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## Public Sector Managers' Organizational Context Challenges for Talent Management Implementation with Millennials

Solomon Djan  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Solomon Djan

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2022

Abstract

Public Sector Managers' Organizational Context Challenges for Talent Management

Implementation with Millennials

by

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MPhil, Walden University, 2021

MBA, DeVry University, 2014

BA, University of Ghana, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

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## Abstract

A literature gap exists on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine retention of millennial talent. Scholars recommend that this gap should be addressed in theoretical and empirical research. The purpose of this study was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. A single case study with an embedded unit design was used to address the literature gap, and qualitative data from 15 semistructured interviews, reflective field notes, and archival data were collected to answer the central research question. This study was framed by Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s concept of contextualized talent management and Kravariti and Johnston's concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management. Thematic analysis of data from the interviews revealed 15 themes encased in the following five coding categories: (a) public sector policies undermine talent management with millennial employees, (b) internal organizational context challenges of the public sector, (c) external organizational context challenges of the public sector, (d) successfully applied strategies for millennial talent retention in the public sector, and (e) changes needed in public sector policy to retain millennial talent. The results of this study can promote positive social change in public sector management by offering recommendations on developing effective talent management strategies to retain valuable millennial talent and build a sustainable workplace for a younger and diverse workforce.

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## Dedication

This research is dedicated to my family, especially my wife Dorcas, who has listened to my fears, who never let me give up, I love you. You are a source of inspiration and strength. I thank God every day and am so grateful that He allows me opportunities to experience successes, joy, and laughter with you. To my adorable heartbeat daughters, Lady Harriet and Queen Hazel, who all wondered, why was I doing a doctorate? It is to encourage in them, through a living example, that learning is a life-long journey, and the destination is where your imagination may lead you. To my deceased father, John Adinkrah, who inspired my curiosity through laughter and persistent insistence on expanding my mind. I can only hope that I have achieved some of your dreams for my life.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my mother, Elizabeth Saarrah Asabea, Faustina Twenewaa, Florence Hoyau, Patrick Yeboah, and the rest of my family, that made this possible for me. I would also like to dedicate this achievement to my big brother, Kwame Adinkrah. I want to take the moment to say thank you so much for all the times that I was not sure I could continue the journey and your prayers and motivation kept me going. You helped guide me through my life and in my academic career development. Without those constant pushes to keep going, I am not sure I would have been able to complete this major accomplishment. Although I am not naming everyone one by one you were all equally important to completing this task.

It is with genuine gratitude and warm regard that I dedicate this work to my

family, friends, and Committee Members for their ultimate support. For all the missed family gatherings, and sleepless nights. I have finally made it!

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study.....	2
Problem Statement .....	4
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Question.....	6
Conceptual Framework.....	6
Nature of the Study.....	8
Definitions .....	10
Assumptions.....	12
Scope and Delimitations .....	13
Limitations.....	15
Significance of the Study .....	16
Significance to Practice.....	16
Significance to Theory .....	16
Significance to Social Change .....	17
Summary and Transition.....	17
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	19
Literature Search Strategy.....	20
Conceptual Framework.....	21
Literature Review.....	25

Talent Management in the Contemporary Work Environment.....	25
Talent Management Research in the Public Sector .....	29
Research on Talent Management Implementation With Millennial Employees.....	32
Talent Management Implementation with Millennial Employees in the Public Sector .....	38
Internal and External Context Challenges in the Public Sector .....	43
Internal Context Challenges in the Public Sector .....	45
External Context Challenges in the Public Sector .....	46
Context Challenges in the Public Sector and Retention of Millennial Employees.....	49
Summary and Conclusions.....	53
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	55
Research Design and Rationale .....	56
Role of the Researcher.....	58
Methodology.....	60
Participant Selection Logic.....	63
Instrumentation.....	67
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection .....	72
Data Analysis Plan.....	77
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	80
Credibility .....	80

Transferability .....	83
Dependability .....	84
Confirmability .....	85
Ethical Procedures .....	86
Summary.....	89
Chapter 4: Results.....	91
Research Setting.....	92
Demographics .....	95
Data Collection .....	97
Initial Contact.....	97
Interviews.....	99
Reflective Field Notes and Journaling.....	100
Transcript Review.....	101
Data Analysis.....	102
Evidence of Trustworthiness .....	112
Credibility .....	112
Transferability .....	113
Dependability .....	114
Confirmability .....	116
Study Results .....	116
Thematic Analysis and Theme Presentation .....	119
Summary.....	134

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	137
Interpretation of Findings.....	139
Public Sector Policies Undermine Talent Management With Millennial Employees.....	140
Internal Organizational Context Challenges in the Public Sector.....	141
External Organizational Context Challenges in the Public Sector.....	142
Successfully Applied Strategies for Millennial Talent Retention in the Public Sector .....	142
Changes Needed in Public Sector Policy to Retain Millennial Talent .....	143
Limitations of the Study.....	144
Recommendations .....	145
Recommendations for Future Research.....	146
Recommendations for Policy and Practice.....	147
Implications .....	148
Implications for Positive Social Change.....	148
Implication for Theory .....	149
Implications for Policy and Practice.....	151
Conclusions.....	153
References.....	155
Appendix A: Recruitment Letter.....	178
Appendix B: Interview Protocol.....	179

## List of Tables

Table 1. Participants' Demographics and Characteristics .....	96
Table 2. Coding and Theme Examples .....	108

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Today's unprecedented complexity of internal and external organizational context challenges—marked by globalization, technology, the lucrative private sector offers for millennial employees, and broader socioeconomic, geopolitical, and demographic changes—increases the necessity for public sector stakeholders to focus on retaining their valuable talent (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Singh, 2019). Talents are perceived as unique strategic resources central to achieving sustained competitive advantage (Claus, 2019; dos Santos & Pedro, 2020). How valuable millennial talent can be retained in the public sector has received little attention in the talent management literature, and the vast research insights gained from talent management in the private sector may not be applicable in public organizations (Boselie et al., 2021).

Scholars have suggested that public sector research has been skewed exclusively towards employee reactions to talent management, while organizational context issues in academic talent management research have been largely ignored (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Whereas employee studies have reflected micro-level issues in talent management, more needs to be known on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that may incite employee turnover and undermine talent management initiatives, especially millennial employees (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). To address this literature gap, research is needed to draw upon public sector managers' views on the organizational context challenges that undermine innovative talent management implementation with their millennial employees (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Ledoux, 2020). Research on talent management applications in recruiting and

retaining public sector millennial employees may be significant to theory extension in the talent management literature (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Retention of talented millennial employees may be important to drive positive social change in supporting public sector management to build a sustainable workplace to retain a younger, diverse workforce with valuable attributes and the capacity to learn within the organization (Naim & Lenka, 2018; Younas & Bari, 2020).

This introductory chapter will illustrate the background literature leading to the problem statement development to explain the gap in the scholarly literature. The demonstration of alignment between problem, purpose, research question, research design, and conceptual framework will follow. Lastly, this chapter will include the significance, assumptions, limitations of the study, and definitions of key terms used throughout this document.

### **Background of the Study**

The relationships between talent management, job satisfaction, and employees' voluntary turnover intentions may weaken performance by the newly employed talent to ensure the organization's strategic objectives (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Other studies revealed that multiple internal agents, particularly line managers, play a crucial role in fulfilling millennials' psychological contract in public sector talent management programs (Clarke & Scurry, 2020). Drawing on psychological contract theory, Clarke and Scurry (2020) found that the multiple internal agents, particularly line managers, play a crucial role in fulfilling millennials' psychological contract in public sector talent management programs.

Cross Walker (2020) studied how the “war for talent,” the knowledge economy, and subsequent aging and exodus of the Boomer generation have put the topic of talent management at the forefront of practitioner literature for the past 30 years. With the existing literature gap in talent management implementation in the public sector, this paper explores talent management as a prevalent topic in people management and development for public sector organizations. Cross Walker’s research found six propositions regarding the challenges to public sector organizations’ talent management practices. These six propositions include loss of power, uncertainty, motivation, conflicting mental models, lack of cultural support, and hierarchy challenges, leading to underappreciated talent management in public sector organizations (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

Talent management can be considered a resource of human resources that triggers a set of practical actions at the public institution level and whose importance is confirmed or refuted by results (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) found that public organizations can take advantage of the fact that talent management is an integrative process that involves attracting, integrating, and developing the best professionals in the labor market. Talent defines a top professional or an elite public officer, regardless of field or specialization. Thus, as a process, talent management presupposes the existence at the level of a grid’s public organization to identify both superefficient public officers and those below standards (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020).

The factors that impact talent management implementation in public sector organizations directly link to the retention and the increase in millennials’ performance

(Tafti et al., 2017). Glazer et al. (2019) found that millennials reported significantly lower continuance commitment levels but no normative and affective commitment differences. There is not enough research on talent management implementation in public sector organizations. This omission has led to the lack of critical analysis of talent management's importance to the public sector if managers are eager to figure out ways of keeping millennials. Thus, effective talent management may lead to the development of public sector millennial employees who are highly committed and sociopolitically sensitive to address these many challenges that may cause millennials to leave the public sector to the private sector (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020).

### **Problem Statement**

Public administration scholars argue that there is a rapidly evolving talent management crisis in the public sector given the increase in retirees, low retention of talented millennial employees, and failure to meet the business challenges of its internal and external organizational context (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020; Clarke & Scurry, 2020). Given that millennial employees are expected to make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, and the estimate that millennial turnover costs the U.S. economy \$30.5 billion annually (Robinson, 2021), public sector stakeholders must be fully committed to younger employee retention to offset their high turnover's tremendous financial loss (Cross Walker, 2020). The public sector practice of sacrificing competitive advantage while placating political administrations has resulted in a steady exodus of valuable millennial employees (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Naim & Lenka, 2018). The social problem is given today's complexity in organizational context challenges, the public

sector's outdated human resources (HR) policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

Like their private-sector counterparts, public sector agencies are confronted with the same talent retention challenges: dynamic workforces characterized by the rise of the knowledge worker, the decline of long-term careers, and the aging and the market exodus of the Boomer generation (Podger, 2017; Younas & Bari, 2020). How valuable millennial talent can be retained in the public sector has received little attention in academic research, and the vast research insights gained from the private sector may not be applicable in public organizations (Boselie et al., 2021). Whereas employee studies contribute to understanding the micro-level issues in talent management, a literature gap exists on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020). The specific management problem is that public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees remain poorly understood (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study with embedded units was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with

millennial employees. This exploratory case study's purpose may address the literature gap on how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees (see Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020). I utilized a single case study with an embedded unit design (see Yin, 2017). I conducted 15 semistructured, online interviews with public sector managers in the United States, meeting the study's inclusion criteria. Data were collected from multiple sources, including reflective journal notes and archival data on talent management strategies and recruitment/retention of millennial employees within public sector agencies in the United States to answer the study's research question (see Stake, 2010; Yin, 2017). Triangulation of multiple data sources was utilized to establish the trustworthiness of the phenomena under study (Guion et al., 2011; Tracy, 2019).

### **Research Question**

How do public sector managers describe their perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees?

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was framed by two key concepts that focused on aligning with the purpose of the study to understand how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: (a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of *contextualized talent management*, and (b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of *generational factors influencing public sector talent management*. This empirical investigation aimed to advance the research and

address the literature gap on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020).

Both concepts forming this study's framework (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020) concerning talent management within public sector agencies were grounded in Sparrow and Makram's (2015) talent management architecture framework that relied upon several non-HR bodies of knowledge in its development including value creation, the resource-based view (RBV) perspective of the firm, dynamic capabilities, and global knowledge management. Sparrow and Markram grounded their talent management architecture framework in human capital theory (Becker, 1993), where the costs of developing and retaining talent should be viewed as investments on behalf of the firm; and expectancy theory (Lawler III & Suttle, 1973) that explains employees make choices to self-invest if there are signals about an organization's growth (Boudreau & Lawler, 2014).

Despite the numerous studies on how organizations develop talent management processes that meet their needs, there is a lack of empirical talent management research regarding the role of contextual issues in public sector management (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Neglecting contextual issues such as globalization, new technologies, socioeconomic and generational challenges may hamper public sector organizations from developing innovative talent management practices, thereby negatively impacting millennial talent retention and competitive advantage (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020).

### **Nature of the Study**

I used a qualitative approach to align with the study's purpose and provide data to address the research question grounded in the constructivist paradigm to understand how individuals find meaning from social interactions and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lee, 2012). A quantitative method was inappropriate for this study because quantitative research designs examine relationships, test theories, standardize reporting, and collect quantifiable data (Harkiolakis, 2017). A mixed-methods approach was inappropriate because quantitative data were not suitable for my research question (Bryman, 2017).

The research problem and the study's nature required a qualitative methodology because it allows for succinct exploration of an issue involved in a complex social process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative research allows the researcher to examine people's perceptions using specific research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, and visual methods. Also, qualitative research can effectively explore the contextual influences on the research issues and address why questions clarify issues or how questions describe processes or behavior (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017).

Qualitative research aims to explore experiences from people living within a specific context. Constructivists question how people perceive the world and interpret the interactions between individuals and the environment (Cooper & White, 2012).

Qualitative research also presents opportunities to evaluate business decisions and explore the reasons behind various aspects of behavior within organizations. Qualitative

case studies comprise a long tradition of using case studies in business teachings because of their reliability and rely more on quantitative and positivist research to generate detailed and holistic knowledge using multiple sources in an information-rich context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Yin, 2017).

Researchers use purposeful sampling to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Although there are various purposeful sampling strategies, it appears that criterion and network sampling should be used in the most common implementation research (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Participants for this case study were recruited using purposeful sampling strategies and screened with the following inclusion criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees.

I conducted 15 semistructured online interviews with public sector managers. Schram (2006) recommended that researchers have between five to 10 participants for a qualitative study because a larger sample size can lead to weaker research results. The interview transcripts were analyzed through thematic analysis through Yin's (2017) pattern-matching logic sequence to identify themes. Interview data themes were triangulated with reflective field notes and archival data to support findings' trustworthiness and make recommendations for future research (Guion et al., 2011).

## Definitions

The following terms used throughout this study are explicitly defined for this research.

*Baby boomers:* This term refers to a generational population group born within the United States between 1946 and 1964 and representing approximately 68 million workers and are also referred to as the *grey market* or *third-generation workers* (Bennet, 2017).

*Contextualized talent management:* This term refers to how various contextual factors (e.g., workforce composition, ownership structures, and individual perceptions) influence talent implementation within an organization (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

*External organizational context challenges:* This term refers to external challenges such as environmental and market pressures which influence talent management implementation. External factors such as political, legal, cultural, and financial parameters are essential in implementing talent management in the public sector (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020).

*Generation or generational cohort:* This term refers to a group of individuals born during a specific span of years who generally share particular life events, shared experiences, and memories (Bennet, 2017).

*Generation X:* This term refers to the population group at the workplace composed of approximately 61 million members with birth years ranging between 1961 and 1979 (Bennet, 2017).

*Generation Z:* This term refers to the generation of individuals born sometime after 1995, with some members thus barely into adulthood and just arriving in the labor market (Desai & Lele, 2017).

*Internal organizational context challenges:* This term refers to the internal structure of the workplace, organizational culture, and internal budgetary constraints, which are a few of the factors that influence talent management implementation (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017).

*Talent:* This term refers to something possessed by an individual who is perceived and recognized within his/her social context as someone who potentially can add value to the organization (Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020).

*Talent management:* This term refers to a resource of human resources that triggers a set of practical actions at the public institution level and whose importance is confirmed or refuted by results. Talent management is an integrative process that involves attracting, integrating, and developing the labor market's best professionals (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

*Millennials /Generation Y:* This term refers to individuals born between 1980 and 2000 (George & Wallio, 2017).

*Organizational context:* This term refers to the background or environment and attributes in which an organization operates (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017).

*Public sector:* This term refers to governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services (Linos & Riesch, 2020).

### **Assumptions**

Researchers hold onto assumptions presumed to be true when extending a theory for a specific purpose (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Assumptions are a fundamental postulate of a study for the researcher to investigate. In this study, the first assumption was that participants have sufficient knowledge, information, and understanding of millennials' recruitment and retention by public sector organizations. A lack of understanding of the phenomenon makes it impossible for the participants to discuss credible solutions. The second assumption was that participants would provide genuine responses and truthful information. I expected participants would not overstate their responses about their perceptions of public sector managers' organizational context challenges for talent management implementation with millennials. The assumption of participants' truthfulness would help find solutions to challenges for talent management implementation with millennials. I believed that participants would be enabled to provide truthful responses (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

The third assumption was that participants' decision to participate in the study was not just about helping a researcher undertaking a dissertation study but about the participant's legitimate interest in addressing the recruitment and retention of millennials by public sector organizations. The fourth assumption was that the sample size would adequately represent the population of (a) adults over the age of 18 years, with (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possessing knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees. Adequate population representation was necessary to avoid a situation where

the study's result may be skewed, rendering the study's findings and recommendations incapable of adequately addressing the study (Yin, 2017).

The fifth assumption was that data analysis would provide an opportunity for me to discover reliable, common themes regarding the recruitment and retention of millennials in public sector organizations. I had to remain aware of my bias during data collection to ensure the data's trustworthiness so that the themes in case study research could be deemed valid and reliable (Fusch et al., 2018). The sixth assumption was that sampling estimation bias would not occur in a way that disrupted the study. I prepared a reserve list of other qualified participants following Yin's best practices (2017). The final assumption was that I would not experience barriers to accessing documents and archival data and that all secondary data would contain accurate information for the study (Stake, 2010).

### **Scope and Delimitations**

In this study, I focused on understanding public sector managers' organizational context challenges for talent management implementation with millennials. Talent management is a complete, inclusive system that includes organization development, career development, and employee training and learning, which benefit both employees and organizations (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). The study population was chosen to replicate similar empirical studies on talent management (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Garrow & Hirsh, 2018; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). Millennial employees and broader socioeconomic, geopolitical, and demographic changes increase the necessity for public sector stakeholders to focus on retaining their

valuable talent (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Singh, 2019). Talents are perceived as unique strategic resources central to achieving sustained competitive advantage (Claus, 2019; dos Santos & Pedro, 2020).

The data collection sample for this study was delimited to participants for this study recruited using purposeful, criterion, and snowball sampling strategies and screened with the following inclusion criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18 years, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees. Talent management's efficient application could advance public sector organizations into becoming employers of choice to attract external talented individuals and consolidate job markets (Garrow & Hirsh, 2018).

Rigorous case study designs control theoretical variation outside the study's scope to establish transferability (Stake, 2010). The study results may potentially transfer to similar sample populations on how public sector managers' organizational context challenges affect talent management implementation with millennials. Javed et al. (2017) stated that talent management in the public sector gives employees a sense of trust and motivation, which gives them the feeling of fulfillment that leads to job satisfaction. Thus, talent management is a complete, inclusive system that includes organization development, career development, and employee training and learning, which benefit employees and organizations.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control, shortcomings in the design, study conditions, or restrictions on their methodology affecting results and conclusions (Tracy, 2019). When conducting research, scholars need to be well versed in the limitations of the selected study design, data collection, and analysis methodology to ensure valid and reliable results (Tracy, 2019). The researcher's method and personal bias related to the circumstances and the environment are inherent limitations of qualitative research. When reviewing limitations that I believed may have influenced the results, I needed to clarify those factors in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The study participants were purposefully selected given that the sample size was not initially attained; snowball sampling was then utilized. It was recognized that a small sample size represented the larger population of public sector managers' organizational context challenges for talent management implementation with millennials. This limitation was mitigated by providing a detailed audit trail and triangulation of interview responses, historical literature, and field notes to collect accurate data to answer the research question. When evaluating qualitative research with small sample sizes, distinct environments, and unique experiences, the findings and conclusions may not be directly applicable to other studies and populations. I was only responsible for collecting the direct sources identified for a specific, qualitative study; therefore, the assurance of transferability of a study's inferences could not be conclusive (Stake, 2010).

## **Significance of the Study**

### **Significance to Practice**

Organizational context is significant when conceptualizing talent management strategies, yet current literature still calls for studies on public sector talent and talent management and a thorough investigation of contextual factors enabling or inhibiting its successful adoption by this sector (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). This study was significant because it contributed to the management field by understanding public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The significance of this study to professional practice may inform public sector leadership and policymakers to how today's complexity in public sector context challenges and the public sector's outdated HR policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

### **Significance to Theory**

This study was significant to theory extension by contributing knowledge to talent management applications in recruiting and retaining public sector millennial employees who are highly committed to being part of a sustainable workplace (see Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Public sector research in the extant literature focuses on employee reactions to talent management and marginalizes organizational context issues. A literature gap exists in academic talent management research on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that

must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019; Sievert et al., 2020). The study was significant to theory by addressing this literature gap by extending scholarly knowledge within the conceptual framework on the organizational context challenges that undermine innovative talent management implementation with public sector millennial employees (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Ledoux, 2020).

### **Significance to Social Change**

The public sector practice of sacrificing competitive advantage while placating politicians funding their agencies has resulted in a steady exodus of valuable millennial employees (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Naim & Lenka, 2018). This political posturing on the side of public sector organizations has led to maintaining outdated HR practices that undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). The public sector is considered the guardian of public funds collected by citizens' taxes. Employee retention through effective talent management implementation is important in driving positive social change by curtailing the wasteful loss of taxpayers' money in financing public sector management through the development of a sustainable workplace with a younger, diverse workforce and their valuable attributes (Naim & Lenka, 2018; Younas & Bari, 2020).

### **Summary and Transition**

Chapter 1 provided the study's specific problem as the specific management problem that public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context

challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees remain poorly understood (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). The purpose of this qualitative, single case study with embedded units was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The conceptual framework of this study was based on Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management and Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management, and the study was a qualitative, exploratory single case study with embedded units (Yin, 2017). The study's data were derived from semistructured interviews, reflective field notes, and archival data. The triangulation of these data sources helped me achieve trustworthiness in the findings. The findings potentially contributed significantly to the literature on organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermining talent management implementation with millennial employees.

In Chapter 2, I will develop the literature search strategy for the study, conduct a current literature review, provide literature supporting the conceptual framework, and summarize the chapter.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The specific management problem is public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Although talent management research in the public sector has been ongoing, finding and retaining millennials for the public sector has become one of the main concerns of public sector managers to retain millennial employees (Tyskbo, 2019). Based on the current context of the implementation of talent management in public organizations, how millennial talents should be trained and developed by public sector managers, the contextual challenges that undermine talent management in public organizations remain limited in the extant literature (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

The purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The public sector practice of sacrificing competitive advantage while placating political administrations has resulted in a steady exodus of valuable millennial employees (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Naim & Lenka, 2018). Scholars remain concerned that the public sector's outdated HR policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

Chapter 2 will present the literature search strategy and the conceptual framework that guided this empirical study. The literature review of this chapter will present a synthesis of knowledge and critical analysis of scholarly sources on the following topics: *talent management in the contemporary work environment, talent management research in the public sector, research on talent management implementation with millennial employees, talent management implementation with millennial employees in the public sector, internal and external context challenges in the public sector, context challenges in the public sector and retention of millennial employees.*

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The databases I used to conduct the literature review include the Walden University Library and Google Scholar. Literary searches were conducted through the collections of Emerald Insight, ABI/INFORM, Business Source Complete, Science Direct, Sage Premier, SpringerLink, EBSCOhost, ProQuest Central, and Academic Search Complete. I used Google and DuckDuckGo search engines to locate sources for peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to the study. Literary searches were conducted by identifying key concepts, searching for the key and related terms, and selecting appropriate databases.

I used the following key terms and a combination of search terms to find the literature, and I listed the number of papers within each category from 2000–2020. The range of years covers seminal paper publications and updated studies in the following subject areas: *coping with employee retention (1,760,000); Gen Y and public sector talent management (3,570); knowledge workers (2,370,000); organizational context factors*

(16,800); *public sector employee turnover* (7,730). Other search terms were *generational cohorts* (15,00); *millennials and public sector talent management* (2,990); *public sector employee turnover* (4); *talent identification* (1, 000); *talent management in public sector* (5,740). The terms used in the search related to the research method included *case study triangulation*, *qualitative study*, *sampling strategy*, *semistructured interview*, and *single case study*. I limited the search to peer-review journals within the past 5 years on public sector managers' organizational context challenges for talent management implementation with millennials, including seminal works of literature and published books. Articles were checked through Ulrich's Periodicals Directory to confirm peer review (Grimes & Morris, 2006).

The current literature and deductive arguments were instrumental in providing the study with the context I present in this literature review to synthesize prior research regarding public sector managers' organizational context challenges for talent management implementation with millennials. I also present a synthesis of scholarly literature on valuable millennial talent in the public sector.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study to understand how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: (a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and (b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management. This empirical investigation aimed to advance research and address a

literature gap on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020).

Both concepts forming this study's framework (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020) concerning talent management within public sector agencies were grounded in Sparrow and Makram's (2015) talent management architecture framework that relied upon several non-HR bodies of knowledge in its development, including value creation, the resource-based view (RBV) perspective of the firm, dynamic capabilities, and global knowledge management. Sparrow and Markram grounded their talent management architecture framework in human capital theory (Becker, 1993), where the costs of developing and retaining talent should be viewed as investments on behalf of the firm; and expectancy theory (Lawler III & Suttle, 1973) that explains employees make choices to self-invest if there are signals about an organization's growth (Boudreau & Lawler, 2014).

Four value-driven processes, namely value creation, value capture, value leverage, and value protection, comprise Sparrow and Makram's (2015) talent management architecture framework. Sparrow and Makram defined value creation as "the process through which an organization then bundles its talent resources with other resources to increase their dependency on the organization context, and hence weaken their bargaining power" (p. 250). In developing a conceptual framework, questions were raised by authors about the definition of value as per the RBV of the firm through their theoretical lens where human capital resources are represented by the knowledge, skills,

capabilities, intelligence, relationships, and experience of the firm's employees (Barney, 1991). Organizations have been questioned as to why they need to protect their assets and resources from imitation when those assets and resources are available in the first place (Sparrow & Makram, 2015).

Sparrow and Makram (2015) defined value capture as “the process through which an organization bundles its talent resources with other resources to increase their dependency on the organization context, and hence weaken their bargaining power” (p. 250). The concept of value capture is grounded in coalitional game theory (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1995; Stirling, 2011). Sparrow and Makram emphasized that through the help of free form exchanges where the value offered by one coalition partner can only be decoded and captured by another, that value can be captured.

Value leverage is defined as “the process through which an organization develops and extends the captured capabilities of its talent resources to add new use-value” (Sparrow & Makram, 2015, p. 250). Value leverage of an asset or resource aims to capitalize on their talents, for example, and ensure return on investments (Makram et al., 2017). The authors' definition of value leverage is grounded in an RBV perspective and brings together employee skills with tacit organizational knowledge in ways that lead to valuable employee outcomes and more significant human capital for customer service (Sirmon et al., 2007). Sparrow and Makram (2015) defined value protection as “the process through which an organization develops isolating mechanisms to protect its talent resources from being lost to other competitors” (p. 250). From an RBV point of view, talent created by superior management skills leads to value protection. Managers with

superior talent management skills retain valued employees to develop knowledge and relationships with customers, suppliers, and critical employees (Castanias & Helfat, 2001).

Despite the numerous studies on how organizations develop talent management processes that meet their needs, there is a lack of empirical talent management research regarding the role of contextual issues in public sector management (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Neglecting contextual issues such as globalization, new technologies, socioeconomic and generational challenges may hamper public sector organizations from developing innovative talent management practices, negatively impacting millennial talent retention and competitive advantage (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020).

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) studied to seek why talent management is underappreciated in public sector organizations. Talent management can be considered a resource of human resources that triggers practical actions at the public institution level and whose importance is confirmed or refuted by results. Drawing conclusions from other talent management researchers, the study seeks to increase talent management implementation in the public sector. The authors offer a synopsis of talent management implementation in the public sector, which seeks to address talent management research gaps. Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s study found that public organizations can take advantage of the fact that talent management is an integrative process that involves attracting, integrating, and developing the best professionals in the labor market. Talent defines a top professional or an elite public officer, regardless of field or specialization. Thus, as a

process, talent management presupposes the existence at the level of the public organization to identify both highly efficient public sector managers and those below standards.

Limitations in the theoretical literature on talent management implementation in the public sector and organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention of millennial employees must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019; Sievert et al., 2020). By addressing this literature gap, theory and scholarly knowledge can be extended on the organizational context challenges that undermine innovative talent management implementation with public sector millennial employees (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Ledoux, 2020).

## **Literature Review**

### **Talent Management in the Contemporary Work Environment**

According to Barkhuizen and Gumede (2021), talent management plays an essential role in retaining competent employees in the workplace. More research may be needed to determine the interface between talent management, job satisfaction, and employees' voluntary turnover intentions in a public institution. The result of the study revealed that government institutions were experiencing a weak leadership mindset. Barkhuizen and Gumede established that proper talent management is an essential strategic tool to ensure that the organizations' strategic objectives are met through the optimal performance of talent. Employee job satisfaction moderates the relationship

between talent management and voluntary turnover intentions of public sector employees (Sievvert et al., 2020).

According to Cross Walker (2020), the “war for talent,” the knowledge economy, and subsequent aging and exodus of the Boomer generation have put the topic of talent management at the forefront of public sector managers practitioner literature for the past 30 years. Age and job title had varying effects on employees’ quitting decisions (Squyres, 2020). Public sector organizations have thus placed significant emphasis on the value of their workforce, which they wish to strengthen by investing in the implementation of talent management (Podger, 2017).

There is a looming crisis in the public sector with an increase in retirees and the inability to attract talented staff, making talent management a prevalent topic in people management and development for public sector organizations (Cross Walker, 2020).

Glazer et al. (2019) studied the differences in various cohorts at the workplace.

Organizations’ implementation of talent management facilitates millennials’ attraction, development, and retention. The retention factors varied according to the nature and culture of the organization, employee level in the organization, and the type of shared responsibility (McDonnell et al., 2017).

As organizations evolve to remain competitive in their respective industries, the debate over how to effectively transform their talents becomes critical to their success (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020). Talent management is not an end in itself. It is not about enhancing employees’ potential, creating succession plans, achieving specific turnover rates, or any other strategic outcome (Mahfoozi et al., 2018). Talent management exists

to support the aim and objective of the organization. When talent management is implemented and carried out, the organization must retain its valuable talent (Mosca et al., 2021).

Living in a digital age means organizations operate very differently from decades ago (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020). Organizations find themselves revamping their human resources management (HRM) systems to compete with competitors and stay ahead of the innovation curve. Thus, talent management is seen as one of the most critical success factors which enable organizations to succeed and have a competitive advantage over their competitors (Tafti et al., 2017). Organizations implement talent management to attract, integrate and develop the best professionals on the labor market with little attention paid to transforming general human resources practices (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017).

With an increase in retirees, the aging workforce is a huge issue for public sector organizations (Clarke & Scurry, 2020). These challenges are illustrated as the primary organizational challenges in reaching growth and development, directed towards talent management. There is an imbalance in the ongoing generations' presence in the public sector, with many retiring experienced baby boomers replaced by a smaller number of younger inexperienced workers. Organizations stand a high chance of success with the proper implementation of talent management. Consequently, talent management may help build a culture where employee contributions are measured, reported, reviewed, and rewarded (Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020). The talent shortage defines the competition of existing talent in the public sector (Sievert et al., 2020).

Organizations have adopted talent management as a procedure to help them have a competitive advantage over their competitors, leading to the company's overall success (Khan et al., 2019). Despite increasing recognition that managing talent can add value and enable organizations to gain a competitive advantage, many organizations have difficulty winning the talent war. Unless companies invest in talent and manage it as a strategic priority, they will not see the benefits of their investment (Huo & Boxall, 2018). Scholars have made noteworthy contributions to talent management by examining the literature on the evolution and transformation of the human resources function and talent management. Moreover, scholars have gone beyond examining the role of human resources in talent management to analyzing central aspects of the human resources function, which are critical to successfully implementing talent management (Brown et al., 2015).

Organizations adopting talent management are continually increasing, providing evidence of talent management becoming increasingly familiar with the potential of leading to remarkable organizational changes (Garrow & Hirsh, 2018). Talent management is the planning, implementing, and applying information technology for networking and supporting at least two individual or collective actors in their shared performing of human resources activities (Fahim, 2018). The central tenets of talent management implementation within organizations are the necessity to connect spatially segregated actors so that interactions can be enabled between those who are in the same room or on different continents, which also allows the execution of technology to support human resources activities (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Claus, 2019).

## **Talent Management Research in the Public Sector**

Most of the research on talent management in the public sector emerged from consultancy reports that provided recommendations based on private sector experience and how and why the public sector could benefit from talent management (Mensah, 2019). Kravariti and Johnston (2020) studied the factors that impact talent management implementation in public sector organizations directly linked to retention and the increase in millennials' performance. Improper implementation of talent management by public sector managers can lead to work hindrance, loss of millennials, production, and productivity, decreased performance, and substantial financial loss (Kamalaveni et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2019).

Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) findings established that talent management is essential for all sectors, but the issue is particularly significant for public sector managers. Globally, public sector organization leaders are confronted with unprecedented challenges as these organizations grapple with the pressures of cost-cutting and rationalization, coupled with a steady increase in demand for services. Talent management could develop highly committed and sociopolitically sensitive talents to address these many challenges that may cause millennials to exit public sector organizations to private sector organizations (Podger, 2017).

Talent management implementation in the public sector organization could be the vehicle that drives public sector managers to effective reform and improve human capacity building and staff deployment, leading to the attraction and retention of millennials (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). The challenges of public sector managers in

talent management include structural challenges and environmental challenges and barriers, behavioral challenges, and barriers. Public sector organizations are characterized by constant change, whether in demographic shifts, shifting priorities, or even shifting structures. With the knowledge economy at the heart of many public sector managers, the potential loss of millennial employees is substantial (Pandita & Ray, 2018).

Scholars have attempted to investigate talent management's possible conceptualization, operationalization, success, and mechanisms of overcoming its challenging application to the public sector (Clarke & Scurry, 2020; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). Talent management also often provides a chance to build a network throughout the organization that long outlives the specific change initiative (Ledoux, 2020). Although evidence in some of these studies is collected from private and public sectors, public sector research has remained sparse, highlighting a lack of critical analysis of the relevancy of talent management to the public sector. Most of the research on talent management in the public sector emerged from consultancy reports that provide recommendations based on the private sector experience and how and why the public sector could benefit from talent management (Tyskbo, 2019).

Talent management is built upon a range of academic and applied perspectives, the body of literature on talent management has grown substantially in recent years (Garrow & Hirsh, 2018). Much has been achieved regarding the lenses and the levels through which talent management has been observed, assessed, and evaluated (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020; Clarke & Scurry, 2020). That said, there have been calls for more

empirical studies because of the limited robust evidence on the effectiveness of talent management in the public sector (Boselie et al., 2021).

The existing literature regarding human resources strategies in retaining public sector employees is minimal, and further empirical research is highly explicitly acclaimed in the public sector (Fahim, 2018; Tyskbo, 2019). The lack of an effective talent retention strategy may lead to work hindrance, loss of organization-specific knowledge, loss in production and productivity, decreased performance, and substantial financial loss (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Advancement in the research field of talent retention remains unequally distributed amidst diverse firm types and varied sectors in an unpredictable way (Squyres, 2020).

The context is significant when conceptualizing talent management, yet current literature still calls for a concise definition of public sector talent and talent management and a thorough investigation of contextual factors enabling or inhibiting its successful adoption by this sector (McDonnell et al., 2017). Public service organizations favor similar but accelerated development paths for talented individuals (Podger, 2017). A literature gap exists on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020). Thus, public sector organizations tend to focus more on addressing weaknesses or gaps in competency rather than building on strengths, leading to high employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). However, scholars have suggested that an increasing tendency in public sector research to focus on

employee reactions to talent management marginalizes organizational context issues in academic talent management research (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2017; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019).

Researchers have raised questions about whether talent management would be enough to solve the talent retention crisis faced by public sector organizations (Huo & Boxall, 2018). Public sector organizations, through talent management, can become fully committed to employee retention to offset their high turnover's tremendous financial loss (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Cross Walker, 2020). Researchers have shown clear patterns of success in the transformation of public sector organizations (Desai & Lele, 2017). Through talent management, most public sector organizations witness high performance and continuous improvement (Wickramaaratchi & Perera, 2020). Successful talent management implementation in a public sector organization helps identify that an organizational change program provides an unparalleled opportunity for building a dynamic workforce (Glazer et al., 2019).

### **Research on Talent Management Implementation With Millennial Employees**

The immediate talent management crisis in the public sector is due to the increase in retirees, low retention of talented millennial employees, and failure to meet contemporary business challenges in the knowledge economy (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020; Clarke & Scurry, 2020). millennial employees will make up 75% of the workforce by 2025. Given that millennial turnover costs the U.S. economy \$30.5 billion annually (Robinson, 2021), public sector stakeholders must fully commit to younger employee retention to offset their high turnover's tremendous financial loss (Cross Walker, 2020).

Public administration scholars argue that there is a rapidly evolving talent management crisis in the public sector given the increase in retirees, low retention of talented millennial employees, and failure to meet the business challenges of its internal and external organizational context (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020). The literature noted six propositions that challenge talent management implementation in public sector organizations: loss of employee power, uncertainty, motivation, conflicting mental models, lack of cultural support, and hierarchal issues (Cross Walker, 2020).

Talent management should be tailored to support millennials' career aspirations by developing them to become committed to the public sector organization's philosophy (Wickramaaratchi & Perera, 2020). Glazer et al. (2019) found that millennials reported significantly lower continuance commitment levels but no normative and affective commitment differences. Talent management could assist the public sector in recruiting millennials, particularly in a digital economy, by appealing to their intrinsic social consciousness to satisfy their expectations and increase their commitment (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020). Millennials desire to contribute to public sector organizations' objectives by building quality relationships and trusting their organizational leaders, which can be accomplished through talent management implementation (Mahfoozi et al., 2018; Sievert et al., 2020).

With millennials, public sector managers' talent management implementation supports fair performance management procedures that measure quality and quantity and are likely to identify each employee's talent in everyday tasks (Cocuľová, 2020). Tafti et al. (2017) studied the obstacles and challenges of talent management and its success

factors in retaining millennial employees in public organizations. Public sector organizations continue to experience employee retention problems, especially with millennials employees. Public sector managers are worried about the attraction and retention of millennials and an increase in retirees. Employee turnover reveals a direct relationship with how well an organization performs because of the emphasis on public sector and private sector organizations' performance (Younas & Bari, 2020).

Clarke and Scurry (2020) studied the factors that influence the success of talent management programs for graduate students within the millennial age range by exploring participant experiences ( $n = 68$ ) from two public sector 'fast track' graduate development programs. Drawing on psychological contract theory, the study examined how talent management programs in the public sector may shape individual expectations, experiences, and evaluations. Clarke and Scurry's interview study found that the multiple internal agents, particularly line managers, play a crucial role in fulfilling millennials' psychological contract in public sector talent management programs. Millennials' turnover rate attributed to violating psychological contract promises tends to cost public organizations a substantial financial loss (Allen & Halkias, 2020).

The workforce of organizations is dynamic and constantly changing, with baby boomer employees gradually retiring and younger cohorts graduating from the university about to start their professional careers (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019). The values, preferences, and demands of millennial generations entering the workplace can lead to misunderstandings and communicational concerns that influence employee productivity, motivation, and engagement, resulting in employee retention and turnover (Gallardo-

Gallardo et al., 2020). Researchers' examination of the generational challenges posed for talent management concerning employee branding references, especially regarding the new net generation, called the millennials or Generation Y, seeks to identify any discrepancies between them and Generation X, who are still pursuing their careers in the workplace. Some researchers have uncovered distinct perspectives concerning Generation X and Generation Y, whereas others have found none, arguing that they have a similar pragmatic outlook on life (Podger, 2017; Younas & Bari, 2020).

As of 2020, 50% of the American workforce was made up of millennials, and it is predicted that by 2025, it will increase to 75% (Robinson, 2021). Thus, in 2019, the older millennials celebrated their 38<sup>th</sup> birthdays. Millennials on the younger end of the spectrum turned 22 in 2019. Some millennials have 15 years of professional work experience, and others have barely graduated (Dimock, 2019). Talent management starts with the hiring process. One important thing that organizations should consider for their growth and succession plans is to look for qualified talent (Claus, 2019). With millennials reporting significantly lower continuance commitment levels but no differences in normative and affective commitment, the question arises as to whether millennial employees will align with their future leadership needs as well as the immediate job needs or not (Glazer et al., 2019).

Therefore, public sector organizations should be aware of different generations' needs, wants, and work preferences by undertaking comparative benchmarking studies across these generations (Bennet, 2017). Each generation that experiences the same events within the same period having similar values and world views, sharing cultural,

political, and economic experience, is called a generational cohort (Bennet, 2017). This group has already started or is about to start their careers, depending on their birth year. Generation X and the millennial employees have been exposed to different historical, economic, and social events than older cohorts and have different characteristics and expectations (Brown et al., 2015).

It is argued that millennial employees are different from preceding groups, both as employees and as consumers (Desai & Lele, 2017). This generation possesses distinctive characteristics concerning their expectations from the employment experience regarding learning requirements, attitudes to career and self-development, work orientation, and engagement. While millennial employees find themselves entering the workforce, public sector managers have also seen a higher employee turnover rate than ever before (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020). Millennials employees are distinct from other generations in how they view work, and their place in a capitalist society such as America is no different. It is critical of them in some ways, saying that they were not focused or goal-oriented as their parents had been (Allen & Halkias, 2020).

Unlike baby boomers, life-long employment is not perceived to be more critical to millennial employees; instead, they prefer public sector organizations to provide career opportunities and challenging, meaningful assignments (George & Wallio, 2017). Millennial employees are willing to give their best at the workplace when they see that their organizations are constantly developing their skills and keeping control of planning their careers. Fast track leadership programs should be designed for those who show promise, and public sector managers should make sure that millennial employees have

opportunities for challenging assignments, job enrichment, and even international projects (Javed et al., 2017). The challenges are suggested to be solved by working more strategically with the organization's talent management strategies by educating and attracting millennials to create a stronger resource pool (Mensah, 2019). In a nutshell, proper implementation of talent management in public sector organizations facilitates millennial employees' attraction, development, and retention (Huo & Boxall, 2018).

Scholars have argued that there is not enough research on talent management implementation in public sector organizations; this has led to the lack of critical analysis of the importance of talent management to the public sector, which may be a successful way for public sector managers to attract and retain valuable millennial employees (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Kamalaveni et al., 2019). As millennial employees move into the public sector, organizations may be essential to drive positive social change in supporting public sector managers in building a sustainable workplace to attract and retain millennial employees (Sievert et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). The retention of millennial employees is a concern for every organization, but one cannot approach it the same way for each generation—what works for baby boomers and Generation X might not work for millennials, and with so many millennials in the workplace, it is essential to understand their wants and needs (Squyres, 2020; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019).

The relationships between talent management, job satisfaction, and employees' voluntary turnover intentions may weaken millennial employees' performance to ensure the organization's strategic objectives (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Thus, millennial

employees respond better with those with whom they connect. Public sector managers need to create a solid professional relationship with their millennial employees to feel more accountable for their work. It is crucial to prioritize communication with millennial employees and invest time and energy into being available (Pandita & Ray, 2018).

Creating a healthy employee–employer relationship is simple: the employer has to care (Naim & Lenka, 2018). Retention of talented millennial employees may be essential to drive positive social change in supporting organizations to build a sustainable workplace to retain a younger, diverse workforce with valuable attributes and learn within the organization (Younas & Bari, 2020). Public sector organizations have begun to look at various strategic ways to improve their outdated human resource tactics and policies which undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

### **Talent Management Implementation with Millennial Employees in the Public Sector**

The public sector practice of sacrificing competitive advantage while placating political administrations has resulted in a steady exodus of valuable millennial employees (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Naim & Lenka, 2018). A high level of millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds result from the public sector's outdated HR policies that undermine valuable talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). Public organization talent management is the under-researched context of public organizations and the lack of contextual awareness. Further, empirically driven analysis is essential for further theory development regarding talent management practices and public sector organization implementation (Tyskbo, 2019).

Younas and Bari (2020) studied the impact talent management practices such as mentoring, strategic leadership, social media, and knowledge sharing have on retaining generation Y employees. Drawing on employee development strategies in retaining generation Y employees, the study examines how talent management practices in the public sector may strengthen the relationship between generation Y employees and managers, leading to generation Y employees' retainment. A total of 372 employees of generation Y participated in the study. Younas and Bari's interview found that when managers adopt talent management practices such as mentoring, strategic leadership, social media at the workplace, it will lead to millennials' retainment. When organizations adopt competency development, it brings about a good relationship between managers and millennials for a positive outcome. Practical insights into managers' experiences and providing necessary information about millennials' needs and expectations leading to their retainment are further needed (Allen & Halkias, 2020).

The public sector workplace comprises a mix of multiple generations of employees whose experiences in their respective times have molded them into individuals with characteristics that define their generation (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Robinson, 2021). These different generations have different behavioral characteristics that define their expectations and preferences at the workplace. The diverse profiles of various generations bring unique benefits to the organization and place unique demands on the organization to provide an environment where all generational cohorts will thrive in the workplace (Bennet, 2017). The talent pool is created, within which strategic employees are trained for "key positions" (Boselie et al., 2021).

The first millennials started joining the workforce in 1996, and the first generation Z employees started joining the workforce in 2013 (Dimock, (2019). The baby boomers have since retired from the workforce, and the last of the baby boomers will remain in the workforce only until the year 2028. The last generation X employee will stay in the workforce until 2044; from 2045, the entire workforce will be only millennial and post-millennial employees (Robinson, 2021).

The decreasing number of millennials to replace the retiring workforce and higher demands for knowledge workers are the most challenging issues confronting organizations. The millennials and post-millennials bring different characteristics and behavioral traits to introduce new dynamics in the organizational setting (Cross Walker, 2020). Therefore, public sector organizations will have to diagnose the impact of issues carefully brought about by millennial employees entering the workforce and design appropriate interventions to ensure that the organization remains effective, efficient, and continues to perform successfully (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

Public sector organizations are confronted with talent retention challenges: dynamic workforces characterized by the rise of the knowledge worker, the decline of long-term careers, and the aging and the market exodus of the boomer generation (Podger, 2017; Younas & Bari, 2020). The challenges are suggested to be solved by working more strategically with the organization's talent management strategies by educating and attracting millennials to create a stronger resource pool (Mensah, 2019). A close examination of researchers has proven that there is no "one size fits all" approach when it comes to designing the organizational development interventions to implement

talent management to support millennials' career aspirations by developing them to become committed to the public sector organization's philosophy (Wickramaaratchi & Perera, 2020). Scholars have proposed that further empirically driven analysis is essential for further theory development regarding talent management implementation with millennial employees in public sector organizations (Tyskbo, 2019).

With updated human resources policies, public sector organizations thrive with millennial employees, leading to high employee retention as they understand and meet their needs (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). They have opened their minds to change and great conversations, created growth and development opportunities, created flexibility in the workplace, and have focused on creating an overall positive work culture. The millennial generation has been highly scrutinized by researchers from various fields who have anxiously waited to see how this historically unique generation will behave in the workplace (Clarke & Scurry, 2020). They are also the most ethnically diverse generation and highly educated (Boselie et al., 2021).

Millennials have never known a world without instant access to the World Wide Web or the internet that can give them answers to their burning questions (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020). Why is the sky blue? Millennials did not need to wait until dinner to remember to ask their parents and hopefully get the correct answers. They just googled it. Millennials desire to contribute to public sector organizations' objectives by building quality relationships and trusting their organizational leaders, which can be accomplished through talent management implementation (Mahfoozi et al., 2018; Sievert et al., 2020). This ability to instantly access answers to their questions has made this a generation of

continuous learners who expect ongoing and robust learning and development from their employers throughout their careers (Desai & Lele, 2017; dos Santos & Pedro, 2020).

Public sector managers who fail to implement talent management to deliver millennial employees' continuous learning expectations may jeopardize their organizations (Cross Walker, 2020). Training and development can come in many forms for millennials. Millennials also want to be developed through access to stretch assignments, external experiences, and experiential programs (Naim & Lenka, 2018). Training and development efforts designed with millennials in mind should be heavy on leadership skill development because not only will employers find an increasing need to fill leadership positions as baby boomers retire, but they will also find that millennials, by and large, are seeking those positions (Kamalaveni et al., 2019).

Unfortunately, many millennials believe their employers are not stepping up to the plate for leadership development. Public sector organizations are not explicitly targeting millennials in their leadership development programs; it should come as no surprise that this generation views leadership, and as an extension, leadership development, a bit differently than previous ones (George & Wallio, 2017). Millennials employees who believe their employers are doing an adequate job of offering them leadership training and development opportunities say they intend to stay at their jobs longer than millennials who believe their employers are not offering them leadership training and development opportunities (Huo & Boxall, 2018; Sievert et al., 2020). For the public sector to better retain and develop a millennial talent pipeline, public sector managers should identify high-potential millennial employees and fast track them for

specialized leadership development based on a personalized strategic development plan for each millennial identified as a high potential individual (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Cocuřová, 2020).

### **Internal and External Context Challenges in the Public Sector**

Scholars have suggested that an increasing tendency in public sector research to focus on employee reactions to talent management marginalizes organizational context issues in academic talent management research (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2017; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Whereas employee studies contribute to understanding the micro-level issues in talent management, a literature gap exists on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020).

When the phrase “context of the organization” is used, context means a combination of external and internal factors that directly impact the organization and its ability to continue providing products and services to its customers (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Internal factors include the organization’s culture, structure, governance, technology, strategic decisions, and vision for the future. External factors encompass the whole environment in which the organization operates: social, cultural, legal, political, regulatory, statutory, economic, to mention but a few, at all levels, including local, state, country, and even international (Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020). Managerial sensemaking in talent management tends to be governed by market logistics (Wickramaaratchi & Perera, 2020). For instance, the business needs in response to the external environment

include shifting demographics, international mobility, skill shortages, the intensification of competition, the shortage of capable leadership, and the globalization of professional labor markets (Claus, 2019; Sparrow & Makram, 2015).

Academic research contains extensive debates about organizational failure's nature, causes, and effects (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Failure represents an existence-threatening decline in performance, the results of which include market exit or turnaround. Empirical research on the determinants of organizational failure has concentrated on internal inadequacies and external constraints, leading to poor performance (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). The impact of the environment on failure has focused on differences between industries rather than organizations (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020).

The organization should determine external and internal issues relevant to its purpose, strategic planning, and ability to achieve its objectives (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020). Public sector organizations should monitor and review external and internal issues (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2017). The organization must consider issues related to the organization's values, cultural knowledge, and performance to understand internal issues (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020). To understand the external context, the organization must consider the legal, technological, competitive, market, cultural, social, and economic environments, whether international, national, regional, or local (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020).

### **Internal Context Challenges in the Public Sector**

Branding or organizational reputation is considered a mechanism for attracting millennial employees (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Thus, for talent management implementation to benefit the public sector and attract millennial employees, activities should be aligned with the organization's strategic objectives of public value to engage current and potential staff (Garrow & Hirsh, 2018). Aligning talent management strategies with public value is a highly pertinent topic for research because, unlike their private counterparts, public organizations that perform poorly are unlikely to be replaced by superior performers in the economic marketplace. Indeed, it has been argued that the political difficulties of closing public agencies performing poorly are severe and that 'permanent failure' is more likely in the public than in the private sector (Clarke & Scurry, 2020). These are pressing practical and theoretical issues: governments across the globe are seeking remedies for public service failure (Cross Walker, 2020).

Researchers stressed the need for structured processes, implying, although not directly, a cultural shift away from informal waste-oriented practices to a more managed and coherent approach (Javed et al., 2017). Public sector managers appear to have no choice and need to make do. It is used to manage the impression of an employer of choice, a symbolic gesture, a distinctive employer offering that promises better opportunities and a long-term career (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020). An organization's internal context is the internal environment within which it seeks to achieve its sustainability goals (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Glazer et al., 2019).

## **External Context Challenges in the Public Sector**

External context challenges in the public sector may be political, economic, social, or technological (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). The same internal factors that lead to an organization's success inevitably characterize that organization's relationship to the external environment in these broad areas (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Glazer et al., 2019). As in the macro-environmental context, public sector organizations cannot always control their micro-environment factors, but they must be carefully managed together and with the internal context understanding (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Customer pressures and complaints can force organizations to change product returns and customer and technical support policies.

A government's regulatory and trade policies can significantly determine how businesses operate, especially international trade, taxation, and regulations (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). The media, including social media, can significantly impact a company's image and public relations. An unfavorable news video or news report can go viral fast, and if your organization does not provide an acceptable response, the negative publicity and effects can last a long time. Sociological forces often drive what, where, and how consumers buy products and services (Glazer et al., 2019).

The multinational and multicultural trend in workforce composition can cause significant employee hiring and retention (Huo & Boxall, 2018). Suppose the response to these situations is unplanned, weak, or untimely. In that case, it might have a dramatic impact on the future of the business—loss of customers, serious production interruption or disruption, permanent loss of organizational knowledge, even loss or bankruptcy of the

business (Javed et al., 2017). Contextual issues can have a positive impact, as they may present opportunities such as new, improved, or increased availability of previously scarce resources, opening up of or access to new markets, availability of new technologies leading to reduced costs, improved product quality, services, and operational efficiency (Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020).

Many of these contextual issues can be viewed as variables, some changing faster, others slower, depending on whether the organization is fast-paced and leading-edge or in a stable or mature industry (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Therefore, variability in these issues depicts uncertainty about their future behavior. Such uncertainty can be pretty diverse, complex, and highly unpredictable. This presents a dilemma to organizations regarding tracking and adapting to changes in these issues (Linos & Riesch, 2020). This uncertainty introduces the need to understand and use risk evaluation, mitigation, and management. Thus, each organizational contextual issue will have its own specific set of uncertainties with different levels of complexity and risk and the need for specific controls to mitigate or eliminate the risk (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

Learning is one of the most fundamental human activities and accounts directly or indirectly for the success of any organization (Mahfoozi et al., 2018). As technological advances lead to faster rates of change, successful organizations need to find a way to respond that encourages innovation and builds into every employee's experience the opportunity to learn and explore (Khan et al., 2019). Communication is essential to all generations, but with the development and proliferation of technology, each generation's

approach to communication is slightly different based on their comfort or exposure to technology from an early age (Mensah, 2019).

Researchers have identified that leaders are influenced to adapt and change communication approaches (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019). Public sector organizations that demonstrate action and follow-up to employee feedback create trusted environments (Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020). Even the definitions of TM align with the market logic, emphasizing sustainable competitive advantage and the people and positions that add the most value (Fahim, 2018). Because of a lack of time, poor structures, a lack of stakeholder involvement, and insufficient human resources competencies, many researchers have suggested that these decisions tend to be boundedly rational, reactive, biased, and bereft of suitable frameworks (dos Santos & Pedro, 2020; Kamalaveni et al., 2019).

Existing studies of environmental influences on failure, principally on the private sector, can provide insights into the possible causes of public service failure (Mahfoozi et al., 2018). Several researchers have generated evidence on the impact of economic munificence on failure. The impact of environmental complexity has not been explored in empirical studies of organizational context challenges (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2017; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). By contrast, evidence on the impact of environmental dynamism on organizational failure comes from various sources. Researchers have indicated that an unstable industry environment is significantly related to organizational failure (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021).

### **Context Challenges in the Public Sector and Retention of Millennial Employees**

The organizational internal and external context affect talent management strategy in public sector organizations, playing critical roles in retaining Millennials in public organizations (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Thunnissen and Buttiens (2017) studied the factors that influence the institutional logic of the different aspects of the talent management approach in the public sector. How public sector organizations shape their talent management to address context challenges to retain millennial employees at public organizations needs further empirical exploration (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019).

The way talent is perceived consequently affects the choice of talent strategy within the public sector organization and constitutes the problem that needs to be solved (Cross Walker, 2020), how public sector managers of talent management implementation with millennial employees are gradually affected by the context in which the organization operates (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). For instance, the changes in the organizational structure, the political situation in the country and region, implication of the third parties in the organization's life, and millennial employees' behavior and views all contribute to the attraction and retention of millennial employees within the organization (Clarke & Scurry, 2020). In turn, they depend on the contextual settings and how talent is implemented within the public sector, resulting in specific talent management strategies (Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020).

Finding an ideal framework that motivates each person to get involved in the necessary tasks and increases loyalty to an organization is difficult (Cocuľová, 2020).

There is limited criticism identified for employee empowerment. Additionally, there is concern about losing managerial control by allowing and offering employee empowerment (dos Santos & Pedro, 2020). Employees do not always respond rationally, which can sometimes create challenging situations by having control left entirely in the hands of the people (Fahim, 2018). Researchers have indicated that leaders frequently resolve personality conflicts (Claus, 2019).

In addition, the institutionalized assumptions on the organizational level play a role in how public sector organizations set operational strategies, especially regarding strategic talent management (Mensah, 2019). At the same time, the inconsistency of the institutional assumption within the organizational documents and millennial employees' way of viewing things can lead to misunderstanding of certain concepts or procedures, thus creating conflicting issues within the organization (Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020). Cognitive dissonance among millennial employees or conflicts between employees may occur regarding how talent is perceived. Here, the public sector managers can play an essential role as the management representative towards the millennial employees and vice versa and the discourse as experts of the field becoming the sense makers of the topic (Naim & Lenka, 2018).

Moreover, an organization may have context challenges in the public sector and retain millennial employees on macro-, meso-, and micro-levels, reflecting in the organization's choice of talent management strategies (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Furthermore, depending on the contextual settings and the choice of the organization's talent management approach, the way the organization operates will

vary (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). For instance, when an organization adopts an inclusive approach to talent management, it aims towards different targets than the whole talent management approach (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Wiblen & McDonnell, 2020). This reflects in the organization's financial planning, the development of the internal educational and career programs focus on improved communication between various departments, orientation towards staff retention, and emphasis put on the creation and spread of organizational culture and values for long term sustainability, in order to manage the demographic challenge and talent shortage on the individual, organizational, and societal level (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019).

Organizational leaders prioritize organizational growth and development (George & Wallio, 2017). With that in mind, the organization must turn to its values, where some are deeply rooted in society when priorities have to be done. One of the identified influential factors is the norms and values set by the financial market. It will reflect on our moral values and, by extension, how we perceive talent and identify that an active choice can be made (Glazer et al., 2019). When reasoning from this perspective and considering the need for public legitimization and isomorphic forces, the long-term perspective seems complicated to hold in what can be called a social trap (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Linos & Riesch, 2020).

Communication with employees has been a critical managerial component across multiple generations (Pandita & Ray, 2018). While baby boomers prefer face-to-face communication, Generation X prefers communication technology, millennials like team discussions, and Generation Z prefers communication via text and e-mail (Boselie et al.,

2021). Thus, managerial change and adaptation to the specific generation are essential when communicating with employees. Specifically, communicating how millennial employee contributions matter and affect exact projects and the organization face-to-face is critical because current managers are not effectively creating clear expectations (Naim & Lenka, 2018). Given millennials' attachment to mobile devices and strong affinity for social media, organizations must move away from traditional top-down management communication and town-hall forums to a more collaborative and engaging dialogue with the workforce (dos Santos & Pedro, 2020).

Public sector organizations are being forced to create environments that allow millennials to have a voice and build an atmosphere where managers respond to the suggestions and desires of the millennial generation (Tyskbo, 2019). Millennials see their jobs as a direct extension of their lives, and therefore managers must provide the appropriate flexibility and accountability to the generation that helps ensure collaboration across all levels in the organization (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Public sector managers will be required to spend time with millennials to gain increased morale, improved productivity, teamwork, and innovation (Steigenberger & Mirc, 2019). To create trusted environments that engage the workforce, organizations must return to mutual respect, accept new ideas, and embrace open communication (Bennet, 2017).

Generations may not be different in the factors that drive retention, with work-life balance and salary/benefits being the two most essential retention factors (Younas & Bari, 2020). Millennial employees may, in fact, not be unique in their workplace characteristics and desires (Desai & Lele, 2017). Moreover, all generations desire ethical

work environments that promote fairness in scheduling and assignments, allowing occasional mistakes to be made without punitive action (Squyres, 2020). The generational differences in work ethic are fiction, such that organizations need to adapt and recognize the importance that all generations bring to the workplace (Dimock, 2019).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

This integrative literature review aimed to identify literature gaps on organizational context challenges facing public sector managers that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020). Chapter 2 included a review and critical analysis from multiple research studies surrounding the concept of organizational context challenges in the public sector agencies and how these may undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees if left unaddressed (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Given today's complexity in organizational context challenges, the public sector's outdated HR policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

Millennial talent retained in the public sector has received little attention in academic research, and the vast research insights gained from the private sector may not be applicable in public organizations (Boselie et al., 2021). Scholars have suggested that an increasing tendency in public sector research to focus on employee reactions to talent management marginalizes organizational context issues in academic talent management research (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2017; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019).

Whereas employee studies contribute to understanding the micro-level issues in talent management, a literature gap exists on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention of greatly needed millennial employees (Sievert et al., 2020).

How valuable millennial talent can be retained in the public sector has received little attention in academic research, and the vast research insights gained from the private sector may not be applicable in public organizations (Boselie et al., 2021). Contributing knowledge to talent management applications in recruiting and retaining public sector millennial employees who are highly committed is being part of a sustainable workplace (see Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Organizational context is significant when conceptualizing talent management strategies, yet current literature still calls for studies on how public sector leadership and policymakers must further understand the complexity of context challenges facing public sector managers (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

In Chapter 3, I will present the methodology for this qualitative study and its purpose. The central research question on how public sector managers describe their perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees will be discussed. The logic of the sampling procedures and research strategy followed by the instrumentation and data collection methods is also provided in the chapter. Finally, the study data analysis, ethical procedures, and approaches for ensuring the trustworthiness of the study results will be presented.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory single case study with embedded units was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. Meeting the purpose of this study addressed the literature gap on how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies interface with talent management implementation (see Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). To address this gap within the qualitative paradigm, this study utilized a single case study with embedded units design (Yin, 2017).

This study was significant because it contributed to the management field by understanding public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The study results may inform public sector leadership and policymakers on the state of organizational complexity in the public sector and how outdated HR policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

This chapter provides detailed information on the research method and rationale for conducting an exploratory qualitative case study. The central research question (CRQ) guiding this empirical investigation is presented along with the participant selection strategy, data collection strategies and analysis, the researcher's role, instrumentation strategy, ethical considerations, and a final overview of the main points in Chapter 3.

## **Research Design and Rationale**

The central research question drives the research strategy and is crucial to understanding the studied problem using the case study approach (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). A researcher must identify the right question to meet the purpose of the study. Consistent with the purpose of this study, the CRQ is as follows:

How do public sector managers describe their perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees?

Today's unprecedented complexity of internal and external organizational context challenges—marked by globalization, technology, the lucrative private sector offers for millennial employees, and broader socioeconomic, geopolitical, and demographic changes—increases the necessity for public sector stakeholders to focus on retaining their valuable talent (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Singh, 2019). Moreover, talents are perceived as unique strategic resources central to achieving sustained competitive advantage (Claus, 2019; dos Santos & Pedro, 2020). Like their private-sector counterparts, public sector agencies are confronted with the same talent retention challenges: dynamic workforces characterized by the rise of the knowledge worker, the decline of long-term careers, and the aging and the market exodus of the Boomer generation (Podger, 2017; Younas & Bari, 2020).

The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because it aligned with its purpose: to understand public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges undermine talent management in their public sector agencies. The quantitative

method was inappropriate for this study because quantitative research designs examine relationships, test theories, standardize reporting, and collect quantifiable data (Harkiolakis, 2017; Kumar, 2019). Thus, the quantitative method does not fully understand participants' perspectives, experiences, and knowledge about the research question (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The mixed-methods approach was also not appropriate for this study because it allowed qualitative and quantitative methods to be used simultaneously, whereas quantitative data were not suitable for answering my research question (Brannen, 2017). The research problem and the study's nature require a qualitative methodology because it succinctly explores an issue involved in a complex social process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because it aligned with my study's purpose: understanding public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees (see Bryman, 2017). Qualitative research allows the researcher to examine and understand people's perceptions in detail in a real-world setting using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, and visual methods (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Again, the qualitative method allows the researcher to generate data about a human group in a natural setting, analyze data inductively, extract meaning from participants, and interpret their findings (Stake, 2010).

I employed a single case study with embedded units (see Yin, 2017) to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their

public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The single case study design was chosen over other qualitative designs such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and narratives because it allows the researcher to accurately understand the case in a real-world environment (Yin, 2017). Case study design focuses on the how and why questions of a contemporary set of events in their natural setting while limiting the researcher's control (Baran & Jones, 2016; Yin, 2017). Through an exploratory case study design, I explored how public sector managers describe their perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role in this research was to interview public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. As a qualitative researcher, I was the primary instrument through which data were collected and mediated in the research; therefore, my role in this study was that of an observer-as-participant recorder and analyst of the qualitative data obtained in this study (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).

A primary data collection and analysis instrument collected, coded, and analyzed the data from interviews, participant journals, and archival data to uncover the emerging concepts and patterns (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Sutton & Austin, 2015). Additionally, it is helpful for the qualitative researcher to keep a research journal explicating personal reactions and reflections, insights into self and past in a separate journal, and how

bracketing takes place. My role as the researcher was to collect data that reflected on the research questions, facilitate interviews, and analyze the answers from the interviews and findings (Sanjari et al., 2014). I ensured that the method of data collection was not just reliable but verifiable, and the data gathering instrument yielded accurate results and created field notes, and as well kept a log of data collection activities in the course of the study in order to achieve validity (Kumar, 2019; Ledford & Gast, 2018).

One of my roles as the researcher was to protect all the participants in the study from any potential harm that may occur due to their participation in the study (Sanjari et al., 2014). Through my role, I communicated the privacy protection procedure to the participants in writing after they showed interest in participating in the study. I used pseudonyms in this study to reference the participants to help maintain anonymity and kept the information confidential during and after the study (Orcher, 2016; Petrova et al., 2016). Thus, my role in the data collection process included, but was not limited to, gathering information on a phenomenon, observing the phenomenon, organizing collected findings from research, evaluating data reliability, and validating the information (Yin, 2017).

The researcher's position as the study instrument can lead to research bias (Jafar, 2018). As a qualitative researcher's role is to get engrossed in their study, the "positionality of the researcher is located as always 'inside' the research study" (Cuthill, 2015, p. 63). The researcher must instinctively be aware of their position and select an appropriate method to combat any known bias (Liong, 2015). Reducing bias included respondent validation, comparing participants' responses, observation of participants, and

triangulation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I avoided using questions that diverted focus from the interview script and used a reflective journal to reduce bias (Certo et al., 2016; Sarstedt et al., 2018). There were no potential conflicts of interest due to insider bias in this study, and I have no affiliation or relationship with the participants interviewed (McCoy & Emanuel, 2017). No incentives were provided to the participants for their involvement in the study; they could decide to withdraw from participating at any time during the process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

I tracked all research and personal bias to control the accuracy of the research process and findings by creating an audit trail (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Based on Berger's (2015) approach, I kept a log of all research activities, conducted reflexivity, and tracked personal biases. Berger's approach to reflexivity involved participants' prolonged engagement and repeated reviews of the participants' responses. Using the semistructured interview approach helped the researcher eliminate his/her position on the research topic, allowing the participants to add insights that may not have been previously known to me. Strategies such as triangulation (Yin, 2017), using purposeful maximum variations sampling (Morse, 2015), and audit trails which reflect the researcher's background, context, and prior understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) were helpful to demonstrate what is called "commonality of assertion" (Stake, 2013).

### **Methodology**

I used an exploratory qualitative single case study with embedded units (Yin, 2017) to understand public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees in

their public sector agencies. With this single case study, I addressed the gap, and research was needed to draw upon public sector managers' views on the organizational context challenges that undermine innovative talent management implementation with their millennial employees (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Ledoux, 2020). Exploratory case studies investigate problems that have not been studied clearly and lack a detailed preliminary investigation (Maslach, 2017). Case study research should have propositions to direct attention to core items to be examined within the study's scope, but such propositions may not be necessary when dealing with exploratory design as long as the purpose of the study is clearly articulated and stated (Yin, 2017).

The advantage of using the qualitative research method is the researcher's ability to explore in-depth a subject grounded in a conceptual framework (Collins & Cooper, 2014). Single case studies allow for an in-depth exploration of a single case to allow the researcher to interpret the participant's experiences without preconceived prejudices (Yin, 2017). Exploring employee turnover through a qualitative research method gives participants' experiences voice by understanding the phenomenon in their words through a single case study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016; Yazan, 2015). The researcher identifies stereotypical assumptions to alleviate predispositions that might alter the research purpose (Yin, 2017).

Researchers have described the case study as a method and methodology (Mills, 2014). A method is considered a set of procedures and techniques employed in a study, whereas methodology is the lens through which a researcher views and decides a study (Harrison et al., 2017; Mills, 2014). Case study researchers have emphasized how an

overarching methodology will help structure a case study design using multiple data sources and methods (Harrison et al., 2017; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Yin, 2017).

Researchers can assess a particular case from various perspectives by reviewing additional evidence and outlining the research findings while using a qualitative approach to available data (Stake, 1995). Single case studies investigating a social phenomenon can involve individuals living within a specific social context as embedded units of study (Yin, 2017). Noor (2008) posited that the unit of analysis, a case study, may be a person, event, entity, or another unit of analysis. In this study, the unit of analysis was the public sector manager.

Qualitative research uses varied purposeful sampling strategies to identify and select information-rich cases related to interest phenomena (Palinkas et al., 2015). I recruited participants for this study using purposeful, criterion, and snowball sampling strategies and screened with the following inclusion criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18 years, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees (Robinson, 2014). The exclusion criteria for the sample were participants who did not meet the above inclusion criteria. The most common form of purposeful sampling is snowball sampling, obtained by asking a few key participants who already meet the criteria for the study to refer others who may also meet the criteria but might be hard to find within the sample population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I conducted 15 semistructured online interviews using the Zoom platform with public sector managers (see Gray et al., 2020). Schram (2006) recommended that researchers

have between five to 10 participants for a qualitative study because a larger sample size may weaken an in-depth investigation of the phenomena under study.

The case study research design chosen is suitable for this study because this type of research design does not involve experimental controls or manipulation to understand participants' perceptions and experiences with the central study topic (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). In addressing the gap and the research problem, I collected qualitative data from interview transcripts and analyzed it through thematic analysis through Yin's (2017) pattern-matching logic sequence in identifying the themes. Interview data themes were triangulated with reflective field notes and archival data to support the trustworthiness of findings and recommend future research (Guion et al., 2011).

### **Participant Selection Logic**

#### ***Population***

This case study's target population was managers in the United States public sector organizations. Across the United States, nearly 24 million people—a little over 15% of the workforce—are involved in military, public, and national service at the local, state, and federal levels. Approximately 16 million are employed in state and local governments of this number. The public sector employs 20.2 million people in the United States, approximately 14.5% of the workforce. The largest U.S. public sector employment division is local government, comprising approximately 65% of public sector employment (Brookings Institute, 2020).

Public administration scholars argue that there is a rapidly evolving talent management crisis in the public sector given the increase in retirees, low retention of

talented millennial employees, and failure to meet the business challenges of its internal and external organizational context (Brunetto & Beattie, 2020). Given that millennial employees are expected to make up 75% of the workforce by 2025 and the estimate that millennial turnover costs the U.S. economy \$30.5 billion annually (Robinson, 2021), public sector stakeholders must be fully committed to younger employee retention to offset their high turnover's tremendous financial loss (Cross Walker, 2020).

The study participants were drawn from a population of public sector managers meeting the study's inclusion criteria through the professional network LinkedIn. This criterion-based sampling gathered a heterogeneous group of participants to support maximum variation sampling to incorporate as much diversity as possible into the research design (see Gentles et al., 2015). In qualitative case study research, maximum variation sampling relies on the researcher's judgment to select participants with diverse characteristics to maximize variability within the primary data (Poulis et al., 2013).

I utilized the LinkedIn professional platform and my professional network to solicit potential participants that met the study's inclusion criteria for participation. The strategies of purposeful criterion and snowball sampling were used for this study. The purpose of sampling strategies allows the researcher to select participants that will provide rich information relevant to the research questions (Maxwell, 2013; Palinkas et al., 2015).

The most common form of purposeful sampling is snowball sampling, where the researcher asks a few key participants who already meet the criteria for the study to refer others who may also meet the criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Snowball sampling

creates a succession of participants from the referrer who would be good sources based on the focus of inquiry, enabling the researcher to access quality participants who ordinarily might be challenging to identify using other sampling strategies (Noor, 2008). Although snowball sampling has been questioned on the idea that participants who refer others share similar characteristics or outlooks, the variance of the initial set of participants within the boundary of the inclusion criteria will lead to the generation of a sample that is not excessively skewed in any one direction (Etikan et al., 2016).

The participants for this case study were recruited and screened with the following inclusion criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18 years, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees (Robinson, 2014). The exclusion criteria for the sample were participants who did not meet the above inclusion criteria. The most common form of purposeful sampling is snowball sampling, obtained by asking a few key participants who already meet the criteria for the study to refer others who may also meet the criteria but might be hard to find within the sample population (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I conducted 15 in-depth individual online interviews with public sector managers (see Gray et al., 2020).

Schram (2006) recommended that researchers have between five to 10 participants for a qualitative study because a larger sample size can lead to weaker research results. The participant selection logic followed that of similar studies in the business and management fields, which were grounded in Yin's (2017) interpretation of participant recruitment for case studies and that of Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020)

concept of contextualized talent management and Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management.

Procedures to identify, contact, and recruit participants were achieved through a purposeful selection of managers within public sector agencies in the United States. The participants' initial set was pooled from a review of public sector managers' profiles on the LinkedIn website (<https://www.linkedin.com/>), who were asked to refer to other participants. An additional recruitment source can be achieved through network sampling using direct contact from my professional network. Professional profiles of public sector managers active on LinkedIn were pre-screened using the study's inclusion criteria. Participants were recruited through email, asking if they were interested in participating in the study. I initially spoke with the participants that responded to determine their suitability and experience as a public sector manager. I sent the consent form electronically to the participants who met the inclusion criteria and showed interest in participating in the study.

Data saturation occurs when no new themes and no new data add substantive insights into the research question (Houghton et al., 2013). Thus, researchers determine data saturation when there is a redundancy of information provided by the research participants because they are at a point of diminishing returns (Mason, 2010). In qualitative studies, researchers achieve data saturation when the research participants provide enough information to replicate the research study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Interviews continued until reaching data saturation. The fieldwork progresses until the participants' full advantage of an in-depth study is reached (Stake, 2010). Single-point

sample size is unnecessary in qualitative research because a single-point sample size may be too small or too large to reach theoretical saturation (Sandelowski, 1995).

A private interview setting may break down invisible boundaries that the research participants possess to facilitate productive semistructured interviews (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The data source type and integration of the research question determine data saturation (Suri, 2011). Even though the proposed sample size was 15 to 20 participants, data saturation was determined as the point to stop the interview process. Data saturation was necessary because failure to reach saturation would adversely affect the research's validity and influence the participants' willingness to disclose information (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

### **Instrumentation**

Specific instrumentation in a case study offers the platform for collecting data from several sources by providing suitable data collection tools in responding to the research question (Yin, 2017). As a researcher, it is always prudent to examine all responses from the various questions developed by researchers related to the research topic and the characteristics and selection of participants in the data analysis process. The use of instrumentation protocols that align with the study's purpose and research question may ensure alignment with the original data to its conceptual framework (Tracy, 2019).

By carefully choosing appropriate instrumentation, themes to support insights emerged from studying the public sector managers' organizational context challenges for talent management implementation with millennials. Four sources of data were utilized throughout this study: (a) interviews with managers within public sector agencies in the

United States meeting the study's inclusion criteria (Yin, 2017), (b) reflective field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), (c) archival data on talent management strategies and recruitment/retention of millennial employees within public sector agencies in the United States (Yin, 2017), and (d) historical, seminal, and current peer-reviewed scholarly papers on the study topic (Yin, 2017), which the researcher kept throughout the entire study.

### ***The Interview Protocol***

The interviewer aims to understand the subjects, their meanings, and their experiences (Cooper & White, 2012). The researcher must first design the interview protocol (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The interview protocol comprised seven open-ended questions intended to encourage each interviewee to respond with relevant information regarding each question, analyzed, synthesized, and compared to the study's other participants' data. The interview questions were followed by probing questions (see Appendix B).

The interview questions (Appendix B) were grounded in the literature and the study's conceptual framework and sourced from peer-reviewed investigations conducted by the seminal authors identified in the conceptual framework. Two key concepts aligned with the purpose of the study, which was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent

management. This empirical investigation aimed to advance research and address a literature gap on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020) and contribute original qualitative data to the study's conceptual framework. A preliminary field test was conducted to analyze and determine whether the study's interview questions could produce data that dependably answer the central research question as part of a quality audit (Tracy, 2019).

The field test auditors included the Dissertation Committee Chair and two subject matter experts to determine the credibility, dependability, and applicability of the interview guide's questions and the interview procedures (see Golafshani, 2003). The three field test auditors—Dr. Daphne Halkias, the Dissertation Committee Chair; Dr. Darren Allen, consultant in organizational management and subject matter expert on talent management of millennial employees; and Dr. Marcos Komodromos, Associate Professor at Nicosia University, in Cyprus and subject matter expert on human resource management—have published peer-reviewed scholarly papers in the domain of millennial employee retention, human resources development and talent management (e.g., Allen & Halkias, 2020; Komodromos, 2020; Mosca et al., 2021; Nandan et al., 2018; Young & Komodromos, 2018). This field testing established trustworthiness and credibility in the study's qualitative findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Establishing a rigorous case study design can strengthen the transferability and trustworthiness of study results to extend theory (Stake, 2010). Transferability presents a

challenge for qualitative researchers in that it limits findings to given sample groups and their contexts (Klenke, 2016). The semistructured interview strategy was designed to facilitate a researcher's subjective understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena (Tracy, 2019). Hence, using field-tested, semistructured interview questions for this study was valuable in gaining a detailed understanding of the phenomenon being explored and gaining insight into each participant's experiences to transfer results to other contexts. To employ content validity and ensure the instrumentation captures the concepts it was designed to investigate by developing a sufficient representation of items grounded in the study's conceptual framework and theoretical foundation. I followed recommendations to strengthen the transferability of results by adding maximum variance to the sample's recruitment strategy regarding location, industry, and demographic groups (see Gentles et al., 2015; Poulis et al., 2013).

Finally, the interview protocol used prompts to facilitate conversations regarding the facts, such as "Can you give me an example of that?" and "Please tell me more about that." Probing questions may encourage examples and details of actions and behaviors from participants. When asking about specific details, probing questions are customized to the participants' specific dialogue (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

### ***Archival Data***

Archival data can be any information previously collected by others and is available for systematic study and a source of data collected within the case study design (Yin, 2017). I reviewed and annotated peer-reviewed scholarly papers from at least 300

scientific journals during this process. I gathered these archival data and created a database containing information from the popular press, professional IT reports, and social media sites. Archival data evidence from government and labor and statistics focused on issues of millennial employee retention in the private and public sectors. These reports were not substantive for the literature review but served as a data triangulation source to complement the semistructured interviews and reflective field notes.

### ***Reflective Field Notes***

The third instrument used to gather data from the research participants was assembling ethnographic field notes from semistructured interviews conducted via the Zoom platform (see Kozinets, 2019). Zoom allowed the researcher to employ participants in distant or remote locations, aiding in replication and eliminating contextual information from the interview engagement, which may have helped the researcher avoid personal reflexivity and maintain a significantly unbiased atmosphere (Gray et al., 2020). Reflective field notes may reveal more than observational field notes because some online data interactions are not recorded and kept while occurring. Field notes attained from online data provide the researcher's observations concerning subtexts, pretexts, contingencies, conditions, and personal emotions occurring throughout their duration online and in association with their online engagements and experiences (Morgan et al., 2017). This process may reveal critical details concerning online social interactions' functioning while making apparent and helping decode the explanations underlying

contextual actions relative to providing a more characteristic recording or description (Kozinets, 2019).

Developing ethnographic field notes prompts the data analysis process driven by a qualitative study purpose and research methods (Kozinets, 2019). This method has been used in similar studies such as that of Morgan et al. (2017), where a case study design using case study observational research methods is used to explore the research questions within real-world settings and drive a sequential order of data collection, data analysis, and synthesis (Yin, 2017)

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

An email was initiated to solicit potential participants via my social media network on LinkedIn during the recruitment process. In recent years, social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, or Twitter as a recruitment tool for human research are no more considered uncommon practices, given that social media has permeated almost every aspect of the lives of anyone who utilizes the internet (Gelinas et al., 2017). Social media is defined as a form of electronic communication where users create online communities to share information, ideas, messages, and other content, including videos with family and friends with whom they may share content and participate in social interactions and networking (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media usage to solicit potential participants provides an avenue for cheaper and faster recruitment methods, thus making social media a better choice and option compared to the traditional methods of posting a flyer, newspaper advertisement, sending invitation

letters, emails, and via word of mouth. Participants recruited from social media were nationwide.

Once prospective participants began to show interest in the study, I expected to receive emails requesting detailed information about their role as participants (see Tracy, 2019). Participants to be recruited would meet the following criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18 years, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees (see Robinson, 2014). The potential participants were recruited using purposeful, criterion, and snowball sampling strategies and screened as per the above criteria, and those that met the criteria were recruited as core participants for the study. I informed the participants that the created LinkedIn platform would be used for recruitment purposes only, and after the recruitment process was complete, all data and information would no longer be shared on the platform to jeopardize their privacy (see Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

With the approval of the interview application by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I requested the participants' contact information such as phone number, email address, Zoom address, including their availability for a phone conference. I then sent a recruitment letter to each participant through email, attaching the informed consent form. The informed consent form explained in sufficient detail the nature and purpose of the study, the risks and benefits of being a participant in the study, and the potential positive social change the study would bring to society. I used the informed consent form to explain that participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the study

at any time. The consent form also informed participants that their privacy would be guaranteed and secured through the confidentiality and anonymity process integrated into the research process. Once debriefed by the consent form, I requested the participants express their consent to participate by replying “I Consent” to the email designated for the study. Replying to the email marked the beginning of the participant’s interview process; I then prepared an interview timeline that highlighted the day and time each participant agreed to be conveniently available for the interview.

With criteria met, qualified participants became volunteers, signed the informed consent form, and returned the form to the researcher before the in-depth interview. After confirming each signed informed consent form, I explained to each participant if he/she has any remaining questions on all aspects of the research, such as signed consent, interviewing procedures, and qualitative research study objectives. I scheduled participants for the interview based on their availability utilizing the interview protocol (Appendix B).

I developed a set of minimum questions. The interviews were conducted via Zoom. The Zoom interviews were conducted from the researcher’s private home office and were prescheduled to ensure that the atmosphere was free from distraction. The interviews were recorded for excellent audibility, accuracy, and criticality during the interview (see Gray et al., 2020).

Researchers recommended between five to 10 participants for a qualitative study because a larger sample size can lead to weaker research results (Schram, 2006). The organization of the data and analysis process commenced, and the process continued until

data saturation was reached. Data saturation occurred when no new themes and no new data added substantive information was discovered with the research questions being posed to the participants (Charmaz, 2006). Saturation levels were reached when every interview question had been exhausted to the point where the participants began to give the same answers, and further interviews resulted in the emergence of the same themes (Tracy, 2019). At this point, the exploration of new data was no longer necessary (Yin, 2017).

The time established for the interviews was between 20 and 30 minutes. Upon completing each participant interview, I thanked the participants and explained that the recorded interview was transcribed verbatim into a Word document for their review, verification, and critical reflection. After collecting the data, I analyzed everything and categorized all similar information into categorical themes. Tracy (2019) maintained that qualitative data represent words from participant observation, field notes, interviews, journals, documents, and other literature; researchers must use thematic analysis to sort through all the information.

Qualitative researchers typically record opinions, feelings, and experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I conducted all the interviews and analyzed all the data. When researchers use semistructured interviews, it allows participants to express their ideas so that researchers obtain rich and direct information (Li et al., 2019). The interview was administered and recorded on the Zoom platform based on the agreed timeline.

Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019) said that categories, themes, and subdivisions, including subcategories and subthemes, are the analytical products of qualitative data

analysis. I paid attention to the participants' responses to the prepared semistructured questions while simultaneously recognizing when to throw in probing questions as necessary. Probing questions help to dig through the mud to discover the gold (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). If I had not achieved the required number of participants before data collection began, participants' solicitation through the snowball technique would have continued until enough participants were recruited to achieve data saturation.

After completing the first interview, there would not be any follow-up interviews. However, I thematically analyzed the recorded interviews and categorized the ideas. I provided each participant with a transcription of their interview and made comments and clarifications. I gave each participant one week to respond with any changes to the transcripts via email. The transcribed data will be kept confidential and destroyed after 5 years, keeping in line with the best practices for qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Yin (2017) indicated that researchers should maintain a database to manage the data gathered during a study that keeps the information orderly and preserves the data in a retrievable format. My database consisted of a reflective journal, audio interview, and all other documentation in password-protected files on my personal desktop computer. I saved all digital documents on my desktop computer in password-protected files and kept all printed documents and my reflexive journal in a folder in my home office filing cabinet. I will secure all data for 5 years to protect the confidentiality of the study participants, which is required of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). After 5 years, I will permanently delete the digital files and shred all printed documents.

## **Data Analysis Plan**

Qualitative data analysis emphasizes turning words from participant observation, field notes, interviews, journals, documents, and other literature, into data results and primarily through thematic analysis to sort through all the information (Yin, 2017). Case study data analysis is the organization of data sets and becoming familiar with the data by examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, and converging case study evidence to produce empirically based findings. Thus, qualitative data analysis guides the presentation of the context of participants' thoughts, emotional experiences, expectations, and the researcher's investigation, which further extends theory (Yin, 2017).

The most common problem researchers encounter in qualitative studies is being confronted with a considerable amount of data piled up unanalyzed during the data collection period (Maxwell, 2013). Yin (2017) suggested that the multiple sources of evidence as analyzed through triangulation allows a researcher to develop "converging lines of inquiry" where several different sources lead to the same finding (p. 127). Triangulation will result in findings that are supported by multiple sources of evidence. Hence, in this study, and as the research proceeded, I simultaneously conducted data collection and analysis. Researchers should maintain a database to manage the data gathered during a study that keeps the information orderly and preserves the data in a retrievable format (Guion et al., 2011).

Coding helps separate data into themes to easily organize and compare different sources. According to Miles et al. (2014), coding involves labeling data units with a code summarizing the actual meaning. The data analysis allowed me to identify emerging

themes and patterns that help explain the central research question of how public sector managers describe how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. When the emerging themes were categorized, findings emerged to better understand public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees.

The research setting is a physical, social, and cultural site where a researcher conducts a study and studies the participants' natural settings (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). I prepared a detailed description of the research setting before data analysis began, which helped me make sense of meaning during the interpretation of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Documentation and understanding of the conditions under which a study occurred will boost the study's repeatability or reproducibility if another researcher conducts the study under a similar setting (Goodman et al., 2016). I developed the codes that were grounded in the conceptual framework. I connected the result of the data analysis with the central research question and concluded so that anyone could check the entire research process with clarity that will lead to the conclusion.

Data analysis needs to be approached rigorously when applying any five analytical techniques—pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis for case study research (Yin, 2017). This study applied rigor and adopted patterns matching logic that addresses my case study's "how." Pattern matching occurred when the predicted pattern was compared with the empirical pattern. I predicted the study's findings by critical propositions from the literature review and my

knowledge of technology adopted through my professional training. The empirically-based pattern was the pattern of the findings revealed from data analysis.

Maxwell (2013) wrote that the essence of coding in qualitative data analysis is not to count items but to “fracture” data by rearranging texts to compare items within the same category. Codes are used to capture words and phrases with the same meaning, and the categories connect them. I utilized the descriptive coding method (Saldaña, 2016) as the primary analytical technique for this study. The descriptive coding method symbolically assigns meanings to data segments, providing an inventory of words or phrases for indexing and categorizing data (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) recommended the descriptive coding method for novice qualitative researchers who are still learning to code qualitative data.

I used manual coding to develop common codes, phrases, and words within the participants’ responses. I applied content analysis techniques for the primary data. Identifying codes in the main content through in-depth interviews remained my priority. After identifying the codes, I started creating all the categories that the identified codes fell under. I explored patterns of similarity or difference among themes generated by the analysis. I used the pattern-matching technique followed by triangulation (Yin, 2017).

To validate my findings, I compared the findings with different researchers’ findings with similar studies (Stake, 2010). Discrepant cases are data out of congruence with the pattern or explanation emerging from the data analysis (Stake, 2010). Analyzing, interpreting, and reporting discrepant cases is necessary as it broadens, revises, or confirms the researcher on the patterns that emerge from the data analysis while

strengthening the study's credibility (Maxwell, 2013). Reporting the case study was the final step of a case study research (Yin, 2017). I reported the outcome of the case study by using thick descriptive narratives and presenting a holistic picture of the public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is the researcher's confidence in their findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced criteria for determining the trustworthiness of qualitative research and emphasized the dependability of data regarding reliability. Dependability in qualitative research refers to data stability over time; therefore, it evaluates the quality of the data collection, data, and theory generation undertaken in a study (Guba, 1981).

### **Credibility**

Credibility is seen as confidence in the study's truth, and findings are always considered the most crucial criterion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While the primary researcher is involved in qualitative research as a profession, the researcher does not have a personal agenda or personal "axes to grind," which could skew their ability to represent and present fieldwork and data analysis in a trustworthy manner (Miles et al., 2014). Connelly (2016) stated that internal validity is similar to credibility in qualitative research. For a researcher to establish credibility for his/her study, triangulation, prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, and member checking should be the adopted

techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, I used triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking to achieve a credible study.

### ***Triangulation of Data***

Researchers obtain data triangulation through reliable findings by gathering data from multiple sources (Yin, 2017). The use of multiple sources as evidence supports the quality of case study results. Triangulation can take several forms in qualitative research but employs multiple methods to allow the consistency of the findings for comparison (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) said that researchers create confirmability so readers can confirm that, given the same data, they might make the same conclusions. Researchers increase confirmability by analyzing the data and presenting interpretations grounded in the data and not based on personal preferences and viewpoints (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), methodical triangulation, data triangulation, investigator triangulation, and theoretical triangulation are the most common triangulation used by researchers. Methodical triangulation is mainly used to ensure consistent findings while applying different data sources from the same methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Investigator triangulation is also the use of multiple researchers or analysts in one study, and lastly, theoretical triangulation brings about many different theories to frame a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study to understand how organizational context challenges in public sector

agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: (a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and (b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management.

In this study, I used methodological triangulation to triangulate data obtained through the Zoom interview method with reflective data obtained from the field observation method and data obtained from the archives. In the journal, I recorded subjects each participant discussed and placed the ideas into categories and sub-categorical themes to support the trustworthiness of findings and make suggestions for further research (Guion et al., 2011; Houghton et al., 2013).

### ***Prolonged Engagement***

Prolonged engagement involves spending enough time in the field to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural setting in which a phenomenon is being studied, including the participants involved in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I developed an in-depth understanding of how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees through prolonged engagement. Prolonged contact enhances credibility and trust in a study, as the researcher becomes so immersed in the study that the context and settings generate findings that become clearer and more appreciated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### ***Member Checking***

Also known as participant validation, member checking involved the technique of taking the entire written narrative back to the study participants and asking the

participants to check, review, verify, and confirm their responses to the research questions in helping the researcher to establish validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One consistent response from member checking was satisfaction in seeing that what they discussed was reasonably consistent with other participants' views and recommendations. By seeking confirmation from study participants on the analysis, I ensured that participants' views were well represented. Member checking helps the researcher to understand the participants' responses to the interview questions completely. The most common downside of member checking was that not all the participants remembered verbatim their responses to the interview questions after the interview. The researcher truly understands the participant's actual perception and truth during the interview through member checking. Comparing the member-checked data with the information reviewed in the organizational documents was essential to verify data alignment.

### **Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative research occurs when the study establishes evidence that its findings apply to other contexts, situations, and participants. Thus, the researcher needs to establish enough evidence that the research context and assumptions can be accessible to another researcher in another research setting (Burkholder et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This concept is equivalent to *the* quantitative researcher (Yin, 2017). The assurance of transferability is critical to my study because it contributes to the management field by understanding public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The study results informed

public sector leadership and policymakers to how today's complexity in public sector context challenges and the public sector's outdated human resources policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). The established transferability adopted in this study is called a *thick description*.

### ***Thick Description***

Geertz (1973) posited that thick description allows the qualitative researcher to investigate and explore social practices using their specific contexts. In recent years introducing thick description has been well known for qualitative researchers (Stokes et al., 2016). With thick description, the researcher may provide more detailed information about the study, construct social and cultural experience patterns, and provide the platform for users of the transferable report to other contexts, settings, and people (Sergi & Hallin, 2011). In this study, I achieved transferability through a thick description of the whole research process, participants' contexts, settings, data samples, and the sampling method (Houghton et al., 2013; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

### **Dependability**

Dependability in the research process is known as the consistency of research findings over a period and whether they can be replicated by other researchers (Billups, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Dependability is indispensable to the study's trustworthiness. This study addressed the dependability by using an interview protocol, including member validations on the participant qualitative data. A reliable interview protocol is crucial in getting valuable qualitative data because an interview protocol

increases the interview effectiveness by ensuring the respondent presents comprehensive information within the allocated time. Member validations involve sending research data back to participants to confirm their accuracy (Billups, 2014). I thematically analyzed the recorded interviews and categorized the themes. I provided each participant with their interview transcription and interpretations of their data and then made comments.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is the last thing to do in qualitative research to establish the trustworthiness of a research study. It is through confirmability that the research findings can be verified to know that they were not gotten from the researcher's own acquisition of facts, understanding of ideas, application of principles but instead derived from the participants' narratives and other data sources for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The confirmability criterion brings about neutrality, impartiality, and the precision of the data (Houghton et al., 2013; Walker, 2012). Confirmability and dependability can be established simultaneously. I used an audit trail and reflexivity to achieve confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### ***Reflexivity***

Reflexivity involves self-awareness and analytic attention to the researcher's role while conducting a qualitative research study (Palaganas et al., 2017). Throughout this study, I kept a daily journal to reflect on my thoughts and document discoveries while focusing on responses from the participants' experiences through the research process (Ackerly & True, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I used a reflective journal and a labeling system to help me keep track of and understand all the qualitative data

(Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Ackerly and True (2019) referred to reflective journals as a way to help improve reflective thinking skills, where learners reflect on current learning.

### **Ethical Procedures**

As a prerequisite, research works must always strive to achieve and maintain ethical practices. I began the data collection process only after obtaining Walden University IRB approval. That is, I complied with every IRB requirement necessary to access the participants and the data for this study. Universities and other research entities create an IRB to review research studies involving humans and approve the research before any data collection can occur (Yin, 2017). It is incumbent on IRB to ensure that all participants involved in the study of human subjects are protected from being harmed or injured in any way during a study (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). Thus, paving the way for participants who do not understand the critical elements of the research process, such as the right to withdraw from the study, to know their rights as participants. The right to withdraw process allows research participants to evaluate the researcher's conduct and the research description provided in the informed consent process and is designed to minimize the incentive to withdraw and the number of withdrawal requests (Holm & Ploug, 2017).

With the IRB approval, I was issued an approval number for my study, I did the following: accessed the research site, reached out to participants, and collected data. The study required all participants to complete an informed consent document before the interviews could begin. Providing informed consent is one fundamental tenet in the ethical conduct of human research (Ioannidis, 2013). I was under the obligation to

achieve this through informed consent. Informed consent is a procedure where the participant in a study, having understood the research information, process, and risk, can voluntarily indicate a willingness to participate in the study. Researchers use an informed consent process to ensure ethical principles of respect for persons and that research participants are aware of the benefits and risks of the research to make an informed decision. I developed an Informed Consent Form and forwarded it to each participant to sign and return the form to me electronically via an email address designated for the study. The consent form served as an opportunity for the participants to ask me questions and clarify any study issues and processes. The participants could withdraw at any time by notifying me via email, telephone, or in person.

Researchers must be guided and follow the highest ethical standard by taking responsibility for the adopted research ethics for the study (Yin, 2017). Maxwell (2013) stated that research ethics involves but is not limited to all aspects of research design, ranging from research goals, research questions, validity, and methods. Additionally, it is incumbent on the researcher to reference other researchers' works to avoid plagiarism as part of the ethical obligation to observe and comply. I developed a trust relationship with the participants and addressed the participants' privacy and confidentiality of the views and perceptions in the study (Palys & Lowman, 2012).

The following is a list of the highlighted ethical actions taken to comply with the ethics of conducting human subject research:

1. I did not engage in pressure, undue influence, or motivation, such as offering value to get the research participants' involvement.

2. Participation was voluntary, and the participants were informed of their rights to withdraw unconditionally and at any time from the study.
3. I addressed anonymity by randomly allocating pseudo names in place of participants' actual names during data collection and analysis.
4. I provided a pseudonymous report copy to the external researcher to secure the participants' identities in an audit inquiry.
5. I addressed confidentiality by signing off on consent letters with a promissory guarantee to individual participants that their personal information and identities would be protected from the public. The demographic form did not ask for participants' exact age but a range of age to ensure the participants' critical demographic information privacy.
6. I addressed the ethics of respect for participants by involving the participants while scheduling the interview. The participants had the right to dictate the interview date and times most convenient for them.
7. I addressed the ethics of no psychological harm to the participants by being psychologically meticulous while asking probing questions. I did not probe participants' personal life experiences but probed participants' professional life experiences to bring depth to the study.
8. I informed the participants about the interview protocol and the data collection devices such as Zoom and voice recorder and asked them to express their concerns.
9. I obtained approval from the IRB before data collection began.

10. I asked the participants to validate their responses as recorded in the transcript before data processing.
11. I let the participants access a copy of the research paper before publication to confirm that their privacy was genuinely covered in the report.
12. I dealt less with hard files of data and more with electronic files. Where hard files are involved, such as interview notes, print photographs, audio, or video files, I securely locked them away in a cabinet that I can only access. All electronic files are password protected and encrypted.
13. I will erase, incinerate, and destroy all hard and soft data collected after 5 years and inform the participants accordingly.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 of this study explained the rationale for using a qualitative single case design over other qualitative designs such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and narratives and substantiated the rationale for adopting the research design. As a qualitative researcher, I discussed my function as a research instrument, observer, recorder, and qualitative data analyst rather than as a participant in the study. I identified the potential for research biases that may arise from the study and discussed how such biases would be moderated through reflexivity.

The single-case design was grounded into an appropriate methodology for selecting and recruiting the participants using the criterion-based snowball strategy and collecting research data from multiple sources (interview, archival data, and reflective field notes). The interview protocol was grounded in the study's conceptual framework:

a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management. This empirical investigation aims to advance research and address a literature gap on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020) and thus aligning with the purpose of the study.

The data analysis plan was developed to produce empirically based findings using Yin's pattern matching technique. Pattern matching examines whether the empirically-based pattern matches or deviates from the predicted pattern. The credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of data results were addressed to support the study's overall trustworthiness. As prescribed by the IRB, I presented the ethical actions necessary to conduct research involving human subjects. Chapter 4 will provide a detailed description of the research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the study results.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study with embedded units was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. Meeting the purpose of this exploratory study may address the literature gap in the public management literature on how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020). The specific management problem is that public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees remain poorly understood (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

I conducted 15 in-depth face-to-face individual interviews with managers working in public sector agencies within the United States. While the minimum number of interviews conducted in a case study is five participants (Schram, 2006), I continued past this number until I reached data saturation at 15 participants, with similar data noted from several participants and especially Participants 11–15 (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Qualitative interview transcripts data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify themes. I triangulated the interview data themes with data from reflective field notes and archival data to develop future directions for research and professional practice (Farquhar et al., 2020).

Scholars suggest that public sector research has been skewed exclusively towards employee reactions to talent management, while organizational context issues in academic talent management research have been largely ignored (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). Organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that may incite employee turnover and undermine talent management initiatives, especially millennial employees, have yet to be addressed by public management scholars and may be significant to theory extension in the talent management literature (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). To address this literature gap, research is needed to draw upon public sector managers' views on the organizational context challenges that undermine innovative talent management implementation with their millennial employees (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Ledoux, 2020).

To answer the research question, I followed recommendations in the extant literature that updated empirical data are needed to inform management practices and extend theory on defining organizational context challenges in the public sector and their implications for talent management implementation (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). This chapter describes the research setting, participant demographics, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and evidence of trustworthiness, and I present the study results. I conclude the chapter with a summary and transition to Chapter 5.

### **Research Setting**

In recruiting potential participants for this study, I browsed through the LinkedIn professional network platform, my professional network, and through snowball sampling (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I searched for and reviewed potential participants'

profiles using purposeful criterion and snowball sampling strategies to determine if they met the following inclusion criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18 years, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees (Robinson, 2014). After participants were prequalified as meeting the inclusion criteria, I contacted the participants via email to ask for their voluntary interest in taking part in the study.

The procedure for the interview, the interview method, and the interview duration were all explained in detail to them. Once participants showed interest, they were sent the Recruitment Letter (see Appendix A) and the Informed Consent Form. The recruitment letter contained a section to validate the potential participant's eligibility to participate based on the inclusion criteria set up for the study. After receiving an email reply from the participants with "I consent," I set up the interview date and time that best worked with the participant's schedule.

I ensured that all potential participants read the Letter of Recruitment and understood the inclusion criteria. Each participant was aware that their identities and the confidentiality standards practiced during the data collection process would be protected. A copy of the interview protocol was messaged to each participant who requested to review the interview questions before starting formal data collection. Once the participants read the Informed Consent Form and replied via email, "I consent," I set up the interview date and time that best worked with the participant's schedule.

I began with 10 potential participants initially sourced from the LinkedIn platform. Eight of them agreed to participate, while two initially declined to respond to the recruitment letter, later citing scheduling issues due to work overload and personal reasons. The eight participants who agreed to participate in the study were expected to be primary sources for further recruiting through the snowballing technique. However, after interviewing this first group, I found out that only five had further suggestions for participant referrals while the others did not have any further suggestions. I, therefore, began a second round of searching for participants through my LinkedIn connection list and contacted more potential participants through social media sources other than LinkedIn.

I began the interview process by collecting audio-recorded interview data via the Zoom audio-only platform with the participants' consent. Each of the interviews was scheduled to take between 20 and 40 minutes, in which I sought to gather information-rich conversational evidence on the seven semistructured interview questions used for the study. The shortest duration for an interview was 20 minutes, and the longest was 40 minutes.

All the interviews were conducted in private settings indicated by the participants, and there was no evidence of prolonged interruptions, disruptions, or participant fatigue. Each interview was planned to last for 30–60 minutes, time enough to gather information-rich conversational data that Tracy (2019) recommended for semistructured interviews. During the interviews, I took reflective field notes and jotted down the participants' responses that most aligned with my observations.

## Demographics

Each of the 15 participants was a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities for millennial employees of the United States. The participants met the study's inclusion criteria, were knowledgeable, had experience directly related to the research topic, and provided valuable in-depth research data. The participants' experience in middle management roles ranged from 3 to 20 years in the U.S. public sector, and no known relationship existed. None of the participants were within the infant or older population age categories. There were no vulnerable participants, as required by Walden's IRB. All the 15 participants were graduates of higher education institutions, each having a minimum of a bachelor's degree.

The demographic of the data collected included participants' age, gender, years supervising millennial employees, position, remote, onsite, or hybrid, generational cohort at the workplace, and educational level. The given pseudonyms were in an XY format, such that X was the generic letter P standing for *participant*, and Y was the numerical identifier assigned to each participant. The complete demographics are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

## Participants' Demographics and Characteristics

Participant	Gender	Age	Type of public agency	Years of public sector managerial experience	Total employees in your public sector agency	Years supervising millennial public sector employees
Participant 1	Female	50s	Transportation	20	70000	28
Participant 2	Female	50s	Transportation	20	70000	20
Participant 3	Female	50s	Transportation	5	60000	12
Participant 4	Female	30s	Transportation	4	70000	4
Participant 5	Male	50s	Transportation	16	70000	15
Participant 6	Female	40s	Transportation	4	70000	20
Participant 7	Female	30s	Education	13	50000	20
Participant 8	Female	50s	Transportation	13	50000	13
Participant 9	Male	50s	Transportation	4	70000	25
Participant 10	Female	20s	Transportation	6	60000	7
Participant 11	Female	30s	Transportation	6	70000	10
Participant 12	Male	60s	Transportation	6	70000	6
Participant 13	Female	50s	Transportation	7	70000	30
Participant 14	Female	40s	Transportation	7	50000	15
Participant 15	Female	40s	Transportation	17	80000	17

### **Data Collection**

The University of Walden University IRB (IRB Approval No 09-16-21-0973967 and expires on September 15, 2022) approved to conduct this qualitative study. All participants were required to indicate their consent by typing “I Consent” in reply to my email prior to data collection. Data collection began with the first interview on September 16, 2021, and continued until October 10, 2021, when the 15th participant was interviewed. Data collection consisted of semistructured interviews, reflective field notes, and archival data. The interviews consisted of seven open-ended questions to explore the participants’ lived experiences.

### **Initial Contact**

I began with soliciting potential participants by utilizing the LinkedIn professional platform and my professional network. Participants for this case study were screened with the following inclusion criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18 years, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention with millennial employees. I began with 10 potential participants initially sourced from the LinkedIn platform. Eight of them agreed to participate, while two initially declined to respond to the recruitment letter, later citing scheduling issues due to work overload and personal reasons.

The eight participants who agreed to participate in the study were expected to be primary sources for further recruiting through the snowballing technique. However, after interviewing this first group, I found out that only five had further suggestions for

participant referrals while the others did not have any further suggestions. I, therefore, began a second round of searching for participants through my LinkedIn connection list and contacted more potential participants through social media sources other than LinkedIn.

The eight prequalified participants in this study were contacted via email to solicit their voluntary participation. With criteria met, qualified participants became volunteers, signed the informed consent form, and returned the form to the researcher before the in-depth interview. The participants met the following criteria: (a) adults over the age of 18 years, (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possess knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees. After the participants confirmed their interest in participating in the study by replying “I consent” to my email, explaining all aspects of the research to them, including the interviewing procedures and the qualitative research study objectives. I then sent a recruitment letter to each participant through email, attaching the informed consent form.

Once debriefed by the consent form, I requested the participants express their consent to participate by replying “I Consent” to the email designated for the study. Replying to the email marked the beginning of the participant’s interview process; I then prepared an interview timeline that highlighted the day and time each participant agreed to be conveniently available for the interview. I scheduled participants for the interview based on their availability utilizing the interview protocol. According to the IRB directives, I recruited about 15–20 participants for the study. I continued the recruitment

until I reached data saturation at 15 participants, with similar data noted from several participants.

### **Interviews**

I began the interview process by collecting audio-recorded interview data via the Zoom audio-only platform with the participants. Zoom allows a researcher to employ participants in distant or remote locations, aiding in replication and eliminating contextual information from the interview engagement, which may have helped me avoid personal reflexivity and maintain a significantly unbiased atmosphere (Gray et al., 2020). Each interview began with gratitude to the participant for their time, energy, and resources to assist me with the study. I immediately followed by explaining the procedure for the interview, the interview method, and the interview duration in detail to them and any terminology used.

All the interviews were conducted in private settings indicated by the participants, and there was no evidence of prolonged interruptions, disruptions, or participant fatigue. The Zoom interviews were conducted from the participant's private home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I adopted the usage of the Interview Protocol to increase the interview effectiveness by ensuring the respondent presented comprehensive information within the allocated time while ensuring consistency in the interview process for all 15 participants. In some instances, probing and follow-up questions were adopted for participants who provided scanty information to give an in-depth answer.

I paid attention to the participant's response to the prepared semistructured questions while simultaneously recognizing when to throw in probing and follow-up

questions, as necessary (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The adopted primary data collection tool used in the study was a semistructured interview based on open-ended questions. The interview questions were drafted to evoke answers to understand the participants' meanings and experiences (see Allen, 2018).

The interviews were based on seven semistructured questions grounded in the conceptual framework listed in the literature review or Chapter 2 to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The minimum number of interviews conducted in a case study is five participants (Schram, 2006). I continued past this number until I reached data saturation at 15 participants, with similar data noted from several participants and especially Participants 11–15 (see Halkias & Neubert, 2020). It took about three weeks for the entire interview process, which included but was not limited to variance in response time from participants consenting and scheduling interviews due to work overload before all 15 interviews were completed. This process also included recruiting potential participants and following up with them after the interviews with the transcripts.

### **Reflective Field Notes and Journaling**

During the interviews, I encouraged the participants to explain their experiences as clearly as possible and asked further questions using Microsoft Outlook to preserve communication. All my interviews were recorded on a password-protected recording device. Thus, the recording enabled me to pay attention to the participants' insights or responses by taking important notes to ensure the information's depth and avoid

redundancy. I used reflective field notes to note the participants' responses to questions. Additionally, it simplified the verbatim transcription of participants' reflections for practical data analysis. There was no influence in responding to the interview questions and planned data collection.

### **Transcript Review**

The information gathered from the interviews was all downloaded from Zoom into Transcription Services which was filed in a secure location, and I will maintain the content for no less than 5 years as required by Walden University. It was Rev Transcription Services (Rev.com) that I used to transcribe all the interviews that were audio recorded. After a successful transcription of the data for each participant, participants received the opportunity to review the written transcript and provide feedback. Microsoft Word Document was used in editing the transcript. I organized the interviews on one long Word document, which showed all the responses to each interview question. Each participant's name was removed and replaced with pseudonyms (P1, P2, P3....., P15).

All seven questions were listed and saved in a password-protected file using the respective pseudonym names. Participants received the opportunity to review the written transcript and provide feedback via email, called member checking. Member checking involved the technique of taking the entire written narrative back to the study participants and asking the participants to check, review, verify, and confirm their responses to the research questions in helping the researcher to establish validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

One consistent response from member checking was satisfaction in seeing that what they discussed was reasonably consistent with other participants' views and recommendations.

The transcribed data were sent to each participant by email to confirm that the transcription of their interview responses represented their views during the interview, called member checking. I had no participants respond, requiring no adjustments to their transcripts. All data for this study were secured in a password-protected computer and storage backup device. I am the only individual with the passwords that access participants' data.

### **Data Analysis**

After completing the transcript review process for the transcribed data with all participants, I began data analysis. I adopted a descriptive coding strategy Saldaña (2016) recommended to assign meaning to segments of raw data collected and used the emerging words from the descriptive coding for categorization and thematic analysis. The raw data transcribed and confirmed through the member-checking process presented a detailed account of public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees.

The interview data for the case study drove this in-depth, futuristic, and holistic investigation and provided industry-related data not present in the scholarly literature (see Yin, 2017). Thus, this study provided detailed information on the unexplored area of knowledge on how organizational context challenges in the public sector undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. A sample of 15 public

sector managers was the embedded units within the case. I used the inductive approach as part of my analysis strategy for this study to generate themes and extend theory (Saunders et al., 2018). I applied thematic analysis to the whole set of interview data in identifying, examining, and recording meaningful patterns and codes within these data to explore meanings and describe the social reality of the 15 participants through their experiences in public sector agencies. The thematic analysis process supported me in developing themes to answer the study's central research question (Saldaña, 2016).

I used Microsoft Excel software to manually hand-code the participants' transcribed interview responses as recommended in Saldaña's (2016) descriptive coding method. I assigned meanings to raw data segments and generated lists of words, phrases, or both for indexing and data categorization. I adopted the ground-up data analysis strategy (Yin, 2017) and generated codes from the transcribed data (Boyatzis, 1998). I utilized an inductive analysis approach to code the data without attempting to make the data fit into a preexisting coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. In any qualitative study, thematic analysis is considered data-driven when the codes are generated inductively (Braun et al., 2019). The coding of words and phrases combined with data triangulation brought about an immediate recognition of patterns, while detailed attention to similarities and differences in the pattern strengthened the study's quality criteria of dependability (Yin, 2017).

For analyzing my study's data, I utilized Yin's procedure for pattern matching. Thematic analysis is the core process of pattern matching, where I compared the empirically-based patterns with the predicted pattern, examined the matching range,

offered rival explanations where necessary, and interpreted the result. I used manual coding to split up or categorize common codes, phrases, and words within the participants' responses. I first identified codes in the main content through in-depth interviews and then created categories from the identified codes. I continued with the content analysis from primary and secondary data using a pattern-matching technique by exploring patterns of similarity or difference among themes emerging from the analysis (Yin, 2017). I classified several themes using coding analysis to identify codes connecting data collections and combining themes across multiple data sources such as journals, interviews, and archival data (Saldaña, 2016). The triangulation of data across multiple sources of evidence ensures rigor in evaluating the confirmability of data collected and improves the study result's trustworthiness (Yin, 2017).

The next step was to compare various themes from the data analysis generated through the lens of multiple sources (interviews, field notes, and archival data) and compare the findings with the literature review's theoretical propositions. This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study to understand how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management.

The study's conceptual framework was grounded in Sparrow and Makram's (2015) talent management architecture framework that relied upon several non-HR

bodies of knowledge in its development, including human capital theory (Becker, 1993), where the costs of developing and retaining talent should be viewed as investments on behalf of the firm; and expectancy theory (Lawler III & Suttle, 1973) that explains employees make choices to self-invest if there are signals about an organization's growth (Boudreau & Lawler, 2014). The alignment of this conceptual framework to my data analysis findings was a foundational element in interpreting how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees.

Though manual descriptive coding may be considered time-consuming, it helped me delve deeper into the data and gain a deeper contextual understanding of my participants' experiences (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014). As a novice researcher, I found the descriptive manual coding method more suitable for a deeper understanding of the study results. This data analysis was structured following Yin's (2017) five phases: assemble, collect, interpret, disassemble, and conclude the data. The multiple data sources were interviews, reflective field notes, and archival data. This methodological triangulation enhanced the dependability of the results.

The five coding categories grounded in the conceptual framework and the 15 themes gleaned from the thematic analysis are listed below:

**Coding:** Public sector policies undermine talent management with millennial employees

**Themes:** 1) noncompetitive salary/compensation packages, 2) lack of talent management policies for career advancement, 3) no promotion and succession planning policies

**Coding:** Internal organizational context challenges of the public sector

**Themes:** 1) misalignment between public sector culture and millennials' work values, 2) disrespectful treatment of younger employees, 3) outdated technology and knowledge transfer systems

**Coding:** External organizational context challenges of the public sector

**Themes:** 1) reduced public funding, 2) political influence on the work culture, 3) no performance evaluation system geared to promotion

**Coding:** Successfully applied strategies for millennial talent retention in the public sector

**Themes:** 1) mentorship and cross-training programs, 2) recognition programs, 3) flexible hybrid/work from home policy

**Coding:** Changes needed in public sector policy to retain millennial talent

**Themes:** 1) well-trained managers, 2) update the archaic salary and tuition reimbursement policies, 3) develop a more progressive work culture

The five conceptual coding categories are grounded in the study's conceptual framework that focused on aligning with the purpose of the study to understand how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management. This empirical investigation aimed to extend theory and professional practice knowledge on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that

undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020).

Both concepts forming this study's framework (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020) concerning talent management within public sector agencies were grounded in Sparrow and Makram's (2015) talent management architecture framework that was developed by its authors to be applied within several non-HR bodies of knowledge including value creation, the resource-based view (RBV) perspective of the firm, dynamic capabilities, and global knowledge management. Sparrow and Markram grounded their talent management architecture framework in human capital theory (Becker, 1993), where the costs of developing and retaining talent should be viewed as investments on behalf of the firm; and expectancy theory (Lawler III & Suttle, 1973) that explains employees make choices to self-invest if there are signals towards growth with the context of a specific organizational structure.

Presenting case study research findings can be completed in several presentation styles depending on the study purpose, the specific data analysis technique, and the nature of the reading audience (Boyatzis, 1998). In this case, my results presentation goal was to give voice to a previously unheard population through sample participant quotes, representative of conceptual coding categories and themes (Saldaña, 2015). The following table describes the finalized coding categories and themes of this single case study with embedded units, along with respective examples of participant quotations (Table 2) to represent each of those categories and themes.

**Table 2***Coding and Theme Examples*

Participant	Interview Excerpt	Coding Category	Theme
Participant 4	“Harsh and outdated policies (especially in comparison to private sector); slow pace in career movement and salary increases; and rigid hierarchical structure that normalizes discounting/dismissing the voices of less experienced employees, make retaining millennials in the public sector challenging.”	<i>Public sector policies undermine talent management with millennial employees</i>	1) Noncompetitive salary/compensation packages; 2) Lack of talent management policies for career advancement; 3) No promotion and succession planning policies
Participant 5	“The biggest problem in retaining millennial employees is the opportunity to grow within their respective career path in a timely fashion.”		
Participant 2	“The culture in government often breeds an environment with very little flexibility and/or space for millennials to explore career pathways for their success. All too often government requires lots of years of experience for promotions and titles above entry level which locks out younger candidates who are interested.”		
Participant 15	“Non-competitive pay. millennials see they are able to work in the private sector for higher pay, more immediate benefits, and less hassle.”		

Participant	Interview Excerpt	Coding Category	Theme
Participant 1	“Lack of pathways for promotions and growth. Mean-spirited culture. Low wages.”	<i>Internal organizational context challenges of the public sector</i>	1) Misalignment between public sector culture and millennials’ work values; 2) Disrespectful treatment of younger employees; 3) Outdated technology and knowledge transfer systems
Participant 3	“The policy for promotions, process for educational reimbursement and managers who need training on how to lead people (not just manage tasks). The list of frustrated millennials goes on and on”		
Participant 5	“My agency is currently losing millennial employees due to recent changes in the organizational culture, internal structure of the workplace and budgetary constraints. Many millennials left the agency in exchange for employment in the private industries.”		
Participant 4	The perceptions associated with “city worker” are not controlled and so for professional sovereignty, millennials may choose to not have their career associated with government. Working for government is local; often millennials want to explore different states or different countries for work/life.”	<i>External organizational context challenges of the public sector</i>	1)Reduced public funding, 2) Political influence on the work culture, 3) No performance evaluation system geared to promotion

Participant	Interview Excerpt	Coding Category	Theme
Participant 10	“Political influence which subjects the agency to the whim of various leaders & forces us to constantly make changes (including some that are not beneficial or necessary), cuts which reduces the amount of career opportunities and salary growth, and public scrutiny which creates harsh policies for all to follow when there are only a few people who take advantage of certain situations.”		
Participant 13	“There are ways to save money and to maybe redirect that money towards employees and paying employees well, but tradition in government that has not been a priority. I think now post COVID, you are looking at a lot of things that people are doing to just try to hire people because they cannot find talent.”	<i>Successfully applied strategies for millennial talent retention in the public sector</i>	1)Mentorship programs, 2) Cross training and apprenticeship programs, 3) Recognition programs 4) Flexible work schedule and a permanent hybrid work from home/office policy.
Participant 2	“In our organization we have different modalities of work, such as outdoor, telework, in office, online group meetings. Our organization also offers long-term benefit programs such as pension, additional Investment options for retirement preparation.”		

Participant	Interview Excerpt	Coding Category	Theme
Participant 1	“Public agencies should institute a better benefit for employees (especially millennials) and their families. Example may include but not limited to employees’ discounts, vacation and personal time, flex time, 401k and or 457 plus pension plans, and tuition reimbursement.”		
Participant 11	“Create an integrative workplace to bridge the gap of millennials and the older workforce. Also, encourage cross training to keep the excitement and increase healthy competitive environment for employees to thrive.”	<i>Changes needed in public sector policy to retain millennial talent</i>	1) well-trained managers, 2) update the archaic salary and tuition reimbursement policies, 3) develop a more progressive work culture
Participant 5	“I would recommend establish a career path with the intent of giving millennial a proverbial future. I would also recommend a change in work environment that allows millennials more flexibility in the work schedule i.e., flex time.”		
Participant 10	“Providing more competitive salaries or eligibility for promotions internally. Making these things easier to get rather than having people jump through hoops to get a raise or a promotion.”		

The frequency of occurrence varied for several themes so that some cases presented themes that were more prominent than others. These themes will be defined and discussed in detail in the Study Results section of this chapter.

## **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

Credibility in a study is seen as confidence in the study's truth, and findings are always considered the most crucial criterion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I demonstrated that the presented findings represent the phenomenon's accurate picture by staying on task with the questions at hand and not offering personal assumptions aided in the credibility of these data (Maxwell, 2013). The concept of credibility is analogous to internal validity in quantitative research (Connelly, 2016). Triangulation, prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, and member checking were adopted techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, I used triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking to achieve a credible study.

The first step in achieving credibility was by informing the participants of their rights and voluntary choice to participate and their confidentiality regarding the study, which allowed me to start the interview and get in-depth responses from the participants. All the interviews were conducted in private settings indicated by the participants, and there was no evidence of prolonged interruptions, disruptions, or participant fatigue. Secondly, participants received the opportunity to review the written transcript and provide feedback via email, called member checking. Member checking involved the technique of taking the entire written narrative back to the study participants and asking the participants to check, review, verify, and confirm their responses to the research questions in helping the researcher to establish validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One

consistent response from member checking was satisfaction in seeing that what they discussed was reasonably consistent with other participants' views and recommendations.

Thirdly, prolonged engagement, saturation, consistency, digital recording, and audit trail enhanced data conclusion credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2017). I developed an in-depth understanding of how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees through prolonged engagement. Fourth, ensuring the inclusiveness of the participants who met the inclusion criteria of being adequately representative of the population of (a) adults over the age of 18 years, with (b) 3 years minimum experience as a public sector manager with supervisory responsibilities, and (c) possessing knowledge regarding talent management practices and retention of millennial employees (Robinson, 2014), also helped improve the credibility of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2017). The participants met the study's inclusion criteria, were knowledgeable, had experience directly related to the research topic, and provided valuable in-depth research data.

### **Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative research occurs when the study establishes evidence that its findings apply to other contexts, situations, and participants. Thus, the researcher needs to establish enough evidence that the research context and assumptions can be accessible to another researcher in another research setting (Burkholder et al., 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The assurance of transferability is critical to my study because it contributes to the management field by understanding public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies

undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The study results informed public sector leadership and policymakers to how today's complexity in public sector context challenges and the public sector's outdated human resources policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). The established transferability adopted in this study is called a thick description.

I achieved transferability through a thick description of the whole research process, participants' contexts, settings, data samples, and the sampling method (Houghton et al., 2013; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). With thick description, the researcher may provide more detailed information about the study, construct social and cultural experience patterns, and provide the platform for users of the transferable report to other contexts, settings, and people (Sergi & Hallin, 2011). Secondly, the interview questions were drafted from the literature on the conceptual framework to evoke answers to understand the participants' meanings and experiences that provided a high probability of transferability (Allen, 2018). Finally, I utilized the LinkedIn professional platform and my professional network to recruit participants and Zoom for the participants' interviews for this study (Yin, 2017).

### **Dependability**

Dependability in the research process is known as the consistency of research findings over a period and whether they can be replicated by other researchers (Billups, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The importance of dependability is essential to the study's trustworthiness, as the research audience must be ensured that if other researchers

review the data, they will arrive at the same conclusion. This study addressed the dependability with an interview protocol, including member validations on qualitative participant data. In qualitative studies, the data collection procedures, analysis, and interpretation leading to the findings are reliable and dependable.

In achieving dependability, I developed a step-by-step methodology approach during the data collection and analysis, including the activities and detailed descriptions. An audit trail was created to document every action and decision during the data collection process. I thus, documented a detailed account of the research process from data collection to the research findings, which eases the study replication, thereby helping establish the study's dependability. I kept track of the progress made with the audit trail while anticipating the remaining actions. Along with the audit trails, I maintained the chain of evidence for effective alignment between each step of the research process and associated the results to the research question (Yin, 2017).

Again, to guarantee dependability, all recordings, transcriptions, and journal notes clearly articulated the process and provided optimal transparency for the data collection process throughout this research and the data collection process. Lastly, I used an interview protocol that was successfully field-tested by Dr. Daphne Halkias, Dissertation Committee Chair; Dr. Darren Allen, consultant in organizational management and subject matter expert on talent management of millennial employees; and Dr. Marcos Komodromos, Associate Professor at Nicosia University, in Cyprus and subject matter expert on human resource management. All the field test experts have published peer-reviewed scholarly papers in the domain of millennial employee retention, human

resources development, and talent management (e.g., Allen & Halkias, 2020; Komodromos, 2020; Mosca et al., 2021; Nandan et al., 2018; Young & Komodromos, 2018). This field testing established trustworthiness and credibility, enhancing the study's dependability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is the last thing to do in qualitative research to establish the trustworthiness of a research study. It is through confirmability that the research findings can be verified to know that they were not gotten from the researcher's own acquisition of facts, understanding of ideas, application of principles but instead derived from the participants' narratives and other data sources for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The confirmability criterion brings about neutrality, impartiality, and the precision of the data (Houghton et al., 2013; Walker, 2012).

In ensuring confirmability, after the interviews were completed, I transcribed participants' answers and sent a transcript to each of them for certification and confirmation, which is a participant check procedure. Validation of responses by participants is a sound practice to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This practice helped confirm that the answers were acceptable and correct for the participants as they were spoken and transcribed.

### **Study Results**

A specific purpose of the study guided the research strategy for this single case study with embedded units (see Yin, 2017). Meeting this exploratory study's purpose may address the literature gap on organizational context challenges facing meso-level

public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020). My study collected data to answer the central research question “how do public sector managers describe their perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees?”.

Public sector managers’ perceptions on this topic were revealed in this case study, with patterns and themes developed from the raw data collected and subsequent data analysis by using thematic analysis. Upon completing the thematic analysis, I compared themes from the data generated from multiple sources (interview, field notes, archival data) and the theoretical proposition on my topic of study generated from the literature review (see Yin, 2017). This study was framed by two key concepts that focused on aligning with the purpose of the study to understand how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.’s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and b) Kravariti and Johnston’s (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management.

The alignment of the conceptual framework to the overall findings was essential in interpreting the results to capture a deep understanding of how public sector managers describe organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies that undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. Comparing the findings with similar studies helped me validate the other studies’ findings. Data out of

congruence with the patterns emerging from the data analysis are called *discrepant cases* (Stake, 2013). Analyzing, interpreting, and reporting discrepant cases is essential to broaden, revise, or confirm the patterns emerging from the thematic analysis to strengthen the study's credibility. I found no discrepant cases to report within the case study's findings.

The final step of case study research is to report the results (Yin, 2017). I used detailed, thick descriptions to present the case study's outcome. My goal in presenting my results was to formulate a comprehensive picture of how participants provided data to answer the research question. Without following one specific reporting procedure, the presentation of qualitative results of a thematic analysis should provide a logical, coherent, concise, nonrepetitive account of the data within the identified themes (Boyatzis, 1998; Yin, 2017). I applied rigor to my data analysis procedures by adopting Yin's (2017) pattern matching logic that addressed the "how" of my case study research question. The goal of pattern matching in my study was to examine whether the empirically-based pattern matches or deviates from the predicted pattern. Yin (2017) mentioned that if the empirical and the predicted pattern appear similar, it indicates the original explanation's acceptability, strengthening the case study's internal validity. If the empirically-based pattern and the predicted pattern do not match, there are rivals, and the researcher must explain how to address the rival. (Tracy, 2019).

Although there is no best way to analyze qualitative data (Maxwell, 2013), I chose an analysis option that fits the available data. In this section, I present the 15 themes that emerged from the thematic analysis and add first a summative statement

captured from the participants' responses to the interview questions. Supportive summative statements on each theme are represented by direct quotes from the participants that define each theme's complex perspectives. Each theme was relevant to the purpose of the study and directly related to the research question. Table 2 reflects the interface between the participants' responses and the emergent coded themes.

Each theme's response listed below is direct quotes from the participant's voice to provide contextual, detail-rich data and enhance confirmability of the study results. Interview responses were carefully analyzed, with self-reflection represented through my reflective field notes during data collection. I used triangulation of findings from reflective field notes and archival data to ensure that the results emerged from participant-driven experiences.

### **Thematic Analysis and Theme Presentation**

#### ***Noncompetitive Salary/Compensation Packages***

This theme refers to public sector policy on work-life balance and salary/benefits that undermine millennial talent management. Generations may not be different in the factors that drive retention, with work-life balance and salary/benefits being the two most essential retention factors (Younas & Bari, 2020). The process through which an organization develops isolating mechanisms to protect its talent resources from being lost to other competitors (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Participants discussed that public sector organizations could not provide competitive salaries and compensation packages that the private sector organizations offer to millennial employees. Meaning, a public sector organization sets up employee salaries and benefits by either matching or exceeding what

the private sector can offer for industry-standard compensation for a particular job or title. According to Participant 9:

Competitive salary structures with immediate reward/merit compensation packages that motivate and inspire employees. Not that compensation is the only factor, but people must be placed in a position to connect with and be motivated by their intrinsic employment wants and needs. Knowing the fruits of your labor.

Participant 14 stated:

The rules and regulations that govern the public sector does not favor millennial employee who think that the system does not respect and trust them as much as they do trust and respect the system. Simply put, bureaucracy does not fit well with millennial employees. Salary and compensation package are one of the challenges that public agency face in attracting and retaining millennial employees. Public agencies pay structure is based on longevity and not based upon experience and suppressed and place millennials in a box and limits the talent and expertise of people that would join the public sector.

### ***Lack of Talent Management Policies for Career Advancement***

This theme refers to people management and development policies to attract, retain, integrate, and develop talents for public sector organizations. Thus, public sector organizations can achieve their institutional objectives by identifying, attracting, nurturing, and retaining talent through an effective talent management strategy. The lack of an effective talent retention strategy may lead to work hindrance, loss of organization-specific knowledge, loss in production and productivity, decreased performance, and

substantial financial loss (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). With updated human resources policies, public sector organizations thrive with millennial employees, leading to high employee retention as they understand and meet their needs (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). Participants discussed that public sector organizations need to meet the increasing expectations of the employee experience by having an engaged workforce with the right skills in place. A talent management strategy helps achieve this as it drives business results. According to Participant 6:

I am a big in mentoring and leadership development of staff. So, I think that is a big problem in the public sector because we do not take the time to develop our employees from a personal level. So, we can send people to safety training. We can send them to Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, but really there is not a path for them to develop as just people and learn how to be good leaders and really gain that work ethic and experience. So, to me, that is, a big gap and I pride myself in being able to do that and help my employees learn and grow and develop, but not everyone does that.

Participant 15 stated:

Our talent management is somewhat passive. Millennials are basically left to devise their own strategies for career development independently and proactively. They must build their own network and seek out opportunities they believe would contribute to growth and success in or outside the organization.

### ***No Promotion and Succession Planning Policies***

This theme refers to governments' indirect or direct policy and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies that do not further or encourage the progress or existence of career growth or business continuity after the company's most influential people move on to new opportunities and retire or pass away. Talent management should be tailored to support millennials' career aspirations by developing them to become committed to the public sector organization's philosophy (Wickramaaratchi & Perera, 2020). Unlike baby boomers, life-long employment is not perceived to be more critical to millennial employees; instead, they prefer public sector organizations to provide career opportunities and challenging, meaningful assignments (George & Wallio, 2017). Participants discussed that better succession policies for public sector organizations would help integrate millennials with their current dispensation. For instance, cross-training and in-house recruiting or promotion will pave the way for millennials to advance their careers. According to Participant 2:

The culture in government often breeds an environment with very little flexibility and/or space for millennials to explore career pathways for their success. All too often government requires lots of years of experience for promotions and titles above entry level which locks out younger candidates who are interested.

Participant 12 stated:

Top two talent retention strategies we are hoping to implement is first, work with all new hires starting with the management level. Once orientation is complete have a coach or ambassador attached that they can connect with during their

employment to discuss anything from employee discounts to development and career planning-promotional opportunities. The second is to work with the senior management team and department heads to identify current employee's skill set along with required skills needed for succession planning. This second strategy will assist in succession planning across the board throughout the agencies. If it works, we always have a pool of qualified and ready candidates to position and place.

### ***Misalignment Between Public Sector Culture and Millennials' Work Values***

This theme refers to the difference between public sector culture and that of the work ethics and values of millennial employees at the workplace. Recognizing this differentiation is crucial for organizations to retain their millennial workforce. Participants expressed that branding or organizational reputation is considered a mechanism for attracting millennial employees (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). For talent management implementation to benefit the public sector and attract millennial employees, activities should be aligned with the organization's strategic objectives of public value to engage current and potential staff (Garrow & Hirsh, 2018). The overarching theme is that millennial employees want more than a job. They want engagement, alignment with personal beliefs and values, organizational involvement, and a chance to challenge the status quo. Participant 8 described:

Management being open to their ideas and giving them opportunities to use them.

The culture is often very rigid. Sometimes they are more open with interns and more encouraging, but once they are hired, I think their career stays at a standstill

for a long time. They usually get opportunities outside the organization. The style of communicating is very top-down. They do not have much collaboration. millennial employees do not like autocratic cultures.

Additionally, Participant 11 stated:

The lack of cordiality/understanding between the old folks and the young once. Sometimes the older generation considers the millennials to be too obnoxious as the vice versa thinks they are out of touch with some their policies. The high demand in manpower, with more competitions among other organizations to outperform in employee packages such as salary. Highly skilled workforce compared to before making the bargaining power much more towards prospective employees and existing employees more attractive to employers.

### ***Disrespectful Treatment of Younger Employees***

This theme refers to any public sector organization's policy deemed to millennial employees as unprofessional, inappropriate, rude, unpleasant, disturbing, or offensive to them. The values, preferences, and demands of millennial generations entering the workplace can lead to misunderstandings and communicational concerns that influence employee productivity, motivation, and engagement, resulting in employee retention and turnover (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Successful talent management implementation in a public sector organization helps identify that an organizational change program provides an unparalleled opportunity for building a dynamic workforce (Glazer et al., 2019). Participants suggest that most public sector organizations' policies do not favor

the millennial employees who think that the system does not respect and trust them as much as they trust it. According to Participant 4:

The rigid hierarchical structure that normalizes discounting or dismissing the voices of less experienced employees makes millennials feel disrespected in the workplace at time. For instance, some entry-level millennial employees have expressed that senior level employees who they need information or input from ignore their emails or ask, “who is your manager?” before answering which makes it more difficult to complete tasks.

Participant 14 stated that:

Millennials are keenly aware that they lack work experience and know of the limitations it places upon them with respect to getting what they want. What millennials want is to have more opportunities. Public sector managers perceive millennial employees to be myopic, meaning that millennials do not understand the complexities of work.

### ***Outdated Technology and Knowledge Transfer Systems***

This theme refers to traditional organizational roles that typically do not address either knowledge management or the cross-functional, cross-organizational process by which knowledge is created, shared, and applied in public sector organizations. Public sector organizations have begun to look at various strategic ways in which to improve their outdated human resource tactics and policies which undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). Public sector managers must be willing to

revamp their learning and development models to meet the expectations of this fastest-growing generation in the workplace (Pandita & Ray, 2018). Participants suggest that public sector organizations must update their policies or procedures to accommodate millennial employees. Participant 4 stated:

Harsh and outdated policies (especially in comparison to private sector) for example limited telecommuting options – limited only to when the company needs employees to continue work from home instead of providing the option at all times, no maternity/paternity leave which makes family planning more difficult, etc...

Participant 10 also stated:

Outdated technology (fax machines still in use), unwillingness of the organization procedures to move into the 21st century, “this is how we’ve always done it” mentality; millennial employees do not feel this is their “era” of working- things that seem like quick wins take longer to implement because of bureaucratic hold ups.

### ***Reduced Public Funding***

This theme refers to a government (federal, state, or another publicly funded agency) policy that places a budgetary constraint on public sector organizations. A government’s regulatory and trade policies can significantly determine how businesses operate, especially international trade, taxation, and regulations (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Participants argued that reduced public funding or budgetary constraint for the public sector organizations have a severe effect on the organizations’ attraction, retention

of millennial employees. Participant 4 mentioned: “Budget cuts which reduces the amount of career opportunities and salary growth, and public scrutiny which creates harsh policies for all to follow when there are only a few people who take advantage of certain situations.” Participant 5 also stated that: “My agency is currently losing millennial employees due to recent changes in the organizational culture, internal structure of the workplace and budgetary constraints. Many millennials left the agency in exchange for employment in the private industries.”

### ***Political Influence on the Work Culture***

This theme refers to behavior that influences the work culture of the public sector, affecting the organization’s attraction and retention of millennial employees. The changes in the organizational structure, the political situation in the country and region, the implication of the third parties in the organization’s life, and millennial employees’ behavior and views all contribute to the attraction and retention of millennial employees within the organization (Clarke & Scurry, 2020). Participants established that when millennial employees perceive organizational politics at a high level, it indicates their dissatisfaction with the job. Participant 4 mentioned: “Political influence which subjects the agency to the whim of various leaders & forces us to constantly make changes (including some that are not beneficial or necessary).” Additionally, Participant 6 stated:

Where people are quitting their jobs because they see their self-worth. So, in terms of how politicians see it, you know, they have different motives, and they have different priorities that do not always value people and do not always value employees. They value more of the trends or whatever is going on maybe, and

they make their decisions based on either popularity or what is most desirable for their constituency group outside of their employee base. So, employees do not really have a voice in decision making process that relates back to something that I mentioned in terms of including their feedback. And what they would want to see.

### ***No Performance Evaluation System Geared to Promotion***

This theme refers to the lack of a well-structured process for public sector organizations to provide millennial employees feedback on their job performance and formally document that performance with the sole aim of promotion. With millennials, public sector managers' talent management implementation supports fair performance management procedures that measure quality and quantity and are likely to identify each employee's talent in everyday tasks (Cocu'ová, 2020). Participants established that the absence of performance evaluations geared for promotion would erode millennial employee engagement as there will be no clarity regarding performance and promotional plan. They will become confused about how their work is contributing to the organization's mission. According to Participant 6:

Lack of Performance Evaluations – Currently we do not have a performance appraisal system in place for new employees. Millennials want to be told that they are doing a great job and without a performance management system in place, we do not have an ability to provide feedbacks or financial rewards for good performance. Also, there are no systems in place to identify hi performing millennials.

Participant 3 stated:

The policy for promotions, process for educational reimbursement and managers who need training on how to lead people (not just manage tasks). The list of frustrated millennials is far too long for me to mention. Amazing and very talented people have left the organization because of the list below.

### ***Mentorship and Cross-Training Programs***

This theme refers to a developmental relationship whereby a millennial employee is a pair with an experienced employee to serve as mentors to oversee the career and development of the millennial employee within an organization. When managers adopt talent management practices such as mentoring, strategic leadership, and social media, it will retain millennials (Younas & Bari, 2020). Participants established that public sector organizations should support the development of the professional and interpersonal competencies of millennial employees. Again, organizations should encourage exploring ideas and risk-taking in learning. Participant 11 mentioned: “Mentorship programs really exposes the millennials to existing and older employees who can share on a personal and professional level how it really feels staying on for long and where they might possibly be soon.” Additionally, Participant 14 stated:

Again, managers should create an integrative workplace to bridge the gap of millennials and all the older age group at the workplace. This can be done with cross training and shadowing to keep the excitement and increase healthy competitive environment for employees to thrive.

### ***Recognition Programs***

This theme refers to the recognition of millennial employees for their performance at the workplace by their employers. It is used to manage the impression of an employer of choice, a symbolic gesture, a distinctive employer offering that promises better opportunities and a long-term career (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020).

Participants established that the recognition program encourages the mentee to take reasonable risks under the circumstances, resulting in the millennial employee's professional and personal development. Participant 1 stated: "Create a Bonus/Incentive-Based Performance evaluations so that high performing young employees can be rewarded." Participant 14 mentioned:

Performance review or an employee rewards system might be on the right track to attract and retain this generation of employees. This is a way of setting up forums for millennials to have a voice in the company is key.

### ***Flexible Hybrid/Work From Home Policy***

This theme refers to a location-flexible arrangement whereby public sector organizations allow employees to combine onsite and offsite work. Millennials see their jobs as a direct extension of their lives, and therefore managers must provide the appropriate flexibility and accountability to the generation that helps ensure collaboration across all levels in the organization (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). Participants report that when organizations allow their millennial employees to have a flexible hybrid/work from home, they accomplish multiple objectives, aiding workers in managing work-life

balance, and efficiently and effectively fulfilling their organizational needs and requirements, leading to their attraction and retainment. According to Participant 6:

Millennials employees should be afforded a better work-life balance. That said, I am of a firm believe that many public sector opportunities can provide that, however, this is missing from my agency. The older generation has a problem adapting to the younger/millennial generation in our organization which has caused some friction in our work environment.

Participant 7 stated: “Flexible schedules - employees can choose their own schedule, and work locations making it extremely convenient.”

### ***Well-Trained Managers***

This theme refers to public sector managers who guide, address, and help grow the workforce needed to take on the challenges that lay ahead for the organization. When a manager is trained effectively, it is better to educate and train up millennial employees. Kravariti and Johnston’s (2020) findings established that talent management is essential for all sectors, but the issue is particularly significant for public sector managers. Public sector managers must be willing to revamp their learning and development models to meet the expectations of this fastest-growing generation in the workplace (Pandita & Ray, 2018). Participants recount that a well-trained public sector manager will communicate clearly and efficiently with their staff about what is needed to get the job done. By being clear about what is required, millennial employees will know who is assigned what and when it is due. Participant 9 described that:

Seasoned public sector employees versed with rules and regulations do not respond favorably to millennials that do not respect and trust the process; bureaucracy does not fit well with millennials. When millennials meet with resistance, it does not last long; either it is resolved, or they seek alternate employment opportunities.

Participants 11 stated: “Create an integrative workplace to bridge the gap of millennials and the older workforce. Also, encourage cross training to keep the excitement and increase healthy competitive environment for employees to thrive.”

### ***Update the Archaic Salary and Tuition Reimbursement Policies***

This theme refers to public sector organizations’ outdated human resources policy on salary and tuition reimbursement, which undermines talent implementation leading to high millennial employee turnover. Improper implementation of talent management by public sector managers can lead to work hindrance, loss of millennials, production, and productivity, decreased performance, and substantial financial loss (Kamalaveni et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2019). The public sector’s outdated HR policies undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). Participants recount the importance of public sector organizations updating their archaic salary and tuition reimbursement policies to reduce millennial employee turnover, leading to a high retention rate. According to Participant 6:

We cannot offer higher salaries; we cannot compete with a lot of the private sector companies with those base salaries. Another is we do not offer bonuses or

any stock options. Again, that is all having to do with money, but a lot of places offer bonuses, sign on bonuses and, other things. We also do not offer like loan repayments, student loan, repayments, or other perks.

Participants 9 stated:

Competitive salary structures with immediate reward/merit compensation packages that motivate and inspire employees. Not that compensation is the only factor, but people must be placed in a position to connect with and be motivated by their intrinsic employment wants and needs. Knowing the fruits of your labor.

### ***Develop a More Progressive Work Culture***

This theme refers to a workplace that can boast a friendly working environment and a culture of open conversations among all employees. All generations desire ethical work environments that promote fairness in scheduling and assignments, allowing occasional mistakes to be made without punitive action (Squyres, 2020). For the public sector to better retain and develop a millennial talent pipeline, public sector managers should identify high-potential millennial employees and fast track them for specialized leadership development based on a personalized strategic development plan for each millennial identified as a high potential individual (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Cocul'ová, 2020). Participants expressed that a more progressive work culture gives millennials the confidence to know that they are not alone and that other employees are always willing to improve their skills and techniques. It builds reassurance and corrects imperfections. Participant 1 stated:

I believe that millennials would like to have more work-life balance and they want to do work that meaningful. I believe that many public sector opportunities can provide that, but our agency has moved away from programs like the Mentoring Program that really helped to engagement millennials. Also, the values of millennials differ from many of the folks in the Baby Boomer and Generation X populations, this has caused some friction in our work environment. The older generation has a problem adapting to the younger/millennial generation in our organization.

Participant 4 described:

The rigid hierarchical structure that normalizes discounting/dismissing the voices of less experienced employees makes millennials feel disrespected in the workplace at a time. For instance, some entry-level millennial employees have expressed that senior-level employees whom they need information or input from ignore their emails or ask, “who is your manager?” before answering, which makes it more difficult to complete tasks.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 4, I presented the result of the thematic analysis for 15 participants, followed by the synthesis of the results to answer this study’s central research question: How do public sector managers describe their perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees? Five conceptual categories with 15 themes emerged from the findings of this single case study with embedded units after the study was grounded in (a)

Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management and (b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management.

The thematic analysis provided rich data on the experiences of participants. The five codes that emerged are as follows: (a) public sector policies undermine talent management with millennial employees, (b) internal organizational context challenges of the public sector, (c) external organizational context challenges of the public sector, (d) successfully applied strategies for millennial talent retention in the public sector, and (e) changes needed in public sector policy to retain millennial talent.

The 15 themes that emerged from the data analysis process include the following: (a) noncompetitive salary/compensation packages, (b) lack of talent management policies for career advancement, (c) no promotion and succession planning policies, (d) misalignment between public sector culture and millennials' work values, (e) disrespectful treatment of younger employees, (f) outdated technology and knowledge transfer systems, (g) reduced public funding, (h) political influence on the work culture, (i) no performance evaluation system geared to promotion, (j) mentorship and cross-training programs, (k) recognition programs, (l) flexible hybrid/work from home policy, (m) well-trained managers, (n) update the archaic salary and tuition reimbursement policies, and (o) develop a more progressive work culture.

The study's trustworthiness was evidenced using scholars' seminal methods (Stake, 2013; Yin, 2017). The single case study results were comprehensively analyzed and interpreted within the conceptual framework. Chapter 5 will present the findings'

interpretations, describe the study's limitations, and recommendations for further research. Finally, I will discuss the implications of the findings to social change, theory, and practice and conclude.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. To address the study's research problem and purpose, I used qualitative data collected from multiple sources of evidence, including interviews, field notes, and archival data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Multiple data sources were triangulated to establish the trustworthiness of the study's results (Fusch et al., 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Using qualitative research methods aligned with the single case study design, I gathered data that reflected the participants' perceptions of organizational context challenges in their public sector. Additionally, the interviews allowed for further elaboration through supplementary problems of the participant's experiences with the phenomena under study to emerge unexpected data (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012).

Using a qualitative single case study with embedded units approach allowed me to give voice to public sector managers on the specific nature of how public sector policies and context challenges fuel a high turnover of millennial talent in this section. This study was framed by two key concepts that focus on aligning with the purpose of the study to understand how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees: (a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and (b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent

management. Both concepts' frameworks (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020) concerning talent management within public sector agencies were grounded in Sparrow and Makram's (2015) talent management architecture framework that relied upon several non-HR bodies of knowledge in its development, including value creation, the resource-based view (RBV) perspective of the firm, dynamic capabilities, and global knowledge management.

Despite the numerous studies on how organizations develop talent management processes that meet their needs, there is a lack of empirical talent management research regarding the role of contextual issues in public sector management (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Neglecting contextual issues such as globalization, new technologies, socioeconomic and generational challenges may hamper public sector organizations from developing innovative talent management practices, negatively impacting millennial talent retention and competitive advantage (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). The public sector practice of sacrificing competitive advantage while placating politicians funding their agencies has resulted in a steady exodus of valuable millennial employees (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Naim & Lenka, 2018). The results of my study highlight how political influences undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover in the public sector and a sizeable loss of public funds (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

Using a single case study with embedded units design was beneficial in this study because it gave me the flexibility required to iterate and extend a theoretical model (Halkias & Neubert, 2020; Stake, 1995). New knowledge emerges from recognizing

patterns in the collected data and the logical arguments that underpin them (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Thematic analysis and data from face-to-face interviews with 15 participants revealed the following 15 themes: (a) noncompetitive salary/compensation packages, (b) lack of talent management policies for career advancement, (c) no promotion and succession planning policies, (d) misalignment between public sector culture and millennials' work values, (e) disrespectful treatment of younger employees, (f) outdated technology and knowledge transfer systems, (g) reduced public funding, (h) political influence on the work culture, (i) no performance evaluation system geared to promotion, (j) mentorship and cross-training programs, (k) recognition programs, (l) flexible hybrid/work from home policy, (m) well-trained managers, (n) update the archaic salary and tuition reimbursement policies, and (o) develop a more progressive work culture.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

This multiple case study's findings confirm or extend current knowledge in the discipline, with each case presenting examples from the literature discussed and critically analyzed in Chapter 2. In this section, I present the study's findings in the context of the coding categories that emerged from the data analysis. I compare these five categories with relevant concepts from the conceptual framework and the research from extant updated literature. I provide evidence from the 15 semistructured interviews to support how the study's findings confirm or disconfirm existing knowledge or extend it. The term "extension" refers to using multiple case studies to provide further evidence in developing a given theory (Eisenhardt, 1991). Extension studies, such as this multiple

case study, provide replication evidence and support extending prior research results by offering new and critical theoretical directions (Bonett, 2012). Theory extension from case studies represents a vital research strategy that may contribute theoretical insights on theorized phenomena that remain inadequately explored in the extant literature (Eisenhardt, 1991; Halkias & Neubert, 2020).

### **Public Sector Policies Undermine Talent Management With Millennial Employees**

Scholars indicate that a high level of millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of public funds result from the public sector's outdated HR policies that undermine valuable talent (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020). My study results confirmed that an updated HR policy in public sector organizations facilitates millennial employees' attraction, development, and retention. Millennial employees are willing to give their best at the workplace when they see that their organizations are constantly developing their skills and keeping control of planning their careers. Study participants confirm that public sector HR practices and policies should be tailored to support millennial employees' career aspirations by developing their skills and keeping control of their careers positively linked to their attraction and retention.

The study aligns with Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) and Younas and Bari's (2020) conclusion that public sector organizations need to look at the various strategic ways in which to improve their outdated human resource tactics and policies which undermine valuable talent, leading to high millennial employee turnover and a sizeable loss of funds. The study results extend knowledge based on Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) on how public sector policies undermine talent management with millennials due

to their unwillingness to revamp their learning and development models to meet the expectations of millennial employees.

### **Internal Organizational Context Challenges in the Public Sector**

Scholars indicate that organizational branding or reputation, culture, structure, governance, technology, strategic decisions, and vision are factors for attracting millennial employees (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). The context in which public sector organizations find themselves constraining and enabling them in specific ways gives them challenges and opportunities to implement talent management. My study results confirmed that public sector organizations must align their policies or procedures to accommodate millennial employees by retaining and attracting them. Unlike their private counterparts, public sector agencies are not as independent as their private sector counterparts because they lack the autonomy necessary to operate as an independent organization.

Study participants confirmed that the overarching theme is that millennial employees want more than a job. They want engagement, alignment with personal beliefs and values, organizational involvement, and a chance to challenge the status quo. This study extends Garrow and Hirsh's (2018) knowledge that talent management implementation benefits the public sector and attracts millennial employees by aligning the organization's strategy with millennial employees. The organizational identity of public sector agencies is primarily predetermined, leaving public managers fewer degrees of freedom in developing strategy and moving the organization in alternative directions.

### **External Organizational Context Challenges in the Public Sector**

Scholars indicate that the government's regulatory role, which includes but is not limited to taxation and trade policies, can significantly determine how businesses operate (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). The changes in the organizational structure, the budget allocation from the government (federal, state, or local) in the organization's life all contribute to the attraction and retention of millennial employees within the organization (Clarke & Scurry, 2020). My study results confirmed that reduced public funding or budgetary constraint for the public sector organizations have a severe consequence on the organizations' attraction, retention of millennial employees. When public sector organizations get budget cuts, this reduces the number of career opportunities and salary growth for millennial employees.

Study participants established that when millennial employees perceive organizational politics at a high level, it indicates their dissatisfaction with the job. This study extends knowledge based on Kravariti and Johnston (2020) that external context challenges faced by public sector managers affect decision-making in talent management. Thus, public sector managers' decisions tend to be governed by external forces such as environmental dynamism, leading to an organizational decline in performance and effectiveness.

### **Successfully Applied Strategies for Millennial Talent Retention in the Public Sector**

Many research studies indicate that when managers adopt talent management practices such as mentoring, strategic leadership, and social media, it will lead to millennials' retention (Younas & Bari, 2020). My study results confirmed the recognition

of millennial employees for their performance at the workplace by their employers. Public sector managers who guide, address, and help grow the workforce need to take on the challenges that lay ahead for the organization. Study participants confirm that the recognition program encourages millennial employees to take reasonable risks under the circumstances, resulting in the millennial employee's professional and personal development. A well-trained public sector manager will communicate clearly and efficiently with their staff about what is needed to get the job done. By being clear about what is required, millennial employees will know who is assigned what and when it is due. This study extends knowledge based on Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) findings that talent management is essential for all sectors, but the issue is particularly significant for public sector managers.

### **Changes Needed in Public Sector Policy to Retain Millennial Talent**

Scholars indicate that for the public sector to more effectively retain and develop a millennial talent pipeline, public sector managers should identify high-potential millennial employees and fast track them for specialized leadership development based on each millennial identified as a high potential individual (Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021; Cocul'ová, 2020). My study results confirmed that participants expressed that a more progressive work culture gives millennials the confidence to know that they are not alone and that other employees are always willing to improve their skills and techniques. It builds reassurance and corrects imperfections. This study aligns with Pandita and Ray's (2018) conclusions that public sector managers must be willing to revamp their learning and development models to meet the expectations of this fastest-growing generation in

the workplace. This study extends knowledge from the work of Kamalaveni et al. (2019) and Khan et al. (2019) on how qualitative research results may offer results that pinpoint how improper implementation of talent management by public sector managers can lead to work hindrance, loss of millennials, production, and productivity, decreased performance, and substantial financial loss.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher's method and personal biases related to the circumstances and the study are methodological limitations of qualitative research as identified by seminal methodology scholars (Tracy, 2019; Yin, 2017). In this study, specific factors may have also posed limitations. I purposefully selected study participants and also used the snowball sampling method. I recognized limitations that I could not control during the study, including conditions affecting results and conclusions (Tracy, 2019). My personal bias in the study circumstances and the public sector agency environment is a limitation of qualitative research.

When reviewing limitations that I believed may have influenced the results, I needed to clarify those factors in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study participants were purposefully selected given that the sample size was not initially attained; snowball sampling was then utilized. It was recognized that a small sample size might not necessarily be generalized to the larger population of public sector managers' organizational context challenges for talent management implementation with millennials. Purposeful and snowball sampling were used to achieve the minimum number of appropriate participants preferred by scholars to provide an information-rich

body of in-depth material pertinent to the study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). I collected data from the direct sources identified for this specific, qualitative study; therefore, the assurance of transferability of a study's inferences may not be conclusive (Stake, 2010).

I utilized the interview method approved by Walden University's IRB, which enabled the interview interactions to avoid contextual information and mitigate personal reflexivity. The audio-only communication in interviews has higher empathic accuracy rates while engaging in interactions and perceiving emotions in strangers' recorded interactions (Kraus, 2017). I conducted interviews for the current study using Zoom's audio-only format, which helped further mitigate bias that may have occurred had the interviews been face-to-face or in a video format on Zoom. Methodological triangulation and multiple data sources were also used to reduce possible bias in presenting the study's final results (Anney, 2014).

### **Recommendations**

The significance of a study includes the need to fill a theoretical knowledge gap and provide recommendations for future study, policy, and practice (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Public sector managers in this study provided first-person information on how their organizational context challenges undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. Managers in the private industry sector who are also facing millennial employee turnover issues may also benefit from the findings of this study, given today's millennial exit from the workplace due to the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. One of today's employers' significant challenges is re-engaging their

younger employees in a post-pandemic labor market. According to Field et al. (2021), the phenomenon of the great resignation is now in full swing for millennial employees in the public sector due to external and internal contextual challenges. Employees want empowerment and more favorable work conditions or are ready to move on. Today, leaders and organizations face unprecedented challenges from defining a new hybrid workplace, navigating supply chain disruption, and retaining exceptional talent amid the significant attrition.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Organizational context is significant when conceptualizing talent management strategies, yet current literature still calls for studies on public sector talent and talent management and a thorough investigation of contextual factors enabling or inhibiting its successful adoption by this sector (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020). Future researchers are encouraged to replicate the findings of this study using quantitative approaches to validate these findings from similar or different contexts. A quantitative approach allows for a broader study involving a more significant number of participants, enhances the generalizability of findings, and allows for greater objectivity and improved accuracy (Harkiolakis, 2017). Using a quantitative approach such as a survey to validate these findings will voice more public sector managers. Because my study was limited by location as a U.S.-based investigation, a quantitative approach using a survey and technology applications for global distribution may extend the findings beyond public sector agencies in the United States.

Researching organizational change in the public sector and the role of talent within the agile transformation process is greatly needed in today's labor market. Creating the right process for integrating talent and embracing a culture of change is critically important in today's volatile markets for public agencies to retain talent. An example of such research using a quantitative method is Bhat et al.'s (2017) research for measuring measured virtual team effectiveness using SEM (structural equation modeling). SEM is a multivariate statistical analysis technique used to analyze structural relationships. This technique combines factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and it is used to analyze the structural relationship between measured variables and latent constructs. Talent management researchers may consider this method because it estimates a single analysis's multiple and interrelated dependence.

According to "The 2021 Deloitte Millennial Survey", millennials are the least engaged generation in the workforce (Paiuc, 2021). More research is needed on how HR and talent leaders aim to develop agile organizations within their own contexts and equip individuals with agility and the importance of life-long learning to prepare them to face the future. More research is needed on how public and private sector managers can reinforce such capabilities to allow for growing intellectual capital, enabling younger employees to make a difference and add value to the organization and themselves (Spurk & Straub, 2020)

### **Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

HR/Talent managers must be lifelong learners. Millennial turnover in the public sector is a global talent retention issue. Future qualitative researchers willing to replicate

this research may also use different contexts such as project types or geographical locations. Such research will be useful in providing how findings differ under different contexts and across different regions and present diverse perceptions of public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. Finally, a layered approach to exploring and evaluating themes that emanated from my research may be considered a recommendation for future research to allow for the deconstruction of a theme's elements and analyzing each element in detail. Further recommendations for policymakers and practitioners within the public sector to strengthen talent management strategies for millennials employees are included in the Implications section of Chapter 5.

## **Implications**

### **Implications for Positive Social Change**

Today, public sector organizations operate in a complex environment that constantly changes demographics and a multigenerational workforce (Mosca et al., 2021). This study is important because it contributed to an under-researched area in the management field on how organizational context challenges in public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. The implications of this study to social change may inform public sector leadership on how the public sector's context challenge and outdated HR policies undermine valuable millennial talent (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Younas & Bari, 2020).

For public sector organizations to remain effective and efficient, they need to correctly address the challenges of keeping millennial employees (Glazer et al., 2019). Effective talent management with millennial employees in the public sector will result in the institutionalization of the desired change initiatives, giving the organization sustained competitive millennial employee's performance over time (Younas & Bari, 2020). Public sector managers must be willing to revamp their learning and development models to meet the expectations of this fastest-growing generation in the workplace (Pandita & Ray, 2018).

This study presented the voice of public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees and recommendations for invigorating the public sector with innovative human resource and talent management policies. Employee retention through effective talent management implementation is important in driving positive social change by curtailing the wasteful loss of taxpayers' money in financing public sector management through the development of a sustainable workplace with a younger, diverse workforce and their valuable attributes (Naim & Lenka, 2018; Younas & Bari, 2020).

### **Implication for Theory**

Whereas employee studies contribute to understanding the micro-level issues in talent management, a literature gap exists on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020). Kravariti and Johnston (2020) found that there is not enough research on talent

management implementation in public sector organizations, and this has led to the lack of critical analysis of the importance of talent management to the public sector and may be warranted if managers are eager to figure out ways of retaining valuable millennials employees. Although talent management research in the public sector has been ongoing, finding and retaining millennials for the public sector remains an issue for public sector managers. My study results address a literature gap in academic talent management research by giving voice to public sector managers on their organization's context challenges that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (see Sievert et al., 2020; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019).

Based on the current talent management implementation in public organizations, more research is needed on who and what should be considered talent and how public sector managers should train and develop these talents (Tyskbo, 2019). This study is significant to theory by extending scholarly knowledge within my conceptual framework on the organizational context challenges that undermine innovative talent management implementation with public sector millennial employees (see Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Ledoux, 2020). Theoretical implications of my study may contribute knowledge to the theories grounding my conceptual framework, namely Sparrow and Makram's (2015) talent management architecture framework that was built as an extension to human capital theory (Becker, 1993), where the costs of developing and retaining talent should be viewed as investments on behalf of the firm; and expectancy theory (Lawler III & Suttle, 1973) that explains employees make choices to self-invest if there are signals about an organization's growth (Boudreau & Lawler, 2014). Future researchers can

benchmark the findings of this research and the recommendation provided for future study to extend the conceptual framework of this study in a different or similar context using different geographical locations.

## **Implications for Policy and Practice**

### ***Employer Branding Strategy***

The public sector suffers from a wide range of public perceptions, including public employment not being rewarding and the focus of public organizations on catering to the needs of the older generational workforce. Little wonder then that the public sector has struggled to attract and retain the millennials. With public sector organizations' focus on attracting the emerging workforce, it is paramount that their leaders adopt a vibrant, credible, and relevant employer brand, making their agencies the ideal workplace for millennials. Generations may not be different in the factors that drive retention, with work-life balance and salary/benefits being the two most essential retention factors (Younas & Bari, 2020). Public sector organizations should set up employee salaries and benefits by either matching or exceeding what the private sector can offer for industry - standard compensation for a particular job or title. It is also imperative that they exemplify values consistent with the work values and career expectations of millennial talents it wants to attract, recruit, and retain.

### ***Employee Evaluation Processes***

Public sector organizations should adopt an adaptive culture that resonates with millennials. Millennial employees' work expectations are for their managers to give them instant feedback on their work. Feedback is essential because it helps track employee

performance and identify areas of improvement. Further, feedback serves as a tool for employee recognition. Public sector managers should provide meaningful real-time feedback to millennial employees, especially during coaching, mentoring, and training sessions. For feedback mechanisms to be effective, managers should give millennial employees real-time and corrective feedback to complement the traditional feedback system based on yearly employee evaluations.

### ***Succession Planning***

The tidal wave of Baby Boomer retirements necessitates adopting a robust succession planning strategy. Managers must promote and maintain transparent, fair, and attainable succession planning programs that enable them to identify millennial employees with the requisite managerial and technical skills and groom them for positions that need filling in the future. Adopting a robust career plan that clarifies the path to achieving professional goals may signal millennial employees that their most crucial extrinsic need for growth and success is being met. An effective succession planning scheme is a win-win for both the organization and the individual employees. Addressing millennials' desire for professional growth may keep them more motivated, engaged, and committed to the organization. Therefore, a robust succession planning scheme may be one of the useful recruitment tools for public sector organizations.

### ***Flexible Hybrid/Work From Home Policy***

Millennials see their jobs as a direct extension of their lives, and therefore public sector organizations should provide the appropriate flexibility and accountability to the generation that helps ensure collaboration across all levels in the organization

(Barkhuizen & Gumede, 2021). When organizations allow their millennial employees to have a flexible hybrid/work from home, they accomplish multiple objectives, aiding workers in managing work-life balance, and efficiently and effectively fulfilling their organizational needs and requirements, leading to their attraction and retainment.

### **Conclusions**

Millennials' turnover rate costs public organizations substantial financial loss (Younas & Bari, 2020). The scarcity of millennial employees to fill vacancies left by retired employees (Tafti et al., 2017) has exacerbated the challenges of public sector managers in talent management, including structural challenges and organizational contextual challenges. The purpose of this qualitative single case study with embedded units was to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with millennial employees. Semistructured interviews with open-ended questions were used to gain deep insights from the study participants (see Yin, 2017). The in-depth insight provided in the interviews provided themes that answered the central research question and aligned with the two key concepts which framed this study: (a) Gallardo-Gallardo et al.'s (2020) concept of contextualized talent management, and (b) Kravariti and Johnston's (2020) concept of generational factors influencing public sector talent management. My investigation's goal was to advance research and address a literature gap on organizational context challenges facing meso-level public sector managers that undermine talent retention that must be addressed in future theoretical and empirical research (Kravariti & Johnston, 2020; Sievert et al., 2020).

Scholars suggest that an increasing tendency in public sector research to focus on employee reactions to talent management marginalizes organizational context issues in academic talent management research (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2017; Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). The results of this study aligned with and extended the theoretical work of other scholars on how the organizational internal and external context affect talent management strategy in public sector organizations, playing critical roles in retaining much needed, talented millennials in public organizations (see Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017; Younas & Bari, 2020). Thus, public sector organizations can achieve their institutional objectives by identifying, attracting, nurturing, and retaining talent through the successful implementation of talent management. Millennial employee retention in the public sector is important in driving positive social change by curtailing the wasteful loss of taxpayers' money in financing outdated public sector policies and actions that only weaken the sector's performance goals (Naim & Lenka, 2018; Younas & Bari, 2020). Addressing the public sector's organizational context challenges as recommended in this study may strengthen and retain a younger and diverse workforce with valuable talent that can further help modernize the public sector.

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## Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Hello,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University, inviting you to participate in my research study.

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study with embedded units is to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with Millennial employees.

The study is important, as the findings may help public sector leaders understand public sector managers' perceptions of how organizational context challenges in their agencies undermine talent management implementation with Millennial employees. The public sector is considered the guardian of public funds collected by citizen's taxes. Employee retention through effective talent management implementation is important in driving positive social by curtailing the wasteful the loss of taxpayer's money in financing public sector management through the development of a sustainable workplace with a younger, diverse workforce and their valuable attributes

If you would be interested in being a part of this study, please review and return the signed consent form attached to this letter. If you would like to request additional information, you may reply to this email. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Solomon Djan (Researcher)

Ph.D. Candidate – Walden University

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in this interview process. The purpose of this qualitative, single case study with embedded units is to understand public sector managers' perceptions on how organizational context challenges in their public sector agencies undermine talent management implementation with Millennial employees.

### **Preliminary Actions:**

#### **Interviewer to participants:**

*Before we get started and ensure consistency among participants' interview responses, I would like to share the definitions of terms we may use within the interview process as they are defined within this study.*

**Public Sector:** This term refers to governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services.

**Talent management:** Talent management is an integrative process that involves attracting, integrating, and developing the labor market's best professionals.

**Organizational Context:** This term refers to the background or environment and attributes in which an organization operates.

**External organizational context challenges:** This term refers to external challenges such as environmental and market pressures which influence talent management implementation. External factors such as political, legal, cultural, and financial parameters are essential in implementing talent management in the public sector.

**Internal organizational context challenges:** This term refers to the internal structure of the workplace, organizational culture, and internal budgetary constraints, to mention a few factors that influence talent management implementation.

*If you should need clarification on any question's content, please feel free to ask me to explain responding. Periodically I may ask clarifying questions or encourage you to describe in more detail. You are invited to elaborate where you feel comfortable and decline when you do not have information to add.*

*Before we begin the interview, you must be comfortable in your location, and you feel free to participate without interruptions. Do you feel this description describes your setting at this moment?*

*May I begin the interview?*

Participant No: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Type of public sector agency \_\_\_\_\_

Years of public sector managerial experience \_\_\_\_\_

Total employees in your public sector agency \_\_\_\_\_

Years supervising Millennial public sector employees:

***For the sake of consistency in participants' responses, Millennials were born between 1981 and 1996. Thus, they are currently between 25 and 40 years.***

1. Please briefly explain the top two specific talent management strategies your public sector agency utilizes to retain Millennial employees.
2. Please briefly explain three of the main internal context challenges your public agency faces and how these relate to Millennial employee turnover.
3. Please briefly explain three of the main external context challenges your public agency faces and how these relate to Millennial employee turnover?
4. Please explain any successful retention strategies your public agency has to increase retention rates of Millennial employees.
5. As an experienced public manager, what do you think is the biggest problem retaining Millennial employees in the public sector?
6. As an experienced public manager, what changes would you recommend, if any, to decrease the turnover of Millennial employees in the public sector?
7. Is there anything else we have not covered that you think is relevant to talent management strategies to retain Millennial employees in the public sector?

**Prompts to facilitate conversations:**

*“Can you give me an example of that?”*

*“Please tell me more about that.”*

*Thank you for assisting me with this research study. I will contact you via email once the transcription from our interview is finalized. I will provide a summary of the interview, and I would like you to review the summary to confirm that I have captured the essence*

*of what you have shared with me. If any discrepancies are found, I will correct the interpretations.*

*Do you have any questions? Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.*