additionally, personnel consider themselves the source for workplace satisfaction. This is an established theory despite the above limitations.

According to the Two-Factor theory, management needs to underscore assurance of hygiene factors' appropriateness for preventing personnel dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). Management must motivate their staff to do their best by supplying interesting and gratifying work. The theory underlines job-enrichment to motivate personnel. Any job ought to be able to maximize utilization of an individual's abilities and talents. Paying attention to motivational factors may bring about work-quality improvements.

Leadership's Role in Motivating the Multigenerational Workforce

The best strategy to motivate each generational cohort is to integrate the work design theory into the organizational policy (Hernaus & Pološki Vokic, 2014). Owners of

most organizations largely overlook workforce diversity issues (Hernaus & Pološki Vokic, 2014). The basic steps to effective leadership are accepting and espousing generational disparities (Dello Russo, Miraglia & Borgogni, 2017; Edgar, Geare & O'Kane, 2015). Improving the performance levels of employees and motivation in multigenerational workplaces requires an evaluation of personnel population, and effort on the manager's part to sustain a workplace climate supporting a diverse workforce (Boehm, Kunze & Bruch, 2014). Maximizing relationships among the different generations will lead to development of a culture necessary for utmost levels of employee motivation and engagement. No singular style of leadership will work for multigenerational workplaces. Adaptability or the ability to alter and customize communications that suit the behavioral differences and learning styles of team members is one of the key leadership characteristics. The Traditionalists, the Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials possess distinctive traits, and a leader must satisfy all the generations' individual needs (Acar, 2014; Miranda & Allen, 2017).

Hall (2016) suggested designing an effective communication system that will be suitable for each generation. It is mandatory that owners be competent communicators since effective communication is the best predictor of job satisfaction (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Thus, owners must identify the preferences of different generations to manage the multigenerational workforce effectively. Gen Y prefers positive, frequent, and open communication and enjoy sharing information with co-workers (Hall, 2016). Therefore, in managerial coaching, it is critical to balance praise with constructive criticism for the millennial generation.

Preliminary ideas to lead within the multigenerational work setting and prevent intergenerational disputes include promoting self-identification in staff members and offering multigenerational training. Acknowledgement of generational differences allows for an improved appreciation of attributes, experiences, and values influencing motivation, ideology, and work ethic of workers from the four generations (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). Development of creative, innovative solutions will enable organizational executives to improve personnel engagement and motivation, by dealing with generational cohorts' value-based requirements (Fachrunnisa & Adhiatma, 2014).

Elements of leadership that motivate and drive multigenerational workers include: systems for performance management addressing individual generations, mechanisms for feedback which meet the needs of each generation, variable compensation, flexible scheduling, adaptable communication, challenges and opportunities for professional development, mentoring programs, and creative recognition and reward programs (Susaeta, Pin, Idrovo, Espejo & Belizon, 2013). To be successful in optimizing human capital, contemporary leaders should understand what draws, encourages, and retains the four generations of the workforce (Susaeta et al., 2013).

Recognition and reward programs for multigenerational employees. As an increasing number of HR executives include multi-generational approaches in their schemes of reward and recognition, a collection of best business practices emerged (Susaeta et al., 2013). While every company has its own approach that best suits its mission and culture, effective programs have certain characteristics which align with the

organizational management cycle, from program planning to implementation and assessment.

Total integration of multigenerational recognition and rewards schemes into the wider business and talent retention strategy is key. Formalization of the program and systematic management of its performance will help ensure the institution of required levels of leadership and resource commitment.

Establishing goals and gauging outcomes. Leaders must establish well-defined goals and employ specific measures of outcome regarding the multigenerational facet of recognition and reward programs. For instance, a firm may attempt to increase knowledge sharing and collaboration among certain generational clusters or improve employee engagement in other clusters.

Receiving personnel input. Another simple but powerful and effective practice is periodic survey of employees on reward preferences and what elements they value. Basing the organizational recognition strategy on workforce preferences helps avoid waste of resources, while having an increased effect on employee behavior. Undeniably, a note of thanks offered at the opportune moment to a deserving individual holds greater value than a formal award event held yearly. Meanwhile, for other employees, having a chance to save and accumulate points for some large prize represents a continued motivating force and ultimately is rewarding (He, Zhu & Zheng, 2014).

Maintaining flexibility. Reconciliation of the diverse wants and needs of individuals belonging to different generational cohorts necessitates flexibility with

regarding program implementation, especially since it applies to recognition and communication strategies.

Being inclusive. Management needs to include all generations in the programs that offer employees the opportunity to gain recognition at work. Providing all employees, a chance to gain recognition is another defining quality of effective programs. Reward types may differ, but being inclusive guides the corporation's culture more effectually, while also increasing workers' perception of justice on the part of the organization (He et al., 2014).

Leveraging technology. Technology is assuming a dominant role with the increasing complexity of workforce dynamics. Top-class recognition and reward programs extensively employ technology. Technology delivers targeted, timely recognition as well as enabling real-time management oversight, even in multi-site, large-scale endeavors (He et al., 2014).

Appraising and making improvements. Finally, organizational leaders must constantly evaluate the effect of their recognition and reward initiatives, for gauging their return on investment and continuous improvement opportunities (He et al., 2014). Owners focusing on continuous improvement have an obligation to use different technological strategies to improve performance management.

Strategies Used in Performance Management

Lebas (1995) posited that performance management points out the measures for performance, and the context and conduct of those measures. Performance is a management system construct and has the potential for implementation of actions meant

to achieve targets and objectives (Lebas, 1995). Performance management comes before its measurement and accords the meaning.

Walter, Patek, and Lesch (2012) posited that before addressing work motivation, a needs assessment is critical. Such an assessment helps in understanding the scope of the problem. A needs assessment also helps in understanding the socioeconomic dynamics that may shape the problem and its viable solutions. After identifying the problem, both management and staff should focus on a shared goal. Make sure that the goal is a realistic one, and use it to clarify issues and correct any preexisting misconceptions.

Kowalik (2011) highlighted procedures, guidelines, and systems to manage and improve the performance of employees at the optimal level the company expects. The system should maximize performance at work, profitability, growth, and efficiency. The system will designate the measure of output for each as desired by management in its objective criteria. Using the primary performance indicators, performance management is the yardstick for employee performance evaluation.

Performance appraisal has moved to performance management in most organizations (Risher & Management, 2003). However, it is notable that the primary model has not changed much for 40 years. The earlier appraisal model was for a different generation and era and examined the employee at the individual level. The appraisal model did not consider the work environment or relationships at work. The central expectation was only for the employee to meet the expectations of performance set by the organization. Dimensions such as cooperation and dependability were hallmarks of the management philosophy of the time. However, in the new paradigm, there is a focus on

the need to overhaul traditional performance management. There is a call to shift from the earlier expectation of merely meeting the expectations, to other aspects that contribute to the achievement of goals in the context.

Job Characteristics for Different Generational Cohorts

Traits are unequally represented within the various generational groups (Hernaus & Pološki Vokic, 2014). Although task job characteristics do not depend on generations, social characteristics at work to a certain level are different in the various generational cohorts. All generational cohorts identified high task identity, high task variety, and a mixture of both as common characteristics of work and knowledge in employees. Nevertheless, the jobs of Gen X, baby boomers, and Gen Y are idiosyncratic for the autonomy of work, interpersonal interactions, and teamwork. Moreover, including the type of work as a control variable showed interacting with others differs only among professional generations (Hernaus & Pološki Vokic, 2014).

The research by Hernaus and Poloski Vokic (2014) is the first that examines differences and similarities between generations via job characteristics. The scope of the study involved knowledge workers, an area not previously researched heavily (Hernaus & Pološki Vokic, 2014). Thus, the research turned out to be unique and bears practical significance.

Both media and popular press have suggested that differences exist between the various generational cohorts, Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y. Significant variations documenting four social job characteristics and tasks spread across three of the four generational groups (Stevanin et al., 2018). It is essential for organizations to deal with

different cohorts using different approaches (Bartz, Thompson & Rice, 2017; Calk & Patrick, 2017). However, according to Murray, Toulson, and Legg (2011), there is no concrete evidence to support these claims. The study findings seek to establish whether the claims about generational cohorts are factual, by applying linear discriminant and qualitative analysis (Murray, Toulson, & Legg, 2011). These results are different from the common depictions by popular media and challenge them.

Many popular press sources have indicated that the values held by Gen Y are fundamentally different from those of earlier generations (Chawla, Dokadia, & Rai, 2017). Gen Y members were more preoccupied with rewards, status, and recognition. However, such claims are not substantiated by scientific evidence (Chawla, Dokadia, & Rai, 2017).

Workers born in Gen Y were more inclined to extrinsic factors at work such as recognition and remuneration than Gen X and Baby-Boomers (Shea & San José State University, 2012). Gen Y showed tendencies of being less intrinsically motivated as compared to earlier generational groups. The Shea and San José State University (2012) study also shows that all three groups tended to be equally motivated by enjoyable work. The results, further point to the lack of research in the variations in work differences between these generations. The findings have a practical importance on the Gen Y labor force. There is renewed interest in generational diversity from the beginning of the 21st Century. HR management officials, media commentators, and consultants focus on confronting the thought that the modern workforce has segments of individuals that are remarkably different in their value systems, preferences, and attitudes; based on their

birthdate (Parry, 2014). Parry (2014) postulated that it would make sense to believe that HR practitioners have embraced the idea that generations explain the differences in the behavior and attitudes held by employees as a way of developing different recognition and reward systems at the workplace.

Parry (2014) and Wesolowski (2014) opined that current research seeks to unearth the generational differences in the workplace. However, the emerging idea of generational differences in the workplace has not been scrutinized or reconsidered by academics (Parry, 2014). Doing so is essential to examine and evaluate the approach. If the decisions by HR managers use assumptions relating to the traits of generational differences, there is a need for further exploratory research relating to generational differences in the workplace (Parry, 2014).

Based on the factors of motivation, generational characteristics are identical across employees in the public and private sectors (Jurkiewicz & Brown, 1998). The only differences identified can be associated with career and life stages, and not with sociological influences that are specific to generational groups.

Parry and Urwin (2011) provided a critical assessment of the basis and the empirical proof that there are differences in generational work preferences and values. The concept of generations is strongly based on theories of sociology, but the empirical evidence from the academic sources for the differences between the generational cohorts is mixed (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Other studies discussed here within cannot pinpoint the predicted differences between age and generation as probable causes of the differences observed. There are flaws in the literature by limitations in methodology since using

cross-sectional research study designs (Parry & Urwin, 2011). There is confusion on the appropriate definition of a generation vis-a-vis cohort and failure to consider the differences in gender, ethnicity, or national context (Parry & Urwin, 2011).

There are some discrepancies concerning whether the generational differences and preferences in the workplace have value to practitioners (Parry & Urwin, 2011). The discrepancies may be irrelevant to practitioners if the generational differences represent actual effects in the workplace, so long as one can show that the differences exist. Presently, this is not the case. There is a need for more research to separate groups and generational effects from the ones caused by period or age (Parry & Urwin, 2011). The thought that differences between employees of different generations and groups exhibit varying preferences and values based on age and other reasons is still a useful managerial idea. Owners need a convincing case for generation as a distinguishing factor to spur them into action.

The focus of the proposed study is on the construction industry; however, results from the hospitality industry give insight to generational work-related values. Chen and Choi (2008) explored work values in hospitality management and the supposed differences among managers and supervisors belonging to three generations. Chen and Choi (2008) surveyed 398 US managers from different organizations. Each manager answered questions related to 15 work values based on hierarchical traits. Chen and Choi (2008) found that generational differences did exist concerning the work-values of those surveyed.

In another study, Rani, Bouzdine, and Samuel (2016) focused on providing insight into the work value differences and personal organization fit of Gen X, Gen Y, and Baby Boomers in India. There were notable work value differences between Gen Y and earlier generations. The differences are important constituents in designing organization systems and structures that are ideal for younger staff (Rani, Bouzdine & Samuel, 2016).

Cennamo and Gardner (2013) studied work values, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and the intention to leave across three generational cohorts in the workforce to establish the generational differences in the organizational values at a personal level. The findings indicated that Gen Y had a stronger focus on the significance of status and work values relating to freedom as opposed to the older cohorts. Baby Boomers reported that their enhanced personal organizational values fit with extrinsic values and status compared to the younger cohorts. In cases where organizational and individual values indicated a poor fit, there were lower job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, and higher chances of turnover across the generational groups studied.

Many organizations must deal with the retirement of older staff (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010). Corporations must hire younger staff and have the challenge of retaining them. Twenge et al. studied the work values of a sample that was nationally representative of US seniors in a high school in 1976, 1991, and 2006 which represented Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y. This study was markedly different from studies that are only conducted once (Twenge et al., 2010). The findings showed that

values related to leisure increased fast across Gen Y and the Baby Boomers while the importance of work declined. Extrinsic values such as money and status were high with Gen X, but were even higher with Gen Y. Gen Y shows less affinity for altruistic work values such as societal worth or helping, compared to the older generations. Social traits like making friends or obtaining a results-based interesting job were ranked lower by Gen Y, compared to the Baby Boomers (Twenge et al., 2010). The findings come with implications that are practical for the management and even the recruitment of a new workforce.

Workplace Performance

The literature presented helps in the comprehension of the various generational cohorts and how they relate to the workforce. Motivational theories provide a reference for the deeper understanding of the varying factors affecting performance at the workplace. Notably, some researchers have significantly differed in ideas about how generational cohorts relate to motivational workplace factors. For instance, Wong et al. (2008) opined that motivational driver differences and personality are non-existent among three generations of the Australian workforce. The differences noted related more to age than generation (Wong et al., 2008). Similarly, Lyons and Kuron (2014) also discovered that motivational aspects about generational groups are not fully supportive of the stereotypes of generational differences in management circles, media, and related literature.

Likewise, Smithers and Walker (2000) presented the hypothesis that the surroundings of a construction site affect the motivation levels of the workers at that site.

Such factors are beyond the generational cohort differences. Smithers and Walker (2000) studied the validity of the claim that generational group motivation happens due to separate and distinct factors, and sought to examine the various approaches applied in motivating the different generational groups. The findings support that demotivation occurs on construction sites because of long hours worked, chaos, non-recognition, and the aggressive management style (Smithers & Walker, 2000).

Theories of motivation will help to build a strong basis for motivational aspects that are appropriate for each generational cohort (Ankli & Palliam, 2012; Herzberg, 1959; Balzac, 2014; Shurrab et al., 2018). The varying work values and job characteristics among the general groups shed light on the proposed study by allowing me to understand the factors taken into consideration when determining the motivation each generational cohort needs.

Transition

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies for improving the performance of multigenerational cohorts in the construction Industry. Section 1 introduced the background of the problem, the problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, research question, interview questions, and conceptual framework. Section 1 continued with the operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, the significance of the study, and ends with a review of the literature. In Section 2, I delve deeper into the project with a recap of the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection

technique, data organization techniques, data analysis, and finally, reliability and validity.

In Section 3, I provide the findings of the study, the application to professional practice, indicate the implications for social change, and suggest recommendations for action and further research.

Section 2: The Project

To explain and justify the study design, in Section 2, I define the project with a recap of the purpose statement and descriptions of the role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization techniques, data analysis, and finally, ensure the study reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that construction owners use to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance. The target population included business owners of three small construction companies in Ohio who have successfully motivated multiple generational cohorts within their company and improved performance. The contribution to positive social change may be the enlightenment of business leaders about the unique characteristics and work ethics of multiple generations, which may increase productivity and organizational success. Furthermore, the findings of the study may provide researchers with knowledge and information about the strategies for improving the performance of Millennials and Gen X. Society can benefit as different generational cohorts appreciate and become more understanding of each other inside and outside of the workplace.

Role of the Researcher

I conducted this study in a principled manner by using reliable sources and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data ethically. The researcher must arm potential readers with knowledge about himself/herself (Wolcott, 2009). I was the primary

instrument for collecting and analyzing the data. In most qualitative case studies, the researcher is usually the primary data collection tool (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The ethics of social research as outlined in the Belmont Report include respect, justice, and beneficence (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015; Salganik, 2017). I made sure that I adhered to research ethics, and I kept the interests of the research participants in mind.

I set aside personal experience and generational views and kept an open mind, thus mitigating any biases I may have had about generational cohorts. The researcher should set aside personal experiences in order to remain objective (Moustakas, 1994). My interview protocol was face-to-face semistructured interviews. All interviews were conducted at my home office because that was convenient for the participants.

I am the chief financial officer (CFO) of a small construction company in the Midwest. I preferred to conduct this study using small construction owners of other companies to minimize bias. Qualitative research is interpretive research (Creswell, 2009). I worked hard to remain objective. I employed the strategy of bracketing to help mitigate bias. Bracketing is a technique used in qualitative research to diminish the possible harmful effects of prejudices that may disrupt the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Participants

The following criteria were used to select the participants: those who are in the construction industry, those who reside in Ohio, and those who are small business owners who have been managers of Gen X and Gen Y employees for at least 3 years. The

participants consisted of small construction business owners in the state of Ohio who have motivated their multigenerational teams to an improved performance. Though I am currently a CFO in the construction industry, I did not have a personal or business relationship with any of the participants. I forged working relationships with the business owners, which added to the environment of trust and authenticity. I guaranteed them confidentiality to ensure that their answers were honest and complete.

Selecting participants who met the criteria ensured that the characteristics and experience of the chosen participants aligned with the overarching research question. I gained access to the participants by attending a local construction symposium, which ensured I had access to participants, I asked a senior project manager of the organization to sign a letter of cooperation (see Appendix A). Once I received IRB approval, I invited construction business owners to take part in a brief four-question survey sent out and returned to me via email so that I was able to determine their alignment with participant criteria of this study (Appendix B). I was not able to recruit three participants from the emailed survey, so I asked the first willing participant for referrals using the snowball method of recruiting. I built a working relationship with the participants through email and phone calls. After signing the informed consent via email, they agreed to be a part of my study, after which I met them face-to-face for interviews. Carden and Boyd (2014) posited that a good working relationship with participants is vital for a meaningful search of a phenomenon. A working relationship with participants keeps them engaged and can improve the quality of data collection (Jack, DiCenso, & Lohfeld, 2016).

Research Method and Design

The three research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method design (Earley, 2014). I used the qualitative multiple method instead of the quantitative or mixed method to explore the strategies that construction owners use to improve the performance of multigenerational cohorts. The multiple case study design is effective when a researcher needs to go beyond the study of isolated variables (Yin, 2016). Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore and explicate human behavior (Bailey, 2014).

Research Method

I explored strategies and did not analyze variables, so the qualitative method was the appropriate method for this study. The questions asked by researchers in qualitative studies are *how*, *what*, and *why*, which are open-ended and probing (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). The qualitative method is helpful in producing comprehensive information that is difficult to measure, such as interpretations, opinions, views, and experiences (Bristowe, Selman, & Murtagh, 2015). Most qualitative research is exploratory (Schonfeld & Mazzola, 2015). Jones (2017) stated that the qualitative method usually involves collecting verbal data from a few participants with the goal of uncovering patterns. Qualitative research allows a more in-depth understanding of attitudes, behaviors, or motivations whereas quantitative research measures phenomena and searches for facts (Barnham, 2015). I used a qualitative research methodology and asked comprehensive, open-ended questions. Koch, Niesz, and McCarthy (2014) posited that this approach helps researchers uncover the participants' thoughts and provides multifaceted responses regarding a phenomenon.

The quantitative method involves collecting data to test relationships between variables and does not examine different perspectives (Barnham, 2015). Therefore, a quantitative study method was not appropriate. The mixed method uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Mertens, 2014; Snelson, 2016). Mixed method research uses both research designs to help comprehend a single phenomenon (Mabila, 2017; Mertens, 2014; Sparkes, 2014). Using a quantitative or mixed method did not suffice for this study because I was not analyzing existing data; instead, I explored the strategies to improve the performance of multigenerational cohorts in the construction industry.

Research Design

A research design is contingent on the proper alignment of the research question and interview questions with the purpose of the study and choosing strategies and questions that facilitate the deescalation of the research problem (Yin, 2012). The case study design is the most effective method to enable learning about essential facets of real-life events (Cronin, 2014; Tsang, 2014). A case study design provides the researcher with prospects for learning new information (Simons, 2015). A qualitative multiple case study was the appropriate design for this study because I wanted to explore the experiences of those in management positions of small construction companies.

Key research designs one may consider when conducting qualitative research are phenomenology, narrative, and ethnography. Phenomenology and case study are both suitable strategies considered for exploring strategies (Ezeobele, Malecha, Mock, Mackey-Godine, & Hughes, 2014; Yin, 2012). Phenomenology was not appropriate for this study. Ingham-Broomfield (2015) asserted that phenomenology researchers seek

multiple denotations that attribute to a phenomenon and attempt to provide an inclusive description instead of an explanation. The narrative design seeks to analyze stories told by the leaders about a group or an event (Bennett, Hill, & Daddario, 2015). Narrative design was not appropriate for this study. An ethnographic design is more expensive to conduct, and it takes an abundance of time (Reeves, Peller, Goldman, & Kitto, 2013). I was not observing the culture or studying the social interactions of groups; therefore, an ethnographic research design was an improper selection for this study.

Data saturation ensures the validity of a qualitative study. Researchers using a qualitative research design often experience the quandary of when and how to achieve data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Nelson, 2016). Searching for new themes, the researcher will decide how many times to interview the participants to reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation of themes occurs when additional information produces no new emerging themes (Hagaman & Wutich, 2016; Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014). Fusch and Ness (2015) asserted that the most important fact to remember about data saturation is that it is about the depth of the phenomena and not the number of interviews conducted. Data saturation occurred when I interviewed the participants and identified all emerging themes.

Population and Sampling

The population for this qualitative multiple case study was owners of small construction companies in northeast Ohio who had experience with managing Millennials and Gen X employees. The purposive and/or snowball sample included three owners. Purposive sampling helps to identify and select participants (Kaczynski, Salmons, &

Smith, 2014; Palinkas et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). Snowball sampling is also known as link-tracing sampling because it traces the links in a social network to allow researchers access to additional participants (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017).

In a qualitative case study, it is not necessary to have a large sample size to achieve balance and completeness (Shahgholian & Yousefi, 2015; Yin, 2014).

Interviewing a small sample can yield fruitful results if the participants are well-versed on the phenomenon at hand and are able to provide rich data. I achieved data saturation in this study by asking the three participants the same interview and follow-up questions until no new themes arose. Data saturation of themes occurs when additional information produces no new emerging themes (Morse et al., 2014). Oberoi, Jiwa, McManus, and Hodder (2015) suggested that the data collection process is no longer necessary once the researcher determines that there is sufficient information that saturates the data. Data saturation can augment the validity of the research and alleviate the consequences of social and moral data divergences (Gergen, Josselson & Freeman, 2015).

I chose participants by purposive sampling at a construction symposium held in greater Cleveland, Ohio. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants based on their effective strategies of a phenomenon (Jones, 2014). I used the following criteria to select the participants: those who are small business owners who have been managers of Gen X and Gen Y employees for at least three years who reside in Ohio, and have access to the documents describing their company's employee reward and recognition programs.

Snowball sampling was the follow up sampling method used for this study. Snowball sampling can provide referral participants from the original participant pool in a desired field (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). Snowball sampling, also referred to as link-tracing sampling, traces the links in a social network to allow researchers access to additional participants (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). Snowball sampling is beneficial to qualitative researchers when the participants are a part of an exclusive population where it may be hard to initiate interaction (Valerio et al., 2016). Snowball sampling allowed one participant to refer other participants based on the specific criteria of the study.

Ethical Research

Following a strict protocol is the basis of ethical research. I gained approval for the purposed study from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the Walden number assigned to my study was 12-05-19-0491794. This study represented the ethical guidelines of Walden University. The Belmont Report protocols stress the importance of maintaining ethical standards (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones & Khodyakov, 2015). After IRB approval, the selection of participants commenced. I prescreened the potential participants by using a four-question survey (Appendix B) which I passed out face-to-face, but was returned via email. Before each participant agreed to an in-person interview, I emailed them an informed consent form already signed by me. The participant replied to the email containing the consent with the words “I Consent” signifying that they understand the nature of the study.

After the participants consented via the informed consent form, I then replied to the consent email and attached the interview questions (Appendix C). The interviews took place in the office of each participant. Choosing the proper location for the interview ensured that the participants were able to focus on the interview. Each interview was approximately 60 minutes in duration. Participants of studies have the right to withdraw at any given time (Tam et al., 2015). The signed informed consent form acknowledged the participant's right to withdraw.

The participants could have withdrawn from the study verbally, by email, or letter. The participants reserved the right to withdraw even after all data collection had taken place. If a participant had withdrawn, I would have shredded the interview notes and deleted all recordings. There were no incentives for participating in the study, but each participant did receive a copy of the study along with the findings.

An ethical responsibility of the researcher is to guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of each participant (Adams et al., 2015). I utilized specific alpha numeric coding to ensure the confidentiality of each participant. I assigned each participant a code to conceal their identities; PAR1 for Participant 1, PAR2 for Participant 2, and PAR3 for Participant 3. Researchers often use pseudonyms to conceal the identity of the participants during data collection (Cleary et al., 2014). Pseudonyms shield the participants and reinforce their feeling of protection during data analysis (Yin, 2014; Yin, 2016). All raw data and transcriptions will be locked in my fireproof safe for a minimum of 5 years to protect the confidentiality of the participants. I will destroy all data 5 years after the completion date of the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Yin (2014) posited that the researcher should be well-versed in a variety of data collection techniques especially when gathering data from multiple sources. Interviews were the primary source of collecting data for this study. Face-to-face interviews may allow the researcher to detect body language often missed in phone interviews. In qualitative interviews, the researcher is often the main data collection tool (Amrollahi & Rowland, 2017; Neuman, 2014; Singh, 2015). I was the primary data collection instrument for this study and I utilized face-to-face semistructured interviews. There were many advantages of face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews are the preferred method to collect data if the participants display non-verbal expressions (DeMassis & Kotlar, 2014). Face-to-face interviews, as opposed to other methods in qualitative research, allow the researcher to better gauge the disposition of the participant (Mathrick, Meagher & Norbury, 2017). McIntosh and Morse (2015) agreed that face-to-face semistructured interviews give more reliable data than unstructured or structured interviews.

There are three types of interviews that a qualitative researcher can use: (a) unstructured, (b) structured, and (c) semistructured (Parker, 2014). Unstructured interviews do not begin with established questions for the participant, and in many cases the interviews are often open discussions with little organization, thus causing an absence of reliability and validity (McTate & Leffler, 2017). Reliability and validity suffer in unstructured interviews (Parker, 2014). Conversely, structured interviews do not allow necessary opportunity for follow-up questions or clarification since the participants find

the exact wording and use of closed-end questions prohibiting (Doll, 2018). Rich data could result from participants if the researcher conducts semistructured interviews where the questions are open-ended and identical for all participants thus allowing the researcher to probe further into the responses (Yin, 2014; Peters & Halcomb, 2015). In semistructured interviews the questions are often available beforehand, permitting researchers to ask participants several open-ended questions that will not produce predetermined replies (Panagiotakopoulos, 2014). McIntosh and Morse (2015) stated that a benefit of semistructured interviews is that they prompt detailed responses which are pertinent to the specific study. Semistructured interviews require the researcher to follow the protocols for the qualitative case study and to ask candid questions in a manner that alleviates bias and helps the researcher to follow the outline of the protocols (Yin, 2014). An outline for the interview protocol for the study is in Appendix D. The four sections outlined in Appendix D are: (a) before the interview, (b) during the interview, (c) after the interview, and (d) after publication.

Member checking with each participant ensures that the transcriptions are in line with their thoughts (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016). Member checking is one of the most critical techniques for qualitative research credibility (Baillie, 2015). Researchers use member checking to improve validity and reliability (Cleary, Horsfall & Hayter, 2014). I conducted follow-up interviews to aid in member checking.

Data Collection Technique

The proper data collection technique is crucial to the accomplishment of the study goals (Eitkan, Musa & Alkassim, 2015). I used face-to-face semistructured interviews. I

documented the non-verbal cues in a research journal. Marshall and Rossman (2016) recommended using silence to draw out information along with some probing/comprehensive questions to bring about rich data. A disadvantage of face-to-face interviews is that it may be difficult for the parties to meet at a specified time and location for a given duration. Telephone interviews may be more convenient and less intrusive for the participant than face-to-face interviews (Drabble, Trocki, Salcedo, Walker & Korcha, 2016). Ward, Gott, and Hoare (2015) argued that telephone interviews may allow the participant to speak more freely since no one is watching them and they are less nervous. When conducting telephone interviews, it is hard to gauge whether or not the participant is truly paying attention or multitasking (Irvine, Drew & Sainsbury, 2013). My goal was to meet all participants face-to-face, and I was able to achieve that goal.

I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews and followed the interview protocol consistently with each participant. I scheduled each interview at a time convenient to the participant and I estimated that each interview would last no longer than one hour. Researchers should record interviews for precise data analysis (Cridland, Jones, Caputi & Magee, 2014). Recording interviews aids with the challenges of transcription (McGonagle, Brown & Schoeni, 2015). Anyan (2013) agreed that recording interviews allows researchers to focus on nonverbal cues, which can lead to better comprehension. Each interview was audio-recorded using a SmartPen® by Livescribe. This device works with a mobile phone application and connects to your computer for ease of transcription. The SmartPen® records written as well as spoken words, which

made transcribing and taking notes on the interview seamless. After transcribing the interview, I paraphrased each participant interview and e-mailed them a summary paragraph of each question to confirm that the summarized responses were indeed their thoughts.

Data Organization Technique

I used the Livescribe 3 SmartPen® to record and transcribe all data collected. By writing in the SmartPen® journal, the notes appear in the Livescribe+ mobile application and transfer to the laptop computer automatically (Witte & Piotrowski, 2015). Recording in a smart journal reduces negative emotions and allows recipients to reflect more clearly (Merlo & Chifari, 2015). The SmartPen® makes cataloguing and labeling each interview an easier task (Wold, 2013). All raw data and transcriptions will be locked in my password-protected fireproof safe for a minimum of 5 years to protect the confidentiality of the participants. I will destroy all data 5 years after the completion date of the study.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) and triangulation were the proper methods to analyze the data for this study. TA provides a robust, systematic framework for coding qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Using TA helps to identify patterns or themes of participants that could lead to the answer of the proposed research question (Clarke & Braun, 2014). Proper TA augments the validity and reliability of a study (Elo et al., 2014). The significant feature of thematic analysis is the organized process which includes coding and creating themes by examining the meaning of a description (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016). There are four stages outlined by

Vaismoradi et al. (2016) in the TA process for performing data analysis. Reading and understanding the data is the beginning of the process, also known as the initialization stage. In this stage, I wrote notes while deciphering transcriptions for coding and concepts. The second stage as the construction stage. In the construction stage, I classified, compared, labeled, defined, and described the themes and topics. The third stage is the rectification stage. This stage involved me sharing information about the themes to establish knowledge. And to finish, in the fourth stage, known as the finalization stage, I created the storyline and concluded the findings.

Triangulation involves using multiple methods to explore the same phenomenon (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014). I used triangulation to intensify the credibility of my study. Triangulation increases the study credibility (Manganelli et al., 2014). Methodical triangulation occurs when the collection of data is from multiple sources including interviews and observation (Yazan, 2015). I used interviews and company documentation about employee reward and recognition programs to achieve triangulation. I used pseudonyms to conceal demographic details. I assigned codes to each participant, PAR1 – PAR3, to help preserve the identity of the participants. Also, I used these codes to organize and classify data.

Data analysis involved transcription of the recorded interviews. I used the Livescribe 3 SmartPen® to record and transcribe all data collected. Traditionally Microsoft Excel is one of the preferred tools for data transcription (Plamondon, Bottorff & Cole, 2015), but Cooper (2017) and Woods, Paulus, Atkins, and Macklin (2016) preferred using NVivo software to help identify themes during transcription. The

SmartPen® automatically recorded and transcribed the interview, and I also used Excel to help track and identify emerging themes.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability to get the same results even if different researchers perform under the same conditions. Dependability places emphasis on the need for researchers to take into consideration the ever-evolving context within research as it happens (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The responsibility of the qualitative researcher is to describe the changes naturally occurring in the setting as well as how those changes affect the researchers approach to the study (Morse, 2015). To address dependability within a qualitative research study, the researcher can perform member checking of data interpretation. This technique allows for accurate assessment of dependability regarding the information collected for the study (Elo et al., 2014).

In qualitative research, to determine reliability and dependability of the information collected, the researcher may perform member checking. Member checking is also known as participant or respondent validation and is a technique for exploring the credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). Participants receive the data or results back to check for accurateness and cohesiveness with their experience (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking may receive criticism due to its interpretative stance concerning qualitative research; however, it is often a popular technique employed by researchers (Cleary, Horsfall & Hayter, 2014). The main reason for using member checking is because it allows the researcher to understand and determine information the participants intend and

assess whether the interpretations are wrong or have errors (Elo et al., 2014). Member checking is a playing-back process that serves as validation of participant feedback (Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien & Rees, 2016). I performed member checking within 72 hours of each interview to ensure validity and accuracy.

Validity

Validity of a study ensures that the results are a true reflection of the phenomena studied (Bengtsson, 2016). An important technique used to establish credibility is triangulation. Triangulation is a method used both qualitatively and quantitatively (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris & Pearson, 2014). Triangulation improves credibility of information by refining both internal consistency as well as generalizability via qualitative methods within the study (Northrup & Shumway, 2014). I used interviews and company documentation about the employee reward and recognition programs to achieve methodological triangulation.

Credibility. The process of providing participants the opportunity to review and confirm their responses is member checking (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking is crucial to the reliability, validity, and credibility of a study (Baillie, 2015; Baškarada, 2014).

Transferability. Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research generalize or transfer to other contexts or settings. To establish transferability, the researcher must provide readers with evidence concerning applicability of the findings to other times, situations, and populations, so that the findings may be transferred to other contexts (Bengtsson, 2016). That evidence must come

from other sources and not the researcher (Sacks, 2015). Researchers cannot provide an index of transferability, but we are responsible to provide the data base that makes transferability possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Generation X and millennials work side by side in many industries, and this study's findings may be useful to all sectors that employ multigenerational teams.

Confirmability. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results are confirmed or corroborated by others. Confirmability relies on the fact that interpretations result from data and not figments of the imagination (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Confirmability relies on the ability of another to interpret the results (Noble & Smith, 2015). To improve confirmability, transparently describe the research steps taken from the beginning, through reporting, and the development of findings (El Hussein, Jakubec & Osuji, 2016).

I used member checking and encouraged my participants to review their responses for accuracy after I restated the transcripts in my own words. Member checking aids in the validity of a study (Birt et al., 2016). Usually after transcription, member checking occurs (Baškarada, 2014).

Data saturation. Data saturation is an emerging approach in qualitative reasoning (Saunders et al., 2017). Data saturation involves the process of data collection and relates to the degree of data repetition expressed in previous data (Saunders et al., 2017). To ensure data saturation has taken place, enough quality data needs to be collected to support the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). It is hard to determine data saturation as there is no set value of what constitutes sufficient data (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp &

LaRossa, 2015). There is enough information to complete the study when you have exhausted the ability to gain supplementary information, further coding is no longer viable, then you have achieved data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I interviewed three business owners who have proven strategies for improving the performance of multiple generational cohorts. If new themes and ideas had continued to emerge, I would have added participants. Data saturation occurred when there were no new themes and the data obtained became familiar and no supplementary information was available.

Transition and Summary

To describe and justify the proposed study, Section 2 explained the project with a recap of the purpose statement, followed by discussions of the role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization techniques, data analysis, and finally, reliability and validity. The informed consent form explains the scope of the study and each participant received a copy. I used a semistructured interview protocol to help eliminate bias and regulate the process. I recruited the first participant using purposive sampling at a local construction symposium by emailing a four-question survey. I used snowball sampling, and I interviewed three construction business owners. To enhance validity, I performed member checking during the follow-up interviews with each participant. I used the Livescribe SmartPen 3® to record the face-to-face interviews.

Section 3 presents the findings of the study, the application to professional practice, the implications for social change, and suggestions for action and further research, reflections, and a conclusion. This section provides detailed information

describing the strategies owners use for improving the performance of multiple generational cohorts in the construction industry. I interpret the findings which will highlight the transferability of the study. Section 3 ends with the presentation of the findings and the impact on social change.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that construction owners use to motivate multigenerational employees to improve organizational performance. The overarching themes were the development of motivation strategies, the primary generations employed, identifying motivating factors for Gen Y and Gen X, optimal communication styles, productivity of preferred strategies in motivating multigenerational teams, and barriers to success encountered and addressed.

Presentation of the Findings

The conceptual framework for this study was generational theory. The findings of the study support the idea that each generation is unique based on a collective set of memories, ideals, and experiences. During data collection, I strived to achieve the main objective to explore the strategies for improving the performance of multigenerational cohorts in the construction industry. I addressed the following research question: What strategies do owners in the construction industry use to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance? When completing the interviews that formed the essential information for this study, I used the interview protocol (see Appendix D) to acquire answers to 10 interview questions. The following themes emerged during my collection and analysis of the data:

1. Development of motivation strategies
2. Primary generations employed
3. Identifying motivating factors for Gen Y and Gen X

4. Optimal communication styles
5. Productivity of preferred strategies in motivating multigenerational teams
6. Barriers to success encountered and addressed

Theme 1: Development of Motivation Strategies

All the participants asserted that they obtained their motivation strategies through trial and error, using emotional intelligence and active listening. PAR3 observed that the use of mentorship helped a great deal in developing their motivation strategies. For example, PAR2 stated,

[It's] largely trial and error. The other part is starting to get advice and feedback from each group and finding out what is important to them, what their preferences are, and trying to get that in a consistent and fair manner for both groups.

See Table 1 for the development of motivation strategies.

Table 1

Development of Motivation Strategies

| | Mentorship | Trial and error | Emotional intelligence | Active listening |
|------|------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|
| PAR1 | | X | X | X |
| PAR2 | | X | X | X |
| PAR3 | X | X | X | X |

Theme 2: Primary Generations Employed

All the participants asserted that they employ largely Gen Y, the age range of this generational cohort in 2020 is 25 to 40, and Gen X, the age range of this generational cohort in 2020 is 41 to 55. The other excluded generations (Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and Generation Z) were not included in this study because they were not

prevalent groups working in the field of construction at the time of this study. PAR1, PAR2, and PAR3 stated that they employ mostly two generational cohorts: Gen X and Gen Y.

Theme 3: Identifying Motivating Factors for Gen Y and Gen X

The motivating factors for both generations were food, compliments, and money. work/life balance (WLB) was the primary motivating factor. The meaning of WLB is different for Gen X than for Gen Y. The motivating factors are consistent for Gen X and Gen Y with a differing implication for WLB. Figure 1 depicts that Gen X is more concerned with stability of work, family obligations, and security. Gen Y is motivated by short-term benefits, paid time off, and weekends off. WLB for Gen X in the words of PAR2 is as follows:

A great example is in dealing with a Gen X employee. Often times the things they are more interested in is often more flexibility, they have different family concerns. In trying to make sure that in meeting different benchmarks that they are getting the latitude/freedom to go do other things that are important to them.

WLB for Gen X and Gen Y in the words of PAR3:

I find them [Gen X] to be more interested in stability. To have enough work where they are not bouncing around. They are [mostly] head of families [and] they have a full-fledged situation going on whether its house or bills and they need consistent pay... The other guys [Gen Y] will work 2-3 times a week then bounce to some other job. But, Gen X really likes the consistency. So, I really do fight hard... and [find] big enough jobs, not just a water heater here, or there. I

look for jobs where we can stay for a while. They [Gen X] work a lot better like that.

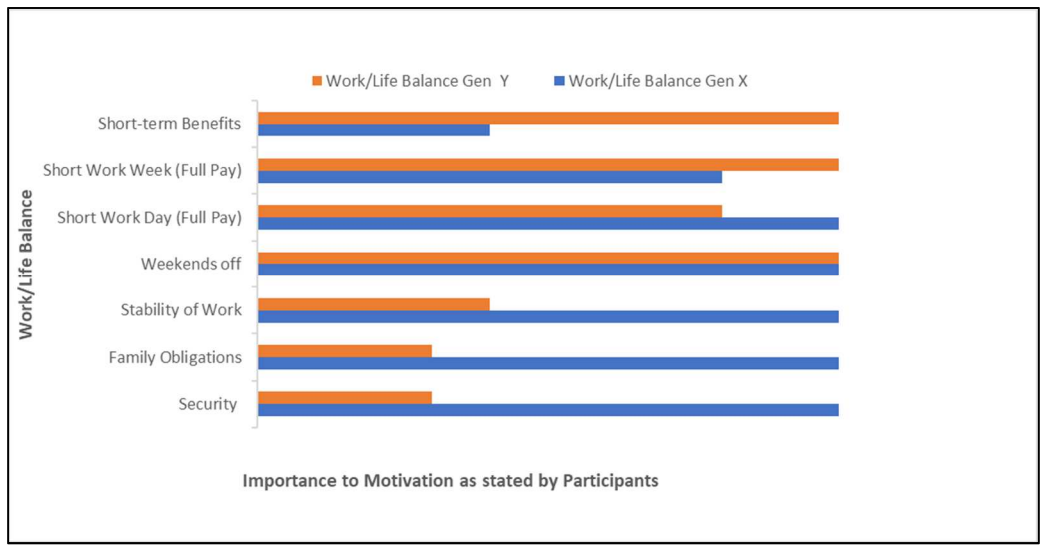


Figure 1. Motivation strategies—work/life balance.

Theme 4: Optimal Communication Styles

All three participants agree on the preferred communication style for Gen X and Gen Y. Both Gen X and Gen Y prefer public compliments and private correction. The optimal communication style for Gen X is group meetings on a weekly basis where the employees have an audience with leadership. The communication style for Gen Y leans toward shorter huddle type meetings followed up with a recap email or text. Gen Y’s communication is synonymous with social media/technology (cell phones).

Theme 5: Productivity of Preferred Strategies in Motivating Multigenerational Teams

Productivity seems to be consistent among all three participants: Productivity has increased for each participant as a result of strategies that improve organizational performance among their multigenerational cohorts. As stated by PAR1,

The success is [that] now there is cohesiveness with an overall general direction.

There is more cohesiveness. I can have a team of five or six guys all working from different generations, with different motivating factors, all towards the same goal. (Interviewer: would you say productivity has increased, decreased, or remained the same?) Increased. Moving the bar.

Theme 6: Barriers to Success Encountered and Addressed

A barrier mentioned from PAR1 and PAR3 was the switch needed in communication styles from one cohort to another. PAR2 agreed stating,

I think the largest barrier[s] especially in trying to deal with everyone as one group, was figuring out the best way to communicate information for each group. Having long meetings for the millennials tend to be more difficult. I also notice that technology, phones and such also tend to get a little more distracting in the long-run. The Gen X employees tend to actually like having more of a conference or meeting setting. Obviously, they aren't as attached to the technology, while they use it, they don't rely on it the same way [as Gen Y]. So, it was figuring out how much I can communicate in each fashion, then finally figuring out I had to tailor it to each group.

The barriers were best addressed by a group conversation, followed-up by a text or email for Gen Y. Gen X tends to also enjoy reiterating in a longer weekly team meeting, but long meetings may bore Gen Y. As further explained by PAR1,

How I address those barriers is [when] I have to do a group conversation, always follow it up with a segregation of those generations, and a repeat with a translation sufficient for that generation to understand. I've noticed in the millennial generation, there is a tendency towards softer skills in the direction, there has to be an underlying theme, and usually a [follow-up] text, or email if there is [a] face-to-face [meeting], there still has to be a follow up text as a reminder or website to get the detailed instructions. Maybe not a blueprint, but some type of outline where they can on their own, individually reflect on their goals electronically, usually in the social media sphere, where they can get their instructions. It doesn't have to be as authoritative and direct as it has to be for Gen X. The other interesting footnote in the millennial directions is [that] directions are open for challenge and change. I have seen big failures in one way: my way or the highway type mentalities with that generation [Y].

Comparison of Findings With the Literature Review and Data

In completing the data analysis for this study, I documented and explored six main themes. The themes are broken into (a) development of motivation strategies, (b) primary generations employed, (c) identifying the motivating factors for Gen Y and Gen X, (d) optimal communication styles, (e) productivity of preferred strategies in motivating multigenerational teams, and (f) barriers to success encountered and

addressed. For this study, my central research question was as follows: What strategies do owners in the construction industry use to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance? In addition to the literature reviewed, an analysis of the data collected through interviews and company documentation revealed that construction company owners do use strategies that improve organizational performance among their multigenerational cohorts.

Identifying Motivating Factors for Gen Y and Gen X

Differences in generations discovered in this study may affect an organization positively while helping leadership to sympathize generationally. This does not eliminate the truth that different age groups possess different thinking reflecting the distinct climate of their upbringing and the diversity of situations they experienced within their lifetimes (Shurrab et al., 2018). This may imply that while they are dissimilar as individuals, they are rather identical within the workplace setting. Lyons and Kuron (2014) acknowledged that companies must cultivate an atmosphere of attentiveness and respect for creating a bridge that links every age group towards developing and maintaining an industrious workforce. Several limitations manifest through current analysis within this study.

In this study, the owners identified the differences between the two generation's WLB. Though both Gen Y and Gen X enjoy WLB, each generation enjoys it differently. According to the participants, Gen X prefers security due to family obligations and appreciate stability (longevity per project) but often need a more flexible schedule. The participants stated that WLB for Gen Y include weekends off, a shorter workday, and short-term benefits.

Optimal Communication Styles

Hall (2016) suggested designing an effective communication system suitable for each generation. It is mandatory that owners be competent communicators since effective communication is the best predictor of job satisfaction (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Thus, owners must identify the preferences of different generations to manage the multigenerational workforce effectively. Gen Y prefers positive, frequent, and open communication and enjoy sharing information with co-workers (Hall, 2016). Therefore, in managerial coaching, it is critical to balance praise with constructive criticism for the millennial generation.

In the data analysed, participants confirmed that they indeed noticed a generational gap between Gen Y and Gen X and each participant felt the need to craft strategies to communicate best with each generation. In this study, the owners used trial and error to develop the strategies that work best for each generational cohort. The participants were in consensus that the younger generation (Gen Y) needs more praise and an open forum to discuss and/or challenge the concepts put before them since in most cases they see themselves as the future managers of the company. The owners also agreed that preferred meeting lengths differ for each of the two generations. The participants posited that Gen X prefer longer weekly meetings in order to have audience with leadership, but Gen Y prefers shorter huddles followed by an email or text to hone in on the expectations/responsibilities at hand.

Productivity of Preferred Strategies in Motivating Multigenerational Teams

The cross-sectional motivational and personality factor-related disparities over the three generations does not support generational stereotypes widely cited by media and management related literature (Wong, Lang, Coulon & Gardiner, 2008). In particular, not many meaningful distinctions were evident among the three studied generations (Wong et al., 2008) Additionally, despite the noted differences, the participants in the study conducted by Wong et al. (2008) were associated more with age as compared to generation. A limitation to the study conducted by Wong et al. (2008) was utilization of cross-sectional information. For an additional inspection of the problem, undertaking a longitudinal study for evaluating motivational drivers and personality preferences of diverse generations in which respondents share a common career stage or age group would prove interesting. Wong et al. (2008) displayed practical consequences including its highlighting of the significance of dealing with people by paying attention to personal differences instead of being dependent on generation-based stereotypes. This might fail to be as predominant as indicated by available literature.

The owners disagree with the findings of Wong et al. (2008), and argued that productivity has increased for each participant as a result of strategies that improve organizational performance among their multigenerational cohorts.

Applications to Professional Practice

Each theme yielded distinct findings that are relevant to and will improve business practice. The first finding surrounded how each strategy was developed. The owners give validity to emotional intelligence, active listening and trial and error as

viable business practices in determining which motivating factors to use to improve productivity. The findings suggest and validate that owners are human beings who are not viewed as weak or inexperienced if they utilize trial and error in different aspects of the business. Some strategies will fail and others will succeed, but the takeaway is that without trying there would be no success. PAR2 corroborated by stating,

There is no quantitative measure that will tell me what's successful and what's not. For me it's largely results-oriented. If we are able to complete jobs, do them, complete them at the quality that is demanded within the budget and timeframe allotted. Typically, if we can meet these objectives and there is more flexibility, more time off for getting the job done, that's where I know my combined strategies are effective.

The findings postulate that there are differing meanings for WLB among the different generational cohorts. Gen X is more concerned with stability of work, family obligations, and security. Gen Y is motivated by short-term benefits, paid time off, and weekends off. This information is relevant to owners who are concerned with retention of employs as well as employee engagement or satisfaction. The findings also state that productivity of the multigenerational team has increased as a direct result of strategies that improve organizational performance.

The final finding is that owners had to overcome barriers in order to be successful. A major barrier was the switch in communication styles between Gen X and Gen Y. Gen X requests longer weekly meetings to satisfy their need for facetime with the leader. Gen Y prefers shorter daily huddle meetings followed-up by a text or email

reiterating the daily goals/assignments. This is valuable information to anyone in business.

Implications for Social Change

Appleton-Dyer and Field (2017) posited that social change has progressed universally into an amalgamated framework that scrutinizes changes in socio-economic and socio-demographic movements and philosophies in multigenerational climates. Assessing the consequences of social change is pertinent to establish the impact of social expeditions in order to determine the changes in multifaceted societal problems and to measure the extent to which people have adapted to social interpositions (Appleton-Dyer & Field, 2017). Positive social change results in a healthier evolution across societal divides (Banks et al., 2016). Lewis and Wescott (2017) posited that society and the economy continues to thrive with the awareness and progression from one generation to the next. Highlighting the motivation strategies utilized by the owners in this study will perpetuate the ability of different generational cohorts to appreciate and become more understanding of each other inside and outside of the workplace. Companies can benefit from the findings by having an increase retention, productivity, motivation, and workplace communication. Owners reading this study should come away with a sense of empathy for each generational cohort, and want to enhance their leadership style to accommodate. The construction industry specifically can benefit from the findings of this study by helping to decrease turnover as employee engagement increases. Construction business owners, through this study, are armed with the knowledge of some motivation factors of Gen X and Gen Y.

Recommendations for Action

The findings herein are not specific to the construction industry, but useful on all planes of the business world. All of the owners asserted that the productivity of their workforce changed positively due to the implementation of multigenerational motivation strategies. The findings of this study dictate that those who manage multigenerational teams should (a) utilize emotional intelligence, (b) practice active listening, and (c) not be anxious when experimenting with different techniques when motivating each generational cohort (see Appendix E). The newer generations are generally more tech-savvy than the preceding generations, so learning to incorporate alternate methods of payment like Cash App, QuickPay® with Zelle®, and Venmo could be beneficial to owners trying to attract and retain the younger generations. Owners should be careful to recognize the importance of technology in the near future. A 30-minute recorded webinar could be a viable way to disseminate the findings of this study to business leaders.

Recommendations for Further Research

Adding the newest generation, Generation Z (born after the year 1995), would make future data collection rich. As this generation recently entered the construction workforce, they should have a voice in the multigenerational discussion. Including influences such as race and culture would also provide worthwhile results to future research.

Reflections

I now have a different understanding of the challenges that students of doctoral programs must face in order to complete their study. My study required a substantial

commitment and consumed my thoughts for the last few years. At first, it was arduous toil through the coursework and annotated bibliographies, but gradually developed into a satisfying trek through the scholarly world that is the doctoral study. The journey itself was meaningful; thus, I now have more abstract thinking, and my writing skills have improved significantly since I first embarked on my doctoral mission. My voyage included a couple of breaks from school, an intensive residency, and many sleepless nights spent writing and re-writing. My chair and especially my second committee member were instrumental in my trek becoming an adventure. Writing switched from being a chore to being something that was exciting and anticipated daily. I can honestly say that I will miss this process, my colleagues, mentors, and friends.

My reflections would not be complete, if they did not include all the support that I received from the staff and affiliates of Walden University, my classmates, and my colleagues. I would be remiss if I did not praise the editing skills of my second chair. Truthfully my first edits were extensive, and I was crushed. My Proposal's Change Matrix ended up being at least 20 pages long and included hundreds of edits. As I struggled with them, I was so sad and defeated and I just wanted to cry. My second pass yielded half the edits of my first draft proposal. What I saw with every correction of my proposal were light bulbs coming on in my head and staying illuminated. I am now a well-read scholar who is prepared and eager to begin authoring articles. My classmates were supportive by providing feedback and offering suggestions in the forums. My conversations and correspondences with a few classmates led to meaningful discussions about life, school, and our future hopes and dreams when we too would join the ranks of

scholarly doctors. My family was supportive and proud, and they encouraged me to always keep progressing through to the finishing line.

My final reflection surrounds Gen X and Gen Y. I am currently in the construction business. The business is evolving at an expedient rate. There are far more multigenerational teams in the business world as a whole, and the construction industry is not exempt. The younger generations are aspiring and bright, and the older are skilled and savvy, preconceived notions were shattered as a result of this research. I interviewed three construction business owners who currently manage multigenerational teams. Since these participants are in the trenches with their workers, they were able to convey their strategies for managing Gen X and Gen Y cohesively to improve performance.

Conclusion

Managing multigenerational teams is a challenge for any industry. Leaders struggle to figure out the motivating factors for each generation (Acar, 2014). Not all leaders have the necessary tools to improve the performance of multigenerational cohorts in the construction industry. The participants shared their strategies that may increase performance in instances where Gen X and Gen Y must coexist for the greater good of the organization.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that owners in the construction industry use to motivate multigenerational cohorts to improve organizational performance. Information reviewed in the data collection and analyses process showed that the participants asserted that they obtained their motivation strategies through trial and error, using emotional intelligence, and active listening. As

other owners practice these skills, they may see an improvement in the area of organizational performance.

Al-Asfour and Lettau (2014) posited that the strategies for leadership styles for the multigenerational workforce include utilizing more of a conversational style instead of the traditional, transactional governance. PAR2 echoed this sentiment by stating,

I think the primary thing that was necessary was looking at each group and figuring out how to reach them best. There are some difficulties in it, but still understanding what each group likes and what the advantages and limitations to those forms of communication are.

PAR1 also proposed that a transactional, authoritative style will not bode well for those hoping to attract and retain the younger generation,

[The leadership style for Gen Y] does not have to be as authoritative and direct as it has to be for Gen X. The other interesting footnote in the millennial's direction is [that] it has to be open for challenge and change. I have seen big failures in one way: my way or the highway type mentalities with Gen Y.

Strategies for improving the performance of multigenerational cohorts in the construction industry are essential to retaining the competitive advantage that includes both Gen X and Gen Y.

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Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation from Research Partner

October 8, 2019

Dear Jenean Harper Satterfield,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Strategies for Improving the Performance of Multigenerational Cohorts in the Construction Industry within

As part of this study, I authorize you to distribute a four-question survey to determine alignment with participant criteria. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities are limited to allowing Jenean Harper Satterfield to distribute the above-mentioned four question survey. All interviews and /or member checking will be conducted at an independent time and location. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in Proquest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Appendix B: Symposium Survey Questions

Please answer the following four questions about your business:

1. Do you own a small construction company? N Y
2. What is the age range of your employees? _____years to _____years
3. How long have you owned your company? 1 2 3 4 5+
4. Do you have access to the documents about your company's employee reward and recognition programs? N Y

Your Company's Name: _____

Return by email to **XXX@waldenu.edu** to determine your alignment with the study criteria.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. How many different generational cohorts are in your employ?
2. What are your strategies to motivate employees?
3. What are the differences in strategies you use to motivate each generational cohort?
4. How did you develop these motivational strategies?
5. What communication style works best to motivate each generational cohort in your workforce?
6. How do you measure the success of your motivational strategies?
7. What were the key barriers you had to address to implement the successful motivation strategies?
8. How did you address these barriers?
9. How has your workforce productivity changed as a result of these motivation strategies?
10. What would you like to add or further discuss about your successful motivational strategies that you employed to improve your organization's performance?

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Strategies for Improving the Performance of Multigenerational Cohorts in the Construction Industry

The following information constitutes the interview protocol for this doctoral study. The purpose of an interview protocol is to provide a step-by-step guide of the interview process.

- Before the interview, the researcher will:
 - provide each participant with a copy of the Invitation to Participate in Research form, the interview protocol, and a list of the interview questions
 - confirm with each participant they have read and understand each document
 - schedule date, time, and place for the interview with the participant
 - answer any preliminary questions from the participants
- During the interview, the researcher will:
 - inform each participant that the interview will be recorded
 - remind the participants that their participation is voluntary
 - remind the participants that they have the option of withdrawing at any time
 - advise each participant that the researcher will take notes in a journal in addition to recording the session
 - remind each participant that they will be confidential
 - address any concerns regarding the interview questions
 - ask each participant the interview questions provided to them in advance
- After the interview, the researcher will:
 - thank each participant for taking part in the interview
 - transcribe the data to determine if a second interview is necessary
 - engage the participant in the member checking technique to ensure accurate documentation and reflection of their interview responses
 - schedule a second interview for follow-up (if necessary)
 - receive affirmation from each participant regarding accuracy of the paraphrasing and accuracy of data interpretation (via e-mail or telephone);
 - convert all paper documents to digital format
 - save all files to a thumb drive and lock in a safe for 5 years
- After publication, the researcher will:
 - send each participant a summary of the findings
 - advise each participant of the publication date
 - save all data for 5 years

Appendix E: Theme Development Notes

Development of Motivational Strategies

- 1) Mentorship
- 2) Case-by-Case Basis
- 3) Trial and Error
- 4) Emotional Intelligence
- 5) Active Listening

| | Gen X | Gen Y |
|----|--|---|
| 1) | Identifying motivating factors Gen X | 1) Identifying motivating factors Gen Y |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work/Life Balance <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Security ii. Family obligations iii. Stability of Work/Flexibility of schedule b. Money <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bonuses for early completion ii. PTO - Half Day Work/Full Day pay | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work/Life Balance <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Weekends off ii. Short work day with full pay iii. Short-term Benefit b. Money <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Promise of Promotion with more experience ii. Feeling needed by the company |
| 2) | Communication Style Gen X | 2) Communication Style Gen Y |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Group followed by individual reinforcement b. Public Praise c. Private Correction d. Longer Meetings (Chance to be heard by leadership) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Weekly 1-hour meetings | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Electronic confirmation (Group Text or Recap Emails) b. Public Praise c. Private affirmation (Sandwich Technique) d. Shorter meetings (Shorter Attention Span) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. 15-minute Team Huddles (Daily) |

Productivity Results when Using Motivational Strategies

Increased workforce productivity for all participants when utilizing motivational strategies

Potential for Future Research

- 1) Gen Z is not represented in this study though they are the newest generation in the construction workforce
- 2) Cultural nuances within each generational cohort
- 3) Pay technology opportunities (CashApp, Direct Deposit, QuickPay and Venmo)

Appendix F: Protecting Human Subject Research Participants

Protecting Human Subject Research Participants

