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Generational Cohort Membership and Career and Organizational Commitment Among Law Enforcement Officers

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Abstract

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by

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MPhil, Walden University, 2019

MA, The American School of Professional Psychology, 2012

BA, Youngstown State University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Career and organizational commitment are topics of interest in multiple fields, including

law enforcement. With the exodus and transition of generational cohorts, there is a need

to understand generational differences to address the recruitment, training, and retention

of officers. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between

generational cohort membership, career commitment, and organizational commitment

among law enforcement officers. Two theories were used for the foundation of this study:

Manheim's theory of generations and Super's developmental self-concept theory. The

study method was quantitative and the design, correlational. A survey containing

demographic questions and items from the Occupational Commitment Scale and the

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire was distributed to participating law

enforcement agencies in Ohio to assess officers' generational cohort membership. A two-

tailed logical regression analysis was used to examine the significance of the relationship

between generational cohort membership and career and/or organizational commitment

in law enforcement. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant

relationship between generational cohorts and career commitment and organizational

commitment in law enforcement in Ohio. In order to effectively recruit, train, and retain

the officers of tomorrow, administration must bridge the generational gap to enhance

officer functions and organizational culture as an effective work environment for all

generations for the future success of law enforcement in America resulting in positive

social change.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research to my brothers and sisters in blue, the men and women in law enforcement who protect and serve our communities every day. Thank you for your service. To those officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice, may your end of watch be forever honored. To those who will be the next generation of officers, you are our future in law enforcement. God speed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Career commitment, which is related to organizational commitment, is one of the most researched areas in empirical literature (Katz et al., 2019; Park & Jung, 2015). Generational differences have also been extensively researched (Stewart et al., 2017). With the emergence of the millennial cohort in a generationally diverse workforce, researchers with various perspectives and in multiple industries have turned their attention to career commitment and generational differences (Herachwati & Rachma, 2018). However, within the occupation of law enforcement, career commitment and generational differences has been under-researched.

Cain (2020) examined motivational factors for employment of different generations in law enforcement. In a study published in the same year, VanDyke (2020) examined learning styles of the millennial generation in law enforcement. Prior to Cain and VanDyke, Sharp (2016) examined job satisfaction in law enforcement according to generational cohorts. These studies laid the foundation for further research on the recruitment, training, job satisfaction, and retention of the millennial cohort in law enforcement. Specifically, more research is needed on career and organizational commitment and the differences among generational cohorts to determine any distinctions in the millennial cohort in law enforcement.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce this study by discussing existing literature on generational differences, career commitment, and organizational commitment in law enforcement. I will provide background information, state the problem and purpose of the study, present the research questions (RQs) and hypotheses,

and discuss the theoretical foundation and nature of the study. After defining key terms, I will discuss the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study before summarizing key points and transitioning to Chapter 2.

Background

Although research has been conducted on generational differences, organizational commitment, and career commitment from multi-industry perspectives, little research existed, specifically, on generational distinctions, specifically among the millennial cohort and pertaining to career commitment, in law enforcement (Cain, 2020; Sharp, 2016). There was a need for further research to address the recruitment (Cain, 2020), training (VanDyke, 2020), and retention (Sharp, 2016) of younger generations, specifically the millennial cohort, in law enforcement (Chevremont, 2019; Keenan, 2017; Skibba, 2018). Other scholars have noted the need for such research, as well.

For instance, in 2005, Haarr discussed the factors affecting the decision for new generation officers to "drop out" of the law enforcement field within the first 16 months. Jensen and Graves (2013) forecasted personnel issues for administrators beginning in 2020, focusing on the training, education, and professional development of younger generations in law enforcement. Favreau (2015) enumerated the anticipatory hurdles of recruiting and retaining the next generation of officers, the millennial generation, due to distinctions in personality traits, training efficacy, and communication styles. Sharp (2016) postulated that job satisfaction was generationally interdependent, emphasizing the importance of gaining insight into younger generations in law enforcement for the future survival and success of departments. Furthermore, Sharp urged the need to better

understand the millennial cohort—their traits, attitudes, desires, needs, values, goals, and expectations—and the interrelationships of such with career commitment in law enforcement. Keenan (2017) discussed the declining number of promising, new, young applicants for academies and agencies, stressing the growing prevalence and need to attract and retain the millennial generation in law enforcement. Skibba (2018) asserted the need for retention strategies specific to younger generations in law enforcement, focusing on the relevance of needs, drives, motivations, and expectations of the millennial generation. Chevremont (2019) provided recommendations for recruiting millennials through cultural change and organizational adaptation to the traits, norms, and mores of younger generations in law enforcement. Last, Cain (2020) noted the need for research on the personal and professional motivations of the millennial generation for entering into, and remaining in, law enforcement. Thus, there was an identified need for further research to address the recruitment, training, and retention of younger generations, specifically the millennial generation, in law enforcement. In order to accomplish this, research was needed on career and organizational commitment and the differences among generations to determine if there were distinctions thereof in the millennial cohort in law enforcement.

Problem Statement

Currently, there are four generational cohorts laboring in the U.S. workforce together (Cain, 2020; Dietrich, 2018; Hansen & Leuty, 2012; Hilal et al., 2017; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). According to researchers (Black-Beth, 2006; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Sharp, 2016), these cohorts consist of the Traditionalist generation (1927–

1945); the baby boomer generation (1946–1962); Generation X (1962–1980); and Generation Y, who are otherwise known as the millennial generation or "Gen Me" (1980–2000) (Jirasevijinda, 2018). By 2025, the millennial generation is predicted to account for 75% of the total workforce need (Lanza, 2019; Morrel & Abston, 2018; Njemanze, 2016). Conversely, according to the results of the 2018 Millennial Survey conducted by Deloitte Consulting, 66% of millennial participants intended to leave their current organization within the first 5 years, suggesting an excessively high turnover rate among the millennial generation (Morrell & Abston, 2018).

Research indicates that law enforcement administrators are encountering more problems today than in the past with the recruitment, training, and retention of future officers (Cain, 2020; Chevremont, 2019; Dietrich, 2018; Keenan, 2017; Sharp, 2016; Skibba, 2018; VanDyke, 2020). Beginning in 2020, members of the Traditionalists and baby boomers started to retire in greater numbers, while a transition of Generation X members into administrative positions was simultaneously occurring (Alan, 2020; Jensen & Graves, 2013; Sharp, 2016). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), the number of necessary employment positions was projected to grow by 5% between 2018 and 2028 (see also Hilal et al., 2017). Conversely, the number of applicants to state peace officer training academies has been declining, as well as the number of certified and commissioned graduates thereof (Cain, 2020; Keenan, 2017; VanDyke, 2020). Therefore, there is a critical need for the recruitment, training, and retention of millennial cadets and officers to ensure the survival of law enforcement agencies in the future (Cain, 2020; Chevremont, 2019; Hilal et al., 2017; Keenan, 2017; Sharp, 2016; Skibba, 2018).

Candidate supply has been shrinking because of a less qualified applicant pool; increased competition; uncompetitive benefits; organizational characteristics; and evolving generational traits, attitudes, and values (Catano & Hines, 2016; Hilal et al., 2017; Keenan, 2017; Sharp, 2016). Other factors include ongoing state mandates for education and training, legal liability concerns, and the scrutiny and high expectations of the public (VanDyke, 2020). The current relationship between law enforcement and the public is predicted to have negative long-term consequences on the recruitment and retention of cadets and officers in the future (Marier & Moule, 2019; Nix et al., 2015, 2018; Wagner, 2019; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). In 2015, the President's Task Force on the 21st Century Policing noted the critical importance of hiring the most qualified people for the future success of law enforcement agencies, in spite of impediments to doing so (Favreau, 2015; Hilal et al., 2017; Marenin, 2016). Therein lay the problem for administrators: the recruitment, training, and retention of the millennial generation in law enforcement (Alan, 2020; Cain, 2020; Logan, 2018; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). To address this problem, further research needs to be conducted to decipher generational differences and any distinctions among the millennial cohort, specifically in regard to career commitment in law enforcement (Alan, 2020; Cain, 2020; Dietrich, 2018; Logan, 2018; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study, which was correlational in design, was to examine career and organizational commitment among generational cohorts to determine any distinctions thereof among the millennial cohort in law enforcement in Ohio.

Currently, there are four generational cohorts laboring in the U.S. workforce together (Dietrich, 2018; Hilal, Densley, & Jones, 2017). However, the transition of the sizable millennial generation into law enforcement positions illustrates the importance of addressing recruitment, training, and retention issues of millennial officers (Cain, 2020; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). The participants included three cohorts of sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The independent variable (IV) for this study was cohorts: baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation). Nominal data were obtained through a demographic questionnaire. The dependent variables (DV) for this study were career commitment and organizational commitment. Career commitment was measured using scores obtained from the Occupational Commitment Scale (OCS). Organizational commitment was measured using scores obtained from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The OCS and OCQ scores were both ordinal data. This study is unique because it addressed several under researched areas in empirical literature: one, generational distinctions in law enforcement; two, career and organizational commitment among officers; and three, the recruitment, training, and retention of the millennial cohort of officers in law enforcement.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I developed four RQs and related hypotheses to examine the effect(s), if any, of generational differences on career and organizational commitment among law enforcement officers. My analysis of generational differences included whether there any

distinctions among the millennial cohort of officers. The overall and specific variables related to career commitment.

RQ1: What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's career commitment in Ohio.

H_A1: There is a significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's career commitment in Ohio.

RQ2: What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and organizational commitment in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$2: There is no significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational commitment in Ohio.

H_A2: There is a significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational commitment in Ohio.

RQ3: What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials), organizational commitment, and career commitment, in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$3: There is no significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

H_A3: There is a significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

RQ4: What is the relationship between millennial cohort membership, organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$4: There is no significant relationship between millennial cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

H_A4: There is a significant relationship between millennial cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this study consisted of Karl Mannheim's theory of generations and Donald Super's developmental self-concept theory.

Manheim's Theory of Generations

In his seminal essay entitled "Das Problem der Generationen," which, translated into English, is, "The Problem of Generations," Manheim (1952) theorized how generational cohorts interact, interrelate, and influence other generations in society. Mannheim defined a generational cohort as a group of people who live in the same historical environment and sociological context. Mannheim asserted that notable historical events, especially those occurring in formative years of development, influence generational cohorts through a shared experience and a collective consciousness. In turn, these experiences influence social change and affect future generational cohorts. While social change occurs gradually, it is more likely to be accelerated in times of historical, sociological, and cultural change in society. Sociohistorical factors can lead generational

cohorts to act as agents of social change in society (Mannheim, 1952; Sharp, 2016;

VanDyke, 2020).

Mannheim's theory has been applied in previous research, thus substantiating its

credibility, reliability, and validity (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). For instance, Sharp

(2016) applied Manheim's theory to the study of younger generations in law enforcement

and the influence of the sociohistorical context of when they entered the field. In

addition, Van Dyke (2020) used the theory to examine generational distinctions in law

enforcement and subscription to cultural norms within that culture.

Mannheim's theory of generations can be applied to the study of generational

cohorts in law enforcement, specifically the millennial cohort, in several ways:

- to establish an overall understanding of generations, as well as the unique
  characteristics and attributes of the millennial generation;

- to provide a perspective of how, and why, the millennial generation is
  perceived by older generations in the workforce today;

- to demonstrate how younger generations attempt to adapt into existing
  roles, traditions, and social patterns; and

- to hypothesize how possible factors are related to the millennial generation
  and career commitment in law enforcement.

Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory

The developmental self-concept theory, which Super introduced in 1953, was

originally referred to as vocational maturity. Super theorized that career development

occurs through a process of growth and change and that the implementation and

adaptation to a self-concept occurs through several life stages. As the self-concept

matures, so does career maturity. Super (1955) defined career maturity as "the place

reached on the continuum of vocational development from exploration to decline" (p.

153). Furthermore, Super (1955) described career maturity as "the similarity between

one's actual vocational behavior and what is expected for that stage of development."

(p.153). Career maturity includes the ability and readiness to cope with vocational tasks

at a given stage and is both affective and cognitive. In addition, career maturity develops

over time through the evolution and implementation of self-concept through life stages.

These life stages include (a) growth, (b) exploration, (c) establishment, (d) maintenance,

and (e) disengagement and decline (Super, 1969). Furthermore, particular to each life

stage are certain characteristics, substages, and tasks, which are discussed in Chapter 2.

Super's theory (1955) has also been extensively applied in previous research, thus

substantiating its credibility, reliability, and validity (Abdullah, 2017; Ismail et al., 2018).

For instance, Abdullah (2017) applied Super's theory to examine the socialization of

young adults and their adaptive personality traits, and Ismail et al. (2018) applied it to

study the demographic factors and academic achievement of young adults. Super's

developmental self-concept theory can be applied to the study of career commitment

among generational cohorts in law enforcement, specifically the millennial cohort, in

several ways:

- to establish an overall understanding of career commitment, as well as the

  unique characteristics and attributes of the millennial generation;

- to provide a perspective of how, and why, the millennial generation is perceived by older generations in the workforce today;

- to offer a framework to conceptualize the development of individuals, specifically the millennial generation, in the context of their vocation or career; and

- to hypothesize how possible factors are related to the millennial generation and career commitment in law enforcement.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was quantitative. I used a correlational design to examine career commitment among generations. I explored whether career commitment was related to organizational commitment to determine any distinctions among the millennial cohort in law enforcement. The participants included three generational cohorts of sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The IV for this study was three generational cohorts: baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation). Nominal data were obtained from a demographic questionnaire. The DVs for this study were career commitment, which was measured using scores obtained from the OCS, and organizational commitment, which was measured by scores obtained from the OCQ. The OCS and OCQ scores are ordinal data.

The OCS is an instrument that measures a respondent's commitment to their occupation, or career, using a 24-item, four-dimensional model. The dimensions are (a) affective occupational commitment, (b) normative occupational commitment, (c)

accumulated costs, and (d) limited alternative dimensions (Blau, 2003). Blau (2003)

based the four-dimensional model underpinning the OCS on Meyer et al.'s (1993)

previous three-dimensional model of occupational commitment, which includes a)

affective occupational commitment; (b) normative and continuance occupational

commitment; (c) occupational commitment conceptualization; and (d) limited alternatives

occupational commitment. The OCQ, developed by Mowday et al., Steers, and Porter

(1979), is an instrument that measures a respondent's commitment to their organization

through a 15-item survey of commitment and willingness to exert effort for the

organization.

Definitions

The following terms are operationally defined for the purpose of this study.

Baby boomer: Member of the cohort born between 1946 and 1962 (Sharp, 2016).

Career commitment: A measured score obtained through responses given on the

OCS and was defined as "1) an individuals' dedication to their career, profession, or

occupation; 2) uniquely focuses on the development of employees' work experiences over

time; and 3) the reduced intention to withdraw from the field" (Blau, 2003, p.470).

Generational cohort: The categorization of individuals based on their birthdates

and shared social experiences (VanDyke, 2020).

Generation X: Member of the cohort born between 1962 and 1980 (Sharp, 2016).

Millennial: Member of the cohort born between 1980 and 2000 (Sharp, 2016);

members are otherwise referred to as Generation Y or, in slang terms, "Gen Me"

(Jirasevijinda, 2018).

Occupational commitment: The psychological link between an individual and their occupation based on an affective reaction to that occupation (Lee, et al., p.800).

Organizational commitment: A measured score obtained through a dimension of responses given on the OCS and was defined as "1) a strong belief in and acceptance of an organization's goals and values; 2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 226).

Assumptions

One assumption of this study was the participants would be forthcoming and honest in their responses. Also, although the instruments used have an extensive history of usage, validity, and reliability (Abdullah, 2017; Ismail et al., 2018; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020), data collection was voluntary and self-reported, and, therefore, the accuracy of the responses given is subject to question. A third assumption was that the participants fully understood the nature of the research, trusted the anonymity of the study, and did not fear negative consequences in the law enforcement agency in which they were commissioned. If participants did not understand the research or did not feel protected, it may have skewed the participation rates and responses. Last, I assumed that, by providing clarification and a detailed consent form, I addressed these concerns and mitigated their potential impacts on participation rates and responses.

Scope and Delimitations

There were some threats to internal and external validity and reliability present in the research. For instance, this study included participants of three generational cohorts of

sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial

generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio; therefore,

permission was needed from these agencies to recruit participants. There were agencies

that declined participation, causing a discrepancy in the comparative totality of all

agencies. Second, the results are specific and relative to the demographics, geographical

location, and chosen field of this study. Thus, the results may not be representative of a

larger whole. A third delimitation pertains to the survey and instruments used in this

study. Participation was voluntary, and of a self-reporting nature; therefore, there was the

potential to decline participation or to participate with bias. As such, the responses were

subject to misrepresentation, discrepancies, inaccuracies, and incompleteness. To address

these threats, I used the same instruments and same process in interviewing participants

during each shift's allotted time, which minimized threats in instrumentation and testing

(Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). The instruments utilized have an extensive history of

acceptability, validity, and reliability (Abdullah, 2017; Ismail et al., 2018; Sharp, 2016;

VanDyke, 2020).

A delimitation in this study was the law enforcement agencies whose leaders

chose not to participate in this study. Among the agencies in the study, some officers

declined participation. The sample population included three generational cohorts of

sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial

generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The

variables used in this study were similar to ones found in previous research of career

commitment, organizational commitment, and generational differences in the workforce

(Hansen, & Leuty, 2012; Joshi, Dencker, & Franz, 2011; Sharp, 2016; Stewart et al., 2017). Although a sufficient sample was attained, there was a scattered number of participating cohorts and a limited number of participating agencies in the study.

Limitations

There were several potential limitations with this study. For instance, this study included participants of three generational cohorts of sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio; therefore, permission was needed from these agencies for participant recruitment. There were agencies that declined participation. A second potential limitation is that the results are specific to the demographics, geographical location, and chosen field of this study. Thus, the results may not be representative of a larger whole. A third potential limitation could be the instruments used in this study. Participation was voluntary and of a self-reporting nature; therefore, there was the potential for individuals to decline participation or, if they agreed to participate, to provide biased, inaccurate, and/or incomplete submissions.

Significance

The significance of this study established the need for further research. The results of this study provided further insight into generational differences and career and organizational commitment among cohorts, as well as any distinctions of the millennial cohort in the workforce. Last, the results of this study provided insight into the education and training of law enforcement officers through the peace officer training academies.

The findings may ultimately inform the recruitment, training, and retention strategies used by law enforcement leaders (Favreau, 2015; Hilal et al., 2017; Marenin, 2016).

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the need for further research on generational differences, career commitment, and organizational commitment among law enforcement officers. The chapter included background information on the study topic. I identified the problem of the recruitment, training, and retention of younger generation officers, specifically the millennial generation. As I noted, addressing these concerns is necessary for the future success of law enforcement agencies. In the chapter, I discussed the purpose and methodological constructs of the research, including the assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations of the study. Furthermore, I provided an overview of the theoretical foundation for this study, which consisted of Manheim's theory of generations and Super's developmental self-concept theory. Last, the chapter included discussion of the potential significance of the study and contribution to empirical literature.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I will present, discuss, and critique the literature relevant to the study. The literature review will include current, empirical literature found within numerous peer-reviewed, scholarly journals. Chapter 3 will include details on the methodological approach that I used for this study, and Chapter 4, the results. In the last chapter, Chapter 5, I will discuss the interpretation of the findings, identify the limitations of the research, provide recommendations for future research, and discuss the

implications of the research for creating positive social change for both civilians and the

future of law enforcement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature on the study topic and demonstrate the gap that was addressed by this study. In the chapter, I will present the literature search strategy I used, as well as provide a review and critique of current (within the past 5 years), empirical, literature found in numerous scholarly, peer-reviewed journals on the millennial generation and career and organizational commitment in law enforcement. The chapter will also include more information on the theoretical foundation for this study, which consisted of Manheim's theory of generations and Super's developmental self-concept theory. The literature review that follows includes sections on the millennial generation, career commitment and organizational commitment, and law enforcement today. The chapter concludes with a summary and conclusions.

Literature Search Strategy

I used several strategies to conduct the empirical literature search. I focused on current peer-reviewed, scholarly articles and empirical literature relating to generations, generational differences, generational distinctions, the millennial generation, cadets, officers, police academies, training, education, recruitment, retention, career commitment, occupational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, law enforcement, officers, and police. The keywords searched were *age*, *attracting*, *career commitment*, *cops*, *education*, *engaging*, *generation**, *generational differences*, *generational distinctions*, *job satisfaction*, *law enforcement and/or police academies*, *law*

enforcement and/or police cadets, *law enforcement and/or police officers*, *law enforcement and/or police*, *maintaining*, *millennial generation**, *motivation*, *occupational commitment*, *officers*, *organizational commitment*, *recruitment*, *retention*, *training challenges*, *training*, and *turnover*. I used these keywords in PsychARTICLES, PsychEXTRA, ProQuest Criminal Justice databases, and SAGE Journals, as well as in Walden University's Thoreau multi-database search tool. The search engine Google Scholar was also a source of literature. I focused on literature that was published within the last 5 years.

In an examination of generational cohorts and job satisfaction in law enforcement, Sharp (2016) noted the need for further research on generational cohorts, job satisfaction, and organizational and career commitment within the field of law enforcement. The traits, attitudes, desires, needs, values, goals, and expectations of millennial law enforcement officers need to be further researched, Sharp noted. Another topic that was Sharp identified as needing further research was how to attract, engage, and maintain the millennial generation within field of law enforcement. Sharp's study clarifies the research gap in current empirical literature that I responded to by conducting this study. Further research needed to be conducted on younger generations, specifically the millennial generation, and the relationship between career commitment, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, in law enforcement. This chapter includes discussion of current, empirical literature found within numerous peer-reviewed scholarly journals on the millennial generation, career commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational

commitment in law enforcement. I will analyze and synthesize the literature to demonstrate the gap in the research that I sought to address in this study.

Theoretical Foundation

Manheim's Theory of Generations

Manheim's theory of generations, originally published in German in 1928 and entitled "Das Problem der Generationen," was subsequently translated into English and published as "The Problem of Generations" in 1952. It is regarded as one of the foremost efforts to define and explain the coexistence of multiple generations in society (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Manheim discussed how generational cohorts interact and react through a cause-and-effect relationship of social and intellectual movements in society. Mannheim defined a generational cohort as a group of people who live in the same historical environment and sociological context. Furthermore, Mannheim asserted that notable historical events, especially those occurring in formative years of development, influence generational cohorts through a shared experience and a collective consciousness. In turn, these experiences influence social change through their impact on future generational cohorts.

The five tenets of Manheim's theory are: "1) new participants in the cultural process emerge while; 2) former participants in the process are continually disappeared; 3) members of one generation participated only in a temporally limited section of the historical process, and; 4) it was necessary to continually transmit the accumulated heritage which; 5) the transition from generation to generation was a continuous process" (1952; Rudolph & Zacher, 2017, p. 120). These tenets are visible with emergence of the

Black Lives Matter movement in the summer of 2014. With a series of highly publicized deaths of young, black males by way of police encounters, the perception has fervently evolved into the biased belief that white officers pose the greatest threat to black males (Mac Donald, 2016). These events between law enforcement and African Americans have brought to light the "us-versus-them" mentality, a trending ideology in the current sociocultural context. According to Brooks (2020), "there [is] nothing so powerful as a movement whose time has come" (p.333), and many civilians, African American and European American alike, seemed to feel that the time is now for the overthrow of law enforcement with such subsequent social movements as "Defund the Police" (Hodge & Boddie, 2022). However, these movements have been born out of distinct and isolated contexts of, albeit several, incidents, promoting the racist narrative and alleged bias of law enforcement (Mac Donald, 2016). The effects, both short- and long-term, of these current movements on the recruitment and retention of officers are unknown (Mac Donald, 2016; Marier & Moule, 2019; Nix et al., 2015, 2018; Wagner, 2019; Wolfe & Nix, 2016).

Mannheim's theory of generations can be applied to generational cohorts in law enforcement, specifically the millennial cohort, in several ways: 1) with the predicted influx of the millennial generation in 2020; 2) with the projected exodus of older generations into retirement, and the transition of middle generations into administrative positions; 3) with the increased need to recruit, train, and retain new officers; and 4) with the cyclical pattern of professional evolution in the field.

In conclusion, Mannheim's theory has been thoroughly studied and applied in previous research, thus substantiating its credibility, reliability, and validity (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). For instance, Sharp (2016) applied Manheim's theory to younger generations in law enforcement and the influence of the social historical context of when they entered the field; and VanDyke (2020) applied Manheim's theory to generational distinctions in law enforcement and the subscription to the cultural norms within that culture. Manheim's theory provided a lens through which to examine the millennial generation, career commitment, and organizational commitment, in law enforcement. As demonstrated though the application to this study, Manheim's theory served as a clear framework to understand the sociocultural and historical context of millennial cadets and officers and their career commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, in law enforcement in today.

Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory

Super introduced developmental self-concept theory in 1953. Super theorized that career development occurs through a process of growth and change, and the implementation and adaptation to a self-concept through several life stages. Career Development was a "continuous lifelong process of developmental experiences that focused on seeking, obtaining and processing information about self, occupational and educational alternatives, life styles and role options" (Hansen, 1976, p.42). As the self-concept matured, concurrently, does career maturity. Previously referred to as vocational maturity, Super (1955, p.153) defined career maturity as "the place reached on the continuum of vocational development from exploration to decline". Super described

career maturity as "the similarity between one's actual vocational behavior and what is expected for that stage of development" (Super, 1955, p.153). Career maturity included the ability and readiness to cope with vocational tasks at a given stage; and was both affective and cognitive. Furthermore, Super asserted that career maturity was developed over time through the evolution and implementation of self-concept through life stages. These life stages included 1) growth (birth-approximately 14 years of age); 2) exploration (14-approximately 24 years of age); 3) establishment (24-approximately 43 years of age); 4) maintenance (43-approximately 59 years of age); and 5) disengagement and decline (59-death) (Super, 1969). Furthermore, the developmental tasks associated with these life stages were: 1) crystallization, or crystalizing a vocational preference; 2) specification, or specificizing the vocational preference; 3) implementation, or implementing the vocational preference; 4) stabilization, or stabilizing in the chosen vocation; 5) consolidation, or consolidating one's status; and 6) advancing in the occupation (Super, 1969). This can be applied to the millennial generation and career commitment in several ways. One, the stage of exploration, which was marked by the characteristics of self-examination, role try-outs, and exploring of occupations through school, leisure activities, and part-time work (Super, 1969). Through this stage and including the sub-stages thereof, such as tentative, crystallizing a vocational preference (transition), and specifying a vocational preference (trial-little commitment) an individual self-examined, their interests, desires, values, capacities, goals, and opportunities, considered different occupations through workforce training, experienced vocational trials and errors, and evaluated and re-evaluated career choices; "commitment was provisional" (Super, 1969).

This illustrated the developmental process of career maturity and the millennial generation, which can be further applied to law enforcement.

Super's developmental self-concept theory was applied to career commitment among generational cohorts in law enforcement, specifically the millennial cohort, in several ways: 1) by establishing an overall understanding of career commitment, as well as the unique characteristics and attributes of the millennial generation; 2) by providing a perspective of how, and why, the millennial generation was perceived by older generations in the workforce, today; 3) by illustrating a framework to conceptualize the development of individuals, specifically, the millennial generation, in the context of their vocation or career; 4) by serving as a hypothesis of how possible factors were related to the millennial generation and career commitment in law enforcement.

In conclusion, Super's theory has also been thoroughly studied and applied in research, thus substantiating its credibility, reliability, and validity (Abdullah, 2017; Ismail et al., 2018). For instance, Abdullah (2017) applied Super's theory to the socialization of young adults and their adaptive personality traits; and Ismail, et al., (2018) applied Super's theory to demographical factors, as well as the academic achievement of young adults.

Super's theory provided a lens through which to examine the millennial generation, career commitment and organizational commitment, which can be further applied to law enforcement. As demonstrated though the application to this study, Super's theory served as a clear framework to understand the developmental process of self-concept and career maturity of the millennial generation.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

The Millennial Generation

A review of current, peer-reviewed, empirical literature revealed multiple themes surrounding the generational distinctions, specifically among the millennial generation. First, scholars established that there are four generations laboring together in the U.S. workforce today (Dietrich, 2018; Hilal, Densley, & Jones, 2017; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). These generations consisted of the Traditionalist generation (1927–1945), the baby boomer generation (1946–1962), Generation X (1962–1980), and Generation Y or slangily, "Gen Me" (Jirasevijinda, 2018), otherwise known as the millennial generation (1980–2000) (Black-Beth, 2006; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Dietrich, 2018; Hilal, Densley, & Jones, 2017; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Although there were differing definitions and categorizations among scholars of this timeframe, there was a consistent overlap of the aforementioned birthyears, and therefore, this timeframe was most commonly cited in the literature. This unique composition is occurring as our population is aging, life expectancy is increasing, and traditional retirement ages are being extended (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Even though life expectancy is increasing and retirement age is extending, the Traditionalist generation and baby boomers are slowly egressing from the workforce, as the millennial generation is emerging (Calk & Patrick, 2017; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020).

According to scholars, these generations entered the workforce in different historical contexts (Jirasevijinda, 2018), and therefore, experienced different economic

climates causing distinctions in members' work ethics (Pyöriä, et al., 2017). Table 1

provides a summary of the different generations in the workforce.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Four Generations Laboring in the Workforce

Generation	Core value	Goal	Strength	Challenge
Traditionalist	Fiscal restraint	To be respected	Service to others	Risk averse
	Strong work ethic	To be valued	Loyalty	Conformist
	Self-sacrifice		Discipline	Resistant to change
Baby	Ideals	Lifelong learning	Idealistic outlook	Narcissism
boomer	Success	Legacy	Inspired to	Overachievement
			succeed	Process over product
Generation	Entrepreneurship	Independence	Loyal to self	Impatient
X	Ambition	Freedom/few rules	Adaptable/flexible	Challenging
	Self-trust		Creative	authority
				Cynical
Millennial	Reliance on	To be a hero	Confident	Reward for showing
	technology	To make a	Team oriented	up
	Eagerness to learn	difference	Digitally savvy	Need for structure
	Confidence		Multitasking	Instant gratification

Note. Adapted from "Bridging the Generation Gap in the Workplace: How I Learned to

Stop Worrying and Love Working with the Millennial Generation," by T. Jirasevijinda,

2018, *Journal of Communication in Healthcare, 11*(2), p. 84.

(https://doi.org/10.1080/17538068.2018.1485830). Copyright 2018 by Informa UK

Limited.

> Influenced by myriad factors including world events (e.g., war and similar
>
> conflicts), financial flourishes and downturns, parenting styles, and technological
>
> advances, each generation shares unique values, goals, and attitudes toward
>
> authority and hierarchy. These, in turn, impact motivation, communication styles,
>
> personal and professional relationships, ways to handle conflicts, and the concept
>
> of work-life balance. Consequently, it is not difficult to see how a workplace

where three to four generations coexist can be fraught with conflicts.
(Jirasevijinda, 2018, p.83).

Furthermore, scholars suggested that although differences exist among all generational cohorts, the millennial generation is distinctive from any other previous generation. (Jirasevijinda, 2018). The millennial generation possesses certain, distinctive personality traits, as compared to older generational cohorts (Sharp, 2016; Valenti, 2019; VanDyke, 2020). Moreover, such personality traits have caused scholars, as well as society, to have surmised a stereotype of the political belief system, religiosity or lack thereof, and overall lifestyle of the millennial generation (Fisher, 2018). For instance, scholars have insinuated that millennials have a laissez-faire approach to life and love supporting equal rights, same-sex marriages, and environmental initiatives (Hagai, et al., 2021; Jirasevijinda, 2018). The millennials, being born in the context of 9/11 and subsequently, living in the "Black Lives Matter" movement (B.L.M.), also have been attributed for having an appreciation for diversity and race relations (Fisher, 2018). They are also the most demographically diverse adult population with "57% non-Hispanic whites, while 21% are Hispanic, and 13% are black, and 6% are Asian" (Pew Research center, 2015, p.9). The millennials are also attributed for having a heightened sense of social consciousness, a humanitarian and excessively liberal perspective of politics with the propensity to hop on the latest bandwagon of movements (Fisher, 2018; Jirasevijinda, 2018; Long, 2017). "As a cohort, millennials are unique in their social consciousness, and they make decisions based on that awareness" (Minshew, 2017, p.85).

Scholars have asserted that the millennial generation has been socialized through the use, and abuse, of technology (Helal & Ozuem, 2021). With the development of the World Wide Web being in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the earliest form of social media, or at that time, search engines, established worldwide prominence by the late 2000s (Dewing, 2010). Simultaneously taking place was the birth, growth, and development of the millennial generation. Millennial children grew out of this era with an aptitude for technology, and have continued to be driven by the computer age, even to a dependent degree, leading to an over-reliance on technological devices, such as computers, iPads, and smart phones (Janicke-Bowles, Narayan, & Seng, 2018; VanDyke, 2020). With everything at their fingertips, the millennial generation has become the leading social media user, today (Helal & Ozuem, 2021; VanDyke, 2020). This was evidenced by a study conducted by Pew Research Center in which the results showed that "90% of all 18–29-year-olds in the U.S. use at least one form of social media and spend up to 6.19 hours per week on it" (Janicke-Bowles, Narayan, & Seng, 2018, p.120). Furthermore, scholars have criticized the millennial generation's version of reality, a virtual reality, where if it did not happen on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or TikTok, then, it really didn't happen. Despite the outward appearance of confidence that millennials portray, they crave attention, approval, and acceptance, which has been reinforced through such digital validations of "Thumbs up", "Likes", "Loves", and "Views" (Helal & Ozuem, 2021; Jirasevijinda, 2018). As a result, the millennial generation has been socialized, in a sense, through their social personas and identities put forth, and are in need of acceptance and approval (Long, 2017). In addition, in a study

conducted by Statista in 2016, the highest degree of daily social media usage was held by users aged 25 to 34 years old (Helal & Ozuem, 2021; Statistica, 2016). In another study also conducted by Statistica, the highest time consumption of social networking was among users aged 16-34 years, or the millennials (Helal & Ozuem, 2021; Statista, 2017).

Scholars have theorized that the millennial generation communicates differently than previous generations (Agarwal & Gupta, 2018; Downs, 2019; Long, 2017). Communication is defined as "the imparting or exchanging of information; the means of sending or receiving information" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). This distinction in communication among the millennial generation has been compounded by the prevalence, accessibility, and commonality of technology. Growing up in the era of technology, millennials have evolved into being digitally dependent, and communicatively complacent (Long, 2017). The millennial generation prefers a dichotomous style of communication; a style of staying connected, both synchronously and asynchronously, from afar and yet, through a device (Agarwal & Gupta, 2018; Downs, 2019). Scholars have stereotyped that millennials are in their own digital world, a technological bubble, "connecting" with other millennials in the same bubble through texting, messaging, social media, Snapchatting, and Marco Polo-ing, rather than interacting interpersonally (Agarwal, & Gupta, 2018; VanDyke, 2020).

Scholars have deduced that although the millennial generation is technologically savvy, able to multi-task while continuously communicating virtually, they tend to be deficient in their interpersonal skills as a result of lacking in one-on-one, face-to-face encounters (Downs, 2019; Shrivastava, 2020). In addition, not only is there a distinction

in their interpersonal communication style, but also, in the way in which they process information or learn new information (Long, 2017). The millennial generation, highly valuing education, (Jirasevijinda, 2018) requires a different approach to learning than previous generations, regarding formal lectures and didacts as ineffective and antiquated (Schwartz, et al., 2018; VanDyke, 2020). For instance, the millennial generation responds best to the utilization of multimedia tools and technology, with education and training that is visual, stimulating, interactive, and brief in duration (Long 2017; VanDyke, 2020). Scholars have argued that the millennial generation responds best to a convergent approach to learning (VanDyke, 2020). A convergent style of learning includes information processing by way of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation through practical problem-solving tasks (Kolb & Yeganeh, 2012); e.g., role playing. Such insight has led to a progressive change in educational systems from a pedagogical approach to a technogogical approach (VanDyke, 2020). While a pedagogical approach emphasizes the lecture method, a technogogical approach emphasizes the interactive use of technology (VanDyke, 2020). Consequently, alternative models have been developed to adapt to the learning styles, as well as appeal to the training needs of the millennial generation (Jirasevijinda, 2018; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). A key component to successful leadership is the ability to effectively communicate and ensure that the message is received and understood by the audience (Long, 2017; VanDyke, 2020). In order to successfully engage the millennial generation, human resource managers need insight into how to interact with, communicate with, and manage millennials (Calk &

Patrick, 2017), especially with an impending generational shift in the workforce (Kosterlitz & Lewis, 2017; Sharp, 2016: VanDyke, 2020).

As a result of these themes, scholars have concluded that there was a need to further research the millennial generation—their similarities, their differences, and the distinctions thereof—in the workforce. Scholars have stated that there was a need to understand the traits, attitudes, desires, needs, values, goals, and expectations of the millennial generation (Lanza, 2019; Morrel & Abston, 2018; Njemanze, 2016; Sharp, 2016, VanDyke, 2020).With the projected exodus of older generations in the workforce concurrent with an influx of younger generations, specifically, the millennials, a better understanding was necessary to promote job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and ultimately, career commitment from multi-industry perspectives. Moreover, by developing a better understanding of the millennial generation as a whole, the law enforcement industry, specifically, will have a better understanding of the millennial generation, as well as a deeper insight into the recruitment, training, and retention of millennial officers for the future success of law enforcement.

Career Commitment and Organizational Commitment

A review of current, peer-reviewed, empirical literature revealed numerous patterns encompassing career commitment. Scholars have examined career and organizational commitment through a multitude of lenses. Yet, there is a need for further clarification of career commitment in the workforce.

Scholars have defined career commitment as "an individual's dedication to their career, profession, or occupation; it uniquely focused on the development of employees'

work experiences over time; and the reduced intention to withdraw from the field" (Blau, 2003, p.470). Similar to career commitment was occupational commitment, which scholars defined as "the psychological link between an individual and his/her occupation that was based on an affective reaction to that occupation" (Lee, et al., p.800). Scholars have posited that an individual who was committed to their career or occupation must have experienced subjective, intrinsic, positive reinforcement, or objective, extrinsic, positive rewards, over time, to affirm, and reaffirm, their chosen profession or occupation (Alzyoud, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020); a concept that was referred to as career success (Sultana & Aldehayyat, 2018). Yet, similar to the concept of career success was career entrenchment. Career entrenchment was referred to as an overlapping construct of career alternatives, which were also considered motivating factors (Blau, 2003). Both career success and career entrenchment are dependent upon self-efficacy which, ultimately determines job satisfaction and one's commitment to their organization (Ahmed, 2019; Singhal & Rastogi, 2018). Among the millennial generation, scholars asserted motivation was a key element to committedness, either organizational or career (Mayangdarastri & Khusna, 2020). A motivated employee will engage, and an engaged employee is motivated; both of which eventually led to organizational, and ultimately career commitment (Mayangdarastri & Khusna, 2020). Organizational commitment was defined as "a strong belief in, and acceptance of, an organization's goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (Sharp, 2016, p.10). Scholars established that although career commitment was intertwined with job satisfaction and organizational commitment

(Katz et al., 2019), an independent, and interdependent relationship existed between them (Luz, Paula, & Oliveira, 2018).

Scholars have also asserted that career commitment was related to demographics, such as chronological age (Van der Heijden, Veld, & Heres, 2021), gender (Campbell & Hahl, 2020), race, and ethnicity (Katz et al., 2019), specifically, to distinctions among generational cohorts, especially, the millennial generation (Damayanti, Yahya, Yean, 2019; Morrell & Abston, 2018). The millennial cohort was predicted to be the next generation of baby boomers, having exploded in the population, and ultimately, the workforce (Kosterlitz & Lewis, 2017). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), millennials surpassed the baby boomer generation as the nation's largest living adult generation. As of July 1, 2019, the millennial generation was numbered at 72.1 million, while the baby boomer generation was numbered at 71.6 million. Millennials make up more than one-third of American workers and were the largest share of the U.S. workforce (Copple, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2015). In addition, scholars predicted that by 2025, the millennial generation would account for 75% of the total workforce, as there was a projected exodus of older generations in the workforce concurrent with an influx of younger generations, specifically, the millennials (Lanza, 2019; Morrel & Abston, 2018; Njemanze, 2016; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Millennials have an entirely different work ethic than that of their parent's generation (Damayanti, Yahya, Yean, 2019; VanDyke, 2020). DeChane quoted McCrindle: "The young people of this (millennial) generation do not live to work, but rather, they work to live. A job merely provides the income to do that what they want to." (DeChane, 2014, p.4). Furthermore,

with the millennial generation being in the beginning of their careers, there was a lack of establishment in their plans, positions, and commitment, causing potential leadership voids in organizations (Calk & Patrick, 2017). This was evidenced by the results of the 2018 Millennial Survey conducted by Deloitte Consulting in which 66% of the millennial participants reported an intention to leave their current position or organization within the first five years of entry. Scholars theorized that an excessively high turnover rate existed among the millennial generation (Morrell & Abston, 2018). This was evidenced by what became known in the United States economy as "the millennial turnover" (Morrell & Abston, 2018), which was estimated at approximately $30.5 billion annually (VanDyke, 2020). As a result, employers, administrators, and supervisors across multiple industries were trying to facilitate a work environment that fostered the strengths and capabilities of each generation through the adaptation of alternative management styles (Valenti, 2019), especially to accommodate the millennial generation. Thus, in order to fully do so, several scholars have proposed a query to better understand generational cohorts, specifically, the millennial generation—from multi-industry perspectives (Calk & Patrick, 2017; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Thus, it was critical to better understand how to recruit, train, and retain the millennial generation across all industries.

Other scholars have also asserted that career commitment was related to psychological factors (Ryan & Deci, 2020), such as psychosocial age (Singhal & Rastogi, 2018; Van der Heijden, Veld, & Heres, 2021), psychological capital (Singhal & Rastogi, 2018), and emotional intelligence (Damayanti, Yahya, Yean, 2019; Sultana & Aldehayyat, 2018). Psychosocial age was referred to as "how old the individual felt,

looked, and acted, with which age cohort the individual identified, and how old the

person desired to be" (Van der Heijden, Veld, & Heres, 2021). Psychosocial age also

referred to the age-appropriate norms for an occupation, company, or society (Van der

Heijden, Veld, & Heres, 2021). Psychological capital was defined as "an individual's

positive psychological state of development; was based on hope, self-efficacy, resilience,

and optimism; and referred to an employee's attitude toward their job which increased

their employment stamina" (Singhal & Rastogi, 2018, p.460). Emotional intelligence was

defined as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own

and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this

information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Sultana & Aldehayyat, 2018, p.485). In

addition, scholars have postulated that career commitment is dependent upon both macro-

level factors, such as laws and legislation, policy and procedure, and organizational

strategy, as well as micro-level factors, such as an employee's interpersonal and

relational needs across the life-span; yet, which in turn, was relative to the individual's

chronological age (Van der Heijden, Veld, & Heres, 2021).

Scholars have also criticized that millennials have an impatience with systems and

processes, an intolerance with delays in gratification, are overly self-indulgent, as well as

having a self-centered, egoistic belief of being the exception to the rule, along with an

attitude of being deserving, worthy, and entitled even without proven or demonstrated

merit (Fisher, 2018; Valenti, 2019); i.e., being dubbed "the Trophy kids" who received a

trophy for simply showing up for the game (Alsop, 2008, p.3). "The millennials have

been raised in the most child-centric time in our history, and some have had parents who

hovered like helicopters near their children, ready to swoop in at a moment's notice to

help solve life's problems big and small" (Schwartz, et al., 2018, p.74). Consequently,

this has carried over to their approach to life and work with a lack of longevity in their

occupational commitments, a deficit in their work ethics, and a work-life imbalance of

with a prioritization of leisure time (Fisher, 2018; Valenti, 2019). Scholars have also

suggested that millennials are superficial, lacking seriousness and depth, and that they

display an informal, attitude towards employers, and preferring a casual, flexible, and fun

work environment (Sharp, 2016; Valenti, 2019; VanDyke, 2020). The millennial

generation shares unique values, goals, and attitudes toward authority and hierarchy. In

turn, these have impacted the motivation, communication styles, personal and

professional relationships alike, as well as conflict resolution skills (Jirasevijinda, 2018).

"Keep them engaged at work by showcasing a culture of paying it forward and tying the

day-to-day into the larger purpose of the organization" (Minshew, 2017, p.85).

Scholars have theorized that career commitment is related to individual

personality traits. Specifically, those personality traits of the Big Five Model, a model

developed by Donald Fiske in 1949 (Penn & Lent, 2019). These personality traits

included neuroticism (sensitive/nervous vs. resilient/confident), agreeableness

friendly/compassionate vs. critical/rational), extroversion (outgoing/energetic vs.

solitary/reserved), conscientiousness (efficient/organized vs. extravagant/careless), and

openness to experience (inventive/curious vs. consistent/cautious) (Farrukh, Ying, &

Mansori, 2017; Penn & Lent, 2019; Xu & Bhang, 2019). By applying this model of

personality to an organizational psychology perspective, one was able to better

understand human behavior in the context of the workplace. In addition, scholars have also theorized different aspects of career commitment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career success. For instance, scholars argued a correlation between agreeableness, extroversion, and conscientiousness to job performance, with the strongest and most valid predictor being conscientiousness (Farrukh, Ying, & Mansori, 2017). Scholars also argued that extraversion, openness to new experiences, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness have a significant relationship with job satisfaction (Farrukh, Ying, & Mansori, 2017). Neuroticism was found to be an indicator of organizational commitment (Farrukh, Ying, & Mansori, 2017). Last, scholars argued a correlation between neuroticism, extroversion, and conscientiousness with career success (Farrukh, Ying, & Mansori, 2017; Penn & Lent, 2019). Scholars have also proposed that career commitment, or lack thereof, otherwise known as career indecision can also be examined through the Big Five Model through neuroticism/negative affectivity, choice/commitment anxiety, need for information, lack of readiness, and interpersonal conflicts (Farrukh, Ying, & Mansori, 2017; Xu & Bhang, 2019).

As a result of these patterns, scholars have concluded that there is a continued need to further research career commitment from the perspective of the millennial generation—their values, motivations, and expectations. With the investment and potential loss of resources, a better understanding was needed to promote career commitment and organizational commitment from multi-industry perspectives. This is an under-researched area in the field of law enforcement. By developing a better understanding of the career commitment from the perspective of the millennial

generation, law enforcement administrators will have a deeper insight into the recruitment, training, and retention of the officers of tomorrow.

As a result of several variants related to career commitment, scholars have attempted to answer the query of the determining variable of career commitment. With a high employee turnover among younger generations, specifically, the millennial generation (Morrell & Abston, 2018), a greater understand was needed to promote career longevity across multiple industries (Damayanti, Yahya, Yean, 2019). Thus, further research was needed for administrators to recruit and retain employees who are going to be committed to their careers.

Law Enforcement Today

A review of current, peer-reviewed, empirical literature revealed several trends encircling in law enforcement. First, scholars established that, currently, there are approximately 17,895 local and state law enforcement agencies, employing approximately 750,340 law enforcement officers (Cain, 2020). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016), "the U.S. population increased by 21% from 267 million in 1997 to 323 million in 2016; yet, the number of full-time, sworn law enforcement only increased by 8%" (Cain, 2020, p.2). Furthermore, scholars predicted that there was going to be a generational, as well as a positional shift in law enforcement, creating a void of entry-level officers (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Within the next decade, there will be an exodus of older generations, a supervisory change in mid-generations, and an influx of younger generations, especially with the emergence of the millennial generation in law enforcement (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). This generational shift was presenting

problems for administrators in two ways: 1) young workers, especially the millennial

generation, were less likely to remain in any one profession or position; and 2) were less

likely to enter into the profession of law enforcement, at all (Cain, 2020). Nearly half of

the estimated 956,322 sworn officers in the United States were eligible for retirement

forcing law enforcement agencies to spend exorbitant resources on the selection and

training of new officers (Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI], 2016; VanDyke, 2020).

Scholars estimated that the number of necessary, front-line employment positions was

projected to grow by 5% between the years of 2018 to 2028, according to the 2018 U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (Hilal et al., 2017).

> Police agencies face a three-fold challenge in meeting their staffing needs. First,
> there was a decreasing number of qualified applicants. This was attributable to
> changing generational work preferences, differences in workforce attributes, and
> decreasing resources available for hiring officers. Second attrition was expanding
> through retirements, military call-ups, and other sources. Third, the scope of
> police work was expanding to encompass new areas, such as Homeland Security
> and Community Policing, obligating fewer officers to do more work.
> (Cain, 2020, p.3).

Scholars cited that in the field of law enforcement, the allocated budget for the

hiring, training, and development of officers was $99 million annually, according to the

U.S. Department of Justice's (2020) Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

unit. From a risk management standpoint, it was critical for administrators to have insight

into how to effectively utilize, and even maximize those resources, but also, minimize the

losses thereof (Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI], 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Thus, there was a critical need to better understand the effective recruitment (Keenan, 2017), training, and retention of millennial officers (Hilal et al., 2017) to ensure the survival of law enforcement agencies in the future (Cain, 2020; Sharp, 2016).

Scholars have contended that the number of applicants to state peace officer training academies was declining, as was the number of certified and commissioned graduates thereof (Cain, 2020; Keenan, 2017; VanDyke, 2020). Candidate supply was shrinking because of a less qualified applicant pool (Keenan, 2017), increased competition, uncompetitive benefits, organizational characteristics (Morrell & Abston, 2018; VanDyke, 2020), and evolving generational traits, attitudes, and values (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Furthermore, the ongoing state mandates for education and training, legal liability and functioning in a litigious society, as well as the exceedingly high expectations of the public (Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015; VanDyke, 2020). This was evidenced by a national survey conducted by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence, in 2018, revealing that local and state governments are having the most difficulty hiring law enforcement as compared to any other category of personnel (Cain, 2020). In addition, scholars have predicted that the current relationship between law enforcement and the public (Nix, Wolfe, & Campbell, 2018; Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015) was predicted to have negative long-term consequences on the recruitment of cadets and the retention of entry-level officers in the future (Marier & Moule, 2019).

No other profession requires its employees to make complex legal and moral

decisions that impact the lives of others quite like policing. Officers must chase

criminals, expose themselves repeatedly to danger, and show compassion,

kindness, courtesy, and respect to citizens. Yet, at the same time, they must

possess the capacity to lawfully take someone's life under the most stressful

conditions, often in a split-second decision. For these reasons and many more,

policing is a special profession.

(Cain, 2020, p. 27).

Yet, in spite of the various impediments, scholars asserted that there has been a

political push urging the critical importance of hiring people, "the right people", for the

future success of law enforcement agencies (Hilal et al., 2017; Marenin, 2016). Thus,

society must be challenged to help solve this problem of attracting, engaging, and

maintaining those officers who are the best and brightest representative of the community

(Copple, 2017). "Developing a plan to recruit, hire, and retain the most qualified

candidates is paramount to sustain a police organization. Law enforcement leaders must

be committed to identifying and employing the best-qualified candidates available, not

merely eliminating the least qualified." (Cain, 2020, pp.9-10). President Obama created

the President's Task Force on the 21st Century Policing in 2015 "to identify the best

means to provide an effective partnership between law enforcement and local

communities that reducing crime and increased trust" (Copple, 2017, p.1). "Recruiting,

hiring, and retaining the right people are the critical first steps to achieving the larger

goals of reducing crime and building relationships of trust with the community"

(Morrison, 2017, p. 2). The Task Force set forth six pillars of recommendations to increase trust between law enforcement and the communities they protect and serve: 1) Building Trust and Legitimacy; 2) Policy and Oversight; 3) Technology and Social Media; 4) Community Policing and Crime Reduction; 5) Training and Education; and 6) Officer Safety and Wellness (Copple, 2017). In addition, the Task Force also set forth strategies for diversity stating "law enforcement agencies should strive to create a workforce that contains a broad range of diversity including race, gender, language, life experience and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities" (Copple, 2017, p.2). Scholars illustrated that simultaneously, as this revisioning of law enforcement was politically taking place, as was the emergence of multiple highly publicized incidents of American European officers versus African American civilians, creating a call for reform against charges of officer-involved shootings, racial bias and prejudice, excessive uses of force, and the militarization of policing (Nix, Wolfe, & Campbell, 2018). In addition, was the creation of the "Black Lives Matter" (B.L.M.) movement (Hodge & Boddie, 2022; Mac Donald, 2016). B.L.M. since its inception in 2014 has gained increased momentum, and, in more recent years, developed campaigns to "Defund the Police" (Hodge & Boddie, 2022; Nix, Wolfe, & Campbell, 2018). Scholars asserted, that society had the option to disband or defund problematic law enforcement agencies or police departments (Hodge & Boddie, 2022; McDowell & Fernandez, 2018), stating that there was a significant minority of African Americans that supported reducing police funding, according to the Pew Research Center, 2020. Scholars also argued that there was the option to establish police

abolition zones; an alternative approach to higher crime areas (Hodge & Boddie, 2022; Vitale, 2017). These areas would have little, if any, law enforcement presence (Singer, 2020), as resources would be directed toward community-driven alternatives to public safety (Abrams & Dettlaff, 2020). Scholars have deduced that with the growth of the B.L.M. movement, had come the subscription to the notion of being "woke" by the younger, more liberal generations, specifically among the millennial generation (Fisher, 2018). According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, woke was defined as "being aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues of racial and social injustice". The pop-culturization and popularity of this notion has exacerbated an already existing challenge in law enforcement—the recruitment and retention of millennial officers (Mac Donald, 2016). In order to develop effective recruitment and retention strategies, it was imperative to improve community-police relations (Cain, 2020).

Scholars have concluded that three factors impact the ability to recruit and retain candidates: 1) a strong economy; 2) the perception of increased danger associated with policing; and 3.) the poor image of policing (Police Executive Research Forum, 2019). Scholars have urged the importance of developing strategies to recruit and retain younger generations in law enforcement, specifically, the millennial generation (Chevremont, 2017), stating that it was paramount to the future survival and success of law enforcement (Chevremont, 2019; Hilal et al., 2017; Sharp, 2016; Skibba, 2018). Concurrently, it was also key to maintain effective management of older generations. In order to preserve the current U.S. workforce, law enforcement administrators, need to better understand each generation's strengths, weaknesses, and distinctions; their goals, preferences, motivators,

and values (Arrington & Dwyer, 2018; Cain, 2020; Wiedmer, 2015). Scholars asserted

that leaders must target officers who are compatible with their agency or department, as

well as with the demographics of the community in which they are going to protect and

serve, while promoting those who have already demonstrated organizational longevity

(Cain, 2020). Morrison suggested rather than utilizing recruiting and hiring practices that

eliminated candidates who do not meet certain criteria, that law enforcement leaders

should have adopted practices that "proactively identify and hire the positive" (2017,

p.5); i.e., a process of weeding in as opposed to weeding out. Furthermore, the California

Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (2009) suggested that law

enforcement leaders set forth an image of an ideal candidate, a profile, of what their

respective agency, and community, was looking forward strategically pursue those

candidates through recruitment strategies. "Actively seeking candidates who reflected an

agency's values and possess identified skill sets, such as interpersonal skills, problem-

solving, and writing skills. And positive characteristics and traits, like empathy, integrity,

self-control, service-mindfulness, and team oriented focused can expand the recruiting

initiative and improve the culture of the agency" (Cain, 2020, p.33).

As a result of these trends, scholars concluded that there was a continued need to

further research the millennial generation in law enforcement—what attracted the

millennial generation in law enforcement. It was necessary to better understand how they

perceive, process, and put forth their training, and why they attracted to the field, as well

as why they remain in the field (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Further insight was

needed into the career commitment of the millennial generation for the future success of law enforcement.

Summary and Conclusions

Several themes, patterns, and trends were revealed in the current, peer-reviewed, empirical literature. For instance, there was a consistent theme surrounding generational cohorts in the workforce, and differences thereof, but specifically, distinctions of the millennial generation. There was also a consistent theme of an impending generational shift of older generations egressing into retirement, as well as younger generations emerging into the workforce across all industries. Second, there was a clear interdependence between career and organizational commitment. There was also a pattern of the need to adapt to younger generations in the workforce through communication, training, education, and management to attract, engage, and maintain millennials. Third, there was a prevalent trend to understand younger generations in the U.S. workforce, especially within the field of law enforcement. There was also a relevant trend of the need to recruit, train, and retain the millennial officers in law enforcement. Thus, there was a critical need for the millennial generation in law enforcement for the future success of agencies (Cain, 2020; Keena, 2017; Hilal et al., 2017; Sharp, 2016); and in order to recruit, train, and retain younger generations, specifically, the millennials, further research needed to be conducted regarding the millennial generation and career commitment in law enforcement.

The purpose of this chapter was to further discuss the research problem to be used for this study. The chapter presented the literature search strategy used, as well as

provided a review and critique of current, empirical, literature found within numerous scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles on the millennial generation, career commitment, organizational commitment, and law enforcement. In addition, the chapter presented a background of existing literature relevant to generational differences, career commitment and organizational commitment in law enforcement, in regard to the recruitment, training, and retention of millennial officers. A gap was identified in previous research regarding the millennial generation and career commitment in law enforcement.

The chapter also further established the theoretical foundation to be used for this study by discussing Manheim's theory of generations and Super's developmental self-concept theory, and demonstrated the application thereof, to this study. Last, the chapter provided the methodological approach to be used for this study. As demonstrated throughout the chapter, there was a need to further research generational differences, specifically, the millennial cohort, and career commitment and organizational commitment, in law enforcement. The following chapter, Chapter 3, will further discuss the methodological approach, or methodology, to be used for this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship, if any, between career

commitment, organizational commitment, and generational differences among three

cohorts—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial

generation)—in law enforcement. I specifically focused on the cohort of millennial

officers currently sworn and commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio to

determine if there was any distinction in regard to career and organizational commitment.

This study is unique because it addressed several under-researched areas in law

enforcement: (a) distinct attributes of the millennial generation; (b) career commitment

and organizational commitment; and (c) the recruitment, training, and retention of

millennial generation officers. With the lack of research on the millennial generation and

career commitment in law enforcement (Sharp, 2016), there was a need to further study

of these variables. Knowledge of how to attract, engage, and retain the officers of

tomorrow is needed given the size of the millennial generation (Sharp, 2016; VanDyke,

2020).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology for the study, including

the study population, instruments, threats to validity and reliability, ethical

considerations, and the plan for statistical analysis. The first section will include

discussion of the research design and rationale. In the Methodology section, I will discuss

the population; sampling and sampling procedures; procedures for recruitment,

participation, and data collection; and the instrumentation and operationalization of

constructs. I then discuss the data analysis plan, threats to validity, and ethical procedures. A chapter summary follows.

Research Design and Rationale

The nature of this study was quantitative research. Using a correlational design, I examined career and organizational commitment among different generations to determine any distinctions among the millennial cohort in law enforcement. The participants included three generational cohorts of sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The IV for this study was generational cohorts: baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation). I obtained nominal data through a demographic questionnaire. The DVs for this study were career commitment, which was measured by scores on the OCS, and organizational commitment, which was measured by scores on the OCQ. The scores were ordinal data.

Methodology

The methodological approach was quantitative and featured a correlational design. I examined millennial officers and their career commitment and organizational commitment in law enforcement. The participants included three generations of officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The IV for this study was generational cohorts: baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation). I obtained nominal data by administering a demographic questionnaire. The DVs for this study were career commitment and organizational

commitment. I used the OCS and the OCQ, respectively, to measure the DVs. The scores were ordinal data.

Population

The sample population consisted of 104 sworn officers of three generational cohorts—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. For the purpose of this study, a baby boomer officer was defined as a member of the cohort born between 1946 and 1962; a Generation X officer was defined as a member of the cohort born between 1962 and 1980; and a Generation Y or millennial officer was defined as a member of a cohort born between the years of 1980 and 2000 (see Black-Beth, 2006; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Sharp, 2016).

I originally proposed a population that was limited, both in size and geographical location, and was subject to change based on graduations, new hires, retirements, separations, and terminations. Therefore, the original proposed may not have been an accurate representation of the results. Thus, this study was expanded to include currently commissioned and sworn officers with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The participants for this study were obtained through a stratified random sampling, ensuring that a variety of groups and a diverse population were represented (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Using the G*Power software, the alpha level, power, and effect size was set, as well as the type of test, and number of tails used in this study. The minimum required

sample size was calculated by this software was 104. The settings used are a two-tailed

logical regression. The following parameters were inputted into the sample size

calculation system: effect size of 0.5 as specified by $Pr(Y = 1|X = 1) = .5$ under H_1;

$Pr(Y = 1|X = 1) = .3$ under H_0; *an* error probability of 0.05, the standard level set in

psychological research; and power of 0.95, which yielded a very high probability to the

real relationship, significance, and effect; all by way of addressing type I and type II

errors, which increased the probability of an accurate conclusion. Y was the dependent

variable DV, and X was the IV in the binary logistic regression. H_0 and H_1 corresponded

to the null and alternative hypotheses for the following two-sided test:

$H_0: \beta_1 = 0$

$H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$

Where β_1 was the slope in the binary logistic regression equation.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The initial procedure for recruitment was in the form of a written explanation of

this study, with a request for participation emailed to law enforcement agencies in Ohio.

From the sample of law enforcement agencies consenting to participate, participants were

advised of the nature of this study, as well as informed of their participant rights, privacy

and anonymity, and informed voluntary consent. The participants received written

statements of such, along with a consent to participate form. The form specified that

participation was voluntary and consent could be withdrawn at any time without

consequence.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

The instruments utilized in this study were a demographics questionnaire, the OCS (with permission), and the OCQ. A demographics questionnaire for participants to self-identify age, gender-orientation, rank, and education level. The OCS was a four-dimensional model measuring: 1) affective occupational commitment; 2) normative occupational commitment; 3) accumulated costs occupational commitment; and 4) limited alternatives occupational commitment. The 24-item survey was broken down as follows: "6-items each measuring affective and normative occupational commitment, 8-items measuring accumulated costs occupational commitment (4 investment and 4 emotional costs), and 4-items measuring limited alternatives occupational commitment" (Blau, 2003, p.474). The OCQ, developed by Mowday et al. (1979), was an instrument that measures a respondent's commitment to their organization through a 15-item survey of commitment through willingness to exert effort to the organization.

Data Analysis Plan

I used different procedures to analyze the data retrieved from the study instruments to answer the RQs.

Research Question 1

RQ1 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? Using the Demographic questionnaire, the data retrieved was measured through a self-report survey of age, gender-orientation, rank, and education level. Using the OCS, the data retrieved was measured through the scales of 1) affective

occupational commitment; 2) normative occupational commitment; 3) accumulated costs occupational commitment; and 4) limited alternatives occupational commitment. This question was examined using a logistic regression analysis conducted through SPSS.

Research Question 2

RQ2 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and organizational commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? Using the Demographic questionnaire, the data retrieved was measured through a self-report survey of age, gender-orientation, rank, and education level. Using the OCQ, the data retrieved was measured through a 15-item survey of commitment through willingness to exert effort to the organization. This question was examined using a logistic regression analysis conducted through SPSS.

Research Question 3

RQ3 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials), organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? Using the Demographic questionnaire, the data retrieved was measured through a self-report survey of age, gender-orientation, rank, and education level. Using the OCS, the data retrieved was measured in two ways: 1) through the scales of 1) affective occupational commitment; 2) normative occupational commitment; 3) accumulated costs occupational commitment; and 4) limited alternatives occupational commitment. This question was examined using a logistic regression analysis conducted through SPSS. In tandem, using the OCQ, the data retrieved was measured through a 15-item survey of commitment through willingness to exert effort to

the organization. This question was examined using a logistic regression analysis

conducted through SPSS.

Research Question 4

RQ4 was, What is the relationship between millennial cohort membership,

organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? Using

the Demographic questionnaire, the data retrieved was measured through a self-report

survey of age, gender-orientation, rank, and education level. Using the OCS, the data

retrieved was measured in two ways: 1) through the scales of 1) affective occupational

commitment; 2) normative occupational commitment; 3) accumulated costs occupational

commitment; and 4) limited alternatives occupational commitment. This question was

examined using a logistic regression analysis conducted through SPSS. In tandem, using

the OCQ, the data retrieved was measured through a 15-item survey of commitment

through willingness to exert effort to the organization. This question was examined using

a logistic regression analysis conducted through SPSS.

Threats to Validity

There were several potential limitations, challenges, and/or barriers with this

research study. For instance, this study also included participants of three generational

cohorts of sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the

millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio.

The results could have been specific and relative to the demographics, geographical

location, and chosen field of this study. In addition, the instruments used could be a

limitation. Participation in this study was voluntary, and of a self-reporting nature. Thus,

there was the potential for participant bias, misrepresentation, inaccuracies, and incomplete submissions.

Ethical Procedures

I conducted this study in accordance with the American Psychological Association's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2017, 2002)*, as well as Walden University's Institutional Review Board guidelines. I obtained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board before I collected data; Approval no. 10-21-22-0524881. This study was not funded by any outside entity, affiliate, or third party. Therefore, there was no support, incentive, or reward based on the results.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the methodological framework to be used in this study. The chapter discussed the background of the problem, the rationale, RQs and hypotheses to be examined, the research method and design. I discussed the population and procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. Ethical considerations and the potential significance of the study were also discussed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study, which was correlational in design, was to examine career and organizational commitment among generational cohorts to determine any distinctions among the millennial cohort in law enforcement. The participants included three cohorts of sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The IV for this study was cohorts—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—with nominal data obtained from responses to a demographic questionnaire. The DV were career commitment, which was measured using the OCS, and organizational commitment, which was measured using the OCQ. The scores on both instruments are ordinal data. In this chapter, I provide descriptive information on the population used for this study and a detailed summary of the results from the statistical analysis.

This study is unique because it addressed several under-researched areas in empirical literature: one, generational distinctions in law enforcement; two, career and organizational commitment among officers; and three, the recruitment, training, and retention of the millennial cohort of officers in law enforcement. The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of this study. I will provide descriptive information on the population used for this study and a detailed summary of the results gathered from the statistical analysis. After restating the RQs and hypotheses, I describe the data collection, with subsections on the sample population, the reliability test, and assumptions of the

statistical analysis. Then, I present the results. The chapter concludes with a summary of key points.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I developed the following RQs and hypotheses to examine the effects, if any, of generational differences on law enforcement officers' career commitment and organizational commitment.

RQ1: What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's career commitment in Ohio.

H_A1: There is a significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's career commitment in Ohio.

RQ2: What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and organizational commitment in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$2: There is no significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational commitment in Ohio.

H_A2: There is a significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational commitment in Ohio.

RQ3: What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials), organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$3: There is no significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

H_A3: There is a significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

RQ4: What is the relationship between millennial cohort membership, organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio?

$H_0$4: There is no significant relationship between millennial cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

H_A4: There is a significant relationship between millennial cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio.

I also explored whether there were any distinctions among the millennial cohort of officers. The overall and specific variables related to career commitment.

Data Collection

The sample population in this study consisted of sworn officers of three generational cohorts—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The minimum sample size as computed using the G*Power software was 104. This minimum size was exceeded by 37; I recruited 141 participants, representing 35% more data points.

Generation Y, or the millennial generation, was the majority in this cohort with 47% of the officers are shown in Table 2 below. The participants were mostly male officers (74%) and those of European American descent (89%). Those officers who had 20 years or more of service were the majority (45%), followed by those who served between 1 and 5 years (19%) in law enforcement.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	Frequency	Percent
Generation		
Baby Boomers	19	13.7
Generation X	55	39.6
Generation Y	65	46.8
Gender		
Male	103	73.6
Female	37	26.4
Ethnicity		
African American	3	2.2
American Indian	1	0.7
European American Descent or Caucasian	122	89.1
Latino/a or Hispanic	2	1.5
Other	9	6.6
Years of Service		
1-5 years	26	18.7
6-10 years	20	14.4
11-15 years	13	9.4
16-20 years	17	12.2
20 or more years	63	45.3

Reliability Test

I used different scales to learn more about career and organizational commitment among millennial officers. Use of these scales allowed me to measure the DVs and

determine how they related to the IV. The DV for this study were: 1) career commitment measured by scores obtained through the OCS; ordinal data; and 2) organizational commitment measured by scores obtained through the OCQ; also, ordinal data. These DVs were constructed from two multiple-question Likert scales.

Before using the scales, which consisted of related individual questions, there was a need to determine if they were consistent and, so reliable. One way to do this was to assess the scale's internal consistency-reliability, or the extent to which the individual items varied or how closely related they are together as a group. Cronbach's alpha, α (or coefficient alpha), developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951, was the most common measure of internal consistency (measures reliability). Cronbach's alpha typically ranged from 0 to 1: a 1.0 alpha value represented perfect consistency in measurement, while an alpha value of 0.0 represented no consistency in measurement. A frequently cited acceptable range of Cronbach's alpha was a value of 0.50 or above. The reliability test results are shown in Table 3 below indicated that one DV had Cronbach's Alpha of 0.9 (OCS) and the other had a value way below the recommended cutoff (OCQ).

Table 3

Reliability Tests Using the Cronbach's Alpha Measure

Variables	N of Cases	N of Items	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha
Occupational Commitment Scale (OCS)	121	24	2.853	0.895
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)	111	15	4.592	0.341

Results

I used ordinal logical regression analysis to examine the relationship between generational cohort membership, career and organizational commitment. The results of the statistical analysis for each of the RQs are presented in this section.

Descriptive Statistics for Main Outcome (Dependent) Variables

The descriptive statistics of the main DVs are shown in Table 4 below. Most of the skewness and kurtosis values were within the ± 1, indicating that most probably the pattern of responses was considered a normal distribution. The standard deviations were also relatively small indicating that the responses were not dispersed from each from the mean.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent Variables

	Median	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skew	Kurt
Occupational Commitment Scale (OCS)	3	2.936	0.595	1	4	-0.218	0.578
Baby Boomers	3	2.765	0.903	1	4	-0.054	-0.775
Generation X	3	2.980	0.595	2	4	0.004	0.003
Generation Y	3	2.946	0.488	2	4	-0.148	1.432
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)	6	5.426	1.128	3	7	-0.306	-0.705
Baby Boomers	6	5.294	1.311	3	7	-0.431	-0.866
Generation X	5	5.408	1.153	3	7	-0.276	-0.599
Generation Y	6	4.491	1.069	3	7	-0.258	-0.850

Research Question 1

RQ1 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and career commitment in law

enforcement in Ohio? Ordinal logistic regression was used to analyze this relationship

and the results are shown in Table 5 below. The results indicated that the ordinal logistic

regression model was not statistically significant, odds ratios for baby boomers 0.528

(95% CI [.174, 1.604]) and Generation X 1.125 (95% CI [.507, 2.496]) as compared to

Generation Y, or the millennial cohort, having a p value = .411, and therefore, I failed to

reject the null hypothesis.

Table 5

Parameter Estimates of Ordinal Logistic Regression Using the Occupational Commitment Scale as the Dependent Variable With Four-Ordered Categories

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Generation Cohort	Estimate	S. E[1]	p value	OR[2]	95% CI[3] for OR[2]	Score test[4]
Baby Boomers	-0.639	0.567		0.528	0.174 – 1.604	
Generation Y	0.118	0.407	0.411	1.125	0.507 – 2.496	0.013
Generation X				1		
-2 Log- Likelihood 33.550						
Likelihood ratio test 1.475 (df=2, p-value = 0.478)						

[1] – Standard Error   [3] – Confidence Interval
[2] – Odds Ratio   [4] – Pearson Goodness-of-Fit

Research Question 2

RQ2 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership

(baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and organizational commitment in law

enforcement in Ohio? Ordinal logistic regression was used to analyze this relationship

and the results are shown in Table 6 below. The results indicated that the ordinal logistic

regression model was not statistically significant, per the p value of the Wald test. The p

value was larger than the .05, and therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 6

Parameter Estimates of Ordinal Logistic Regression Using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire as the Dependent Variable With Four-Ordered Categories

.

Generation Cohort	Estimate	S. E[1]	p value	OR[2]	95% CI[3] for OR[2]	Score test[4]
Baby Boomers	-0.226	0.497		0.798	0.301 – 2.112	
Generation X	-0.116	0.352	0.886	0.891	0.447 – 1.775	0.514
Generation Y				1		
-2 Log- Likelihood 43.955						
Likelihood ratio test 0.236 (df=2, p-value = 0.889)						

[1] – Standard Error   [3] – Confidence Interval
[2] – Odds Ratio   [4] – Pearson Goodness-of-Fit

Research Question 3

RQ3 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials), organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? This question was split from its original construct into two sub-sections: 1) testing the relationship between generational cohort membership and career commitment (OCS); and 2) testing the relationship between generational cohort membership and organizational commitment (OCQ). Ordinal logistic regression was used to analyze the relationship between generational cohort membership, organizational commitment (OCQ), and career commitment (OCS), and the results are shown in Tables 7 and 8 below. The results indicated that the ordinal logistic regression model was not statically significant, per the p value of the Wald test. The p value was larger than the .05 significance level and therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 7

Parameter Estimates of Ordinal Logistic Regression Using the Occupational Commitment Scale as the Dependent Variable With Four-Ordered Categories

Generation Cohort	Estimate	S. E[1]	p value	OR[2]	95% CI[3] for OR[2]	Score test[4]
Baby Boomers	-0.639	0.567		0.260	-1.751 - .472	
Generation X	0.118	0.407	0.411	0.772	-.679 - .915	0.013
Generation Y				1		
-2 Log- Likelihood 33.025						
Likelihood ratio test 1.475 (df=2, p-value = 0.478)						

[1] – Standard Error   [3] – Confidence Interval
[2] – Odds Ratio   [4] – Pearson Goodness-of-Fit

Table 8

Parameter Estimates of Ordinal Logistic Regression Using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire as the Dependent Variable With Four-Ordered Categories

Generation Cohort	Estimate	S. E[1]	p value	OR[2]	95% CI[3] for OR[2]	Score test[4]
Baby Boomers	-0.226	0.497		0.649	-1.200 - .748	
Generation X	-0.116	0.352	0.742	0.742	-0.806 - .574	0.504
Generation Y				1		
-2 Log- Likelihood 43.955						
Likelihood ratio test 0.236 (df=2, p-value = 0.889)						

[1] – Standard Error   [3] – Confidence Interval
[2] – Odds Ratio   [4] – Pearson Goodness-of-Fit

Research Question 4

RQ4 was, What is the relationship between millennial cohort membership, organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? This question was also split from its original construct into two sub-sections: 1) testing the

relationship between millennial cohort membership and career commitment (OCS); and

2) testing the relationship between millennial cohort membership and organizational

commitment (OCQ). The ordinal logistic regression model was used to analyze the

relationship between millennial cohort membership and career commitment (OCS), and

the results are shown in Table 9 below. The ordinal logistic regression model was not

statistically significant, odds ratios for those who were not millennial was 0.955 (95% CI

[.456, 2.000]) as compared to the millennial having p value = .903, and therefore, I failed

to reject the null hypothesis. The ordinal logistic regression model was also used to

analyze the relationship between millennial cohort membership and organizational

commitment (OCQ), and the results are shown in Table 10 below. Just as the previous

results, the test showed no statistically significant relationship, and therefore, I failed to

reject the null hypothesis.

Table 9

Parameter Estimates of Ordinal Logistic Regression Using the Occupational
Commitment Scale as the Dependent Variable With Four-Ordered Categories

Millennial Cohort	Estimate	S. E[1]	p value	OR[2]	95% CI[3] for OR[2]	Score test[4]
No	-0.046	0.377	0.903	0.955	0.456 – 2.000	0.094
Yes				1		
-2 Log- Likelihood 22.693						
Likelihood ratio test 0.15 (df=1, p-value = 0.903)						

[1] – Standard Error   [3] – Confidence Interval
[2] – Odds Ratio   [4] – Pearson Goodness-of-Fit

Table 10

Parameter Estimates of Ordinal Logistic Regression Using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire as the Dependent Variable With Four-Ordered Categories

Millennial Cohort	Estimate	S. E[1]	p value	OR[2]	95% CI[3] for OR[2]	Score test[4]
No	-0.143	0.327	0.663	0.867	0.457 – 1.646	0.373
Yes				1		
-2 Log- Likelihood 32.739						
Likelihood ratio test 0.191 (df=1, p-value = 0.662)						

[1] – Standard Error   [3] – Confidence Interval
[2] – Odds Ratio   [4] – Pearson Goodness-of-Fit

Summary

The results of this study provided insight into generational cohorts of officers, specifically, the millennial cohort, in regard to career and organizational commitment, in law enforcement. The chapter presented the findings of the study that included the description of the demographic characteristics of the sample population, the descriptive statistics of the main variables, statistical assumptions analysis, and the statistical analysis findings, organized by the RQs. The results retrieved from the various inferential analyses conducted demonstrated that no statistically significant relationships existed between career commitment and organizational commitment among generational cohorts, including the millennial generation, in law enforcement, in Ohio.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, will present, discuss, and critique the findings from the research study analysis. The chapter will include the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, potential implications to empirical research, and

recommendations for future research. Last, the chapter will provide a conclusion to the research study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study, which was correlational in design, was to examine career and organizational commitment among generational cohorts and to determine any distinctions among the millennial cohort in law enforcement in Ohio. Currently, four generational cohorts are laboring in the U.S. workforce together (Dietrich, 2018; Hilal et al., 2017). However, the transition of generations in law enforcement illustrates the importance of recruiting, training, and retaining millennial officers (Cain, 2020; Sharp, 2016; VanDyke, 2020). Law enforcement administrators face challenges related to the selection, recruitment, training, and retention of future law enforcement officers (Cain, 2020; Chevremont, 2019; Dietrich, 2018; Keenan, 2017; Sharp, 2016; Skibba, 2018; VanDyke, 2020).

The study participants included three cohorts of sworn officers—baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (or the millennial generation)—currently commissioned with law enforcement agencies in Ohio. The IV for this study was the cohort—baby boomers, Generation X, or Generation Y (or the millennial generation); nominal data for this variable were obtained through a demographic questionnaire. The DVs for this study were career commitment, which was measured using the OCS, and organizational commitment, which was measured using the OCQ. The OCS and OCQ scores are ordinal data. In conducting the study, I addressed under-researched areas in empirical literature related to generational distinctions in law enforcement; career commitment and organizational commitment among officers; and the recruitment, training, and retention

of the millennial cohort of officers in law enforcement. In summary, the study's findings demonstrated that no statistically significant relationships existed between career commitment and organizational commitment among generational cohorts, including the millennial generation, in law enforcement in Ohio.

This chapter includes an interpretation of the results and discussion of the implications for research. I interpret the findings in relation to the RQs. The limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change are then addressed. I offer the following recommendations: promote intergenerational job engagement, offer mentorship programs, and boost communication and offer a voice platform. The chapter ends with a conclusion to the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

RQ1 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? The results indicated that the ordinal logistic regression model was not statistically significant, with odds ratios for baby boomers 0.528 (95% CI [.174, 1.604]) and Generation X 1.125 (95% CI [.507, 2.496]) as compared to the millennial cohort having a p-value = .411. The null hypothesis indicated that no statistically significant relationship existed between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's career commitment in Ohio. Therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis. The findings failed to prove the study by Katz et al., (2019), who showed that in career commitment, there was a slight correlation between commitment to a career and a person's age. Whereas, I

investigated participants as per generational cohorts as opposed to an age factor in determining career commitment among law enforcement officers. However, despite the generational differences, there was no statistically significant relationship between their career commitment. Perhaps, it was because law enforcement officers shared a common goal and mission, regardless of age or generation. Furthermore, their work required a high level of commitment and dedication, which transcends all generational differences.

In addition, the findings of this study needed to prove the findings related to distinctions among generational cohorts, specifically among the millennial generation. In the study of Damayanti et al., (2019), the work environment influenced organizational commitment among the millennial cohort due to the positive relationship between work values and the work environment that led to career commitment. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between generational cohort membership and career commitment among law enforcement officers in Ohio. According to the results of baby boomers and Generation X law enforcement officers' career commitment based on the OCS scores in Ohio per analysis, it did not significantly differ from those of the millennial cohort. Additionally, this study's findings may not be generalizable to law enforcement officers in other states or countries. Different generations portrayed different beliefs and patterns in their workplaces, hence the lack of any statistically significant relationship portrayed the same among law enforcement officers.

Research Question 2

RQ2 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials) and organizational commitment in law

enforcement in Ohio? The results indicated that the ordinal logistic model was not

statistically significant per the p-value of the Wald test. Law enforcement officers from

the baby boomer and Generation X cohorts did not significantly differ from Generation Y,

or the millennial cohort, in terms of organizational commitment as measured by the OCQ

in Ohio. Therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis. The finding failed to confirm the

study by Luz et al. (2018), which indicated that an independent, interdependent

relationship existed between organizational commitment, career commitment, and job

satisfaction. Millennials' generational preferences, openness to experiences, and

emotional stability were factors that impacted organizational commitment. This study did

not prove the connection between organizational commitment and generational cohorts

through such variables. Also, it failed to confirm the findings of the study of Morrell and

Abston (2018), which indicated that organizational commitment faced challenges with a

high employee turnover among younger generations, specifically the millennial

generation, as they were less committed to the organization.

Despite factors from recruitment to retention contributing to organizational

commitment, no statistically significant relationship existed. Such suggested that other

variables may be at play in determining organizational commitment among law

enforcement officers. The generational shift, as evidenced by Cain (2020), would later

lead to administrative challenges. The findings of this study did not prove that, as the

generational gap did not affect organizational commitment, as shown by some scholars. It

became an assumption for the scholars who predicted that there would be a generational

and a positional shift in law enforcement, creating a void of entry-level officers (Sharp,

2016; VanDyke, 2020). The fact that the current employees in law enforcement were based on three generations did not necessarily mean that there will not be a need for new officers in the future, especially as technology and society continued to evolve. Law enforcement agencies must address this potential void and plan accordingly.

Research Question 3

RQ3 was, What is the relationship between generational cohort membership (baby boomers, Generation X, and millennials), organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? The results indicated the ordinal logistic regression model was not statically significant, per the p value of the Wald test. The p value was larger than the .05 significance level and therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis. There was no statistically significant relationship between generational cohort membership and a law enforcement officer's organizational and career commitment in Ohio. Therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis. The study's finding failed to prove the need to preserve the current workforce, law enforcement administrators, need to better understand each generation's strengths, weaknesses, and distinctions; their goals, preferences, motivators, and values as evidenced by Arrington & Dwyer, 2018; Cain, 2020; Wiedmer, 2015. The nature of consistent and standardized career and organizational commitment measures influences the findings. The complexity of the law enforcement profession, which included many factors that can affect an officer's level of commitment to their career and organization, made it hard to show a link between career commitment and organizational commitment among law enforcement officers. Despite the concerns about the changing nature of the applicants' pool, generational differences

do not affect career and organizational commitment. Research studies such as Luz et al. (2018) showed that these factors were influenced by various individual and organizational factors, such as job satisfaction, leadership, and organizational culture, rather than generational differences alone. Therefore, it was essential for law enforcement agencies to focus on creating a positive work environment and providing opportunities for career development to enhance the commitment of their officers.

This study supported the findings of Sharp (2016) which promoted the need for future research on how to attract, engage, and maintain the millennial generation within field of law enforcement. The lack of significant relationship between career commitment and organizational commitment as these variables due to no impact indicated for the law enforcement officers in Ohio. The findings of this study indicated that the independence of these variables is straightforward, hence no effect on the generational cohorts.

Research Question 4

RQ4 was, What is the relationship between millennial cohort membership, organizational commitment, and career commitment in law enforcement in Ohio? The ordinal logistic regression model was not statistically significant; the odds ratio for those who were not millennial was 0.955 (95% CI [.456, 2.000]) compared to the millennial with a p-value = .903. There was no significant relationship between career commitment and organizational commitment among millennials. Therefore, I failed to reject the null hypothesis. The study by Mayangdarastri and Khusna (2020) connected the millennial generation to the notion that, a motivated employee will engage, and an engaged employee will be motivated, eventually leading to organizational and, ultimately, career

commitment. In addition, Luz et al. (2018) showed the interconnectedness between organizational commitment, career commitment, and job satisfaction, as they are intertwined. However, this study's finding did not confirm these scholars' assertion.

The findings of this study failed to confirm Calk and Patrick (2017). They indicated that with the millennial generation at the beginning of their careers, their plans, positions, and commitment need to be more established, causing potential leadership voids in organizations. Despite such propositions by these scholars, career commitment and organizational commitment, the lack of any significant relationship showed that the law enforcement administration did not significantly impact the millennial career-wise, or in terms of organizational involvement. Morrell and Abston (2018), deduced that "the millennial turnover" impacted the U.S economy which was estimated at approximately $30.5 billion annually and affirmed by VanDyke (2020). The findings of this study showed that regardless of the career commitment and organizational commitment among millennials and having no statistically significant relationship, factors other than career and organizational commitment may have played a role in determining job satisfaction, career commitment, and organizational commitment, among the millennial generation.

Limitations of the Study

The weaknesses in this study were articulated through the elements of trustworthiness. Its limitations were the credibility, confirmability, and transferability of this study. Also, by analyzing the internal validity, its threats were established in relation to the purpose of this study. First, credibility of the nature of my study posed challenges, as it could not determine how some significant factors related. Additionally, the sample

size might not have been representative of the entire population, leading to potential biases and limitations in generalizing the findings to a larger population. Furthermore, the original population I proposed was limited, both in size and geographical location, and was subject to change based on graduations, new hires, retirements, separations, and terminations. In quantitative research, sample size was a critical factor to consider when conducting research as this affects the validity and reliability of results. Moreover, my study relied solely on self-reported data, which may have been subject to bias and inaccuracies, and did not account for external factors that may have influenced the results. Using secondary data for the study impacted its credibility, as the instruments used were a demographic questionnaire, the OCS (with permission), and the OCQ. Furthermore, the study's inability to control for extraneous variables and the limited sample size may have also affected the generalizability of the findings. It impacted the accuracy of the responses as I could not verify them.

Second, transferability was affected through selection bias of the research sample. It impacted external validity as the participants are from Ohio, hence, as per the purpose of the study cannot be generalized. Additionally, the study's reliance on numerical data may have overlooked important contextual factors that may have influenced the outcomes. Third, confirmability of the study was jeopardized as the findings of the study indicated no statistically significant relationship for its variables. The inability to draw conclusions from the findings was one of the limitations of a quantitative study. Another limitation was that quantitative studies may not capture the full complexity of human experiences and behaviors, as they rely on numerical data and statistical analysis.

Recommendations

As further research needs to be conducted to decipher generational differences, and any distinctions thereof among the millennial cohort, specifically in regard to career commitment in law enforcement. Law enforcement administration faced challenges specifically, with the recruitment, training, and retention of future officers in law enforcement (Cain, 2020; Chevremont, 2019; Keenan, 2017; Sharp, 2016; Skibba, 2018; VanDyke, 2020). The challenge was in recruiting and retaining the right individuals within law enforcement and promoting career development and organizational commitment. Law enforcement administration needed to be aware and understand millennials' career decisions, including work-life balance, job satisfaction, and opportunities for advancement, and offer integration through police organizational culture. This knowledge can help agencies develop effective recruitment and retention strategies that will address the challenge of attracting and retaining qualified personnel by considering generational differences when recruiting. As a result, it sets the appropriate pool that meets the desired criteria as it lowers it to accommodate more millennials. This research could provide valuable insights into how law enforcement agencies can adapt their recruitment and retention strategies by focusing on generational differences. Therefore, to better attract and retain millennial employees, ultimately leading to a more diverse and effective workforce, it may also shed light on the potential impact of technology and changing societal values on career commitment in law enforcement.

Implications

Resolving generational differences in law enforcement leads to a positive social change that could increase trust and community cooperation, resulting in a safer and more harmonious society. It may also lead to more effective policing strategies that consider different generations' unique needs and perspectives. Diversification of law enforcement functions allows different generations of law enforcement officers to act as agents of social change, which can ultimately lead to a safer and more cohesive society. It shifts the culture of policing from "warrior" to "guardian," emphasizing building trust and relationships within the communities in which they serve. Sorting out the generation gap in law enforcement will lead to more effective policing. This culture shift can help bridge the gap between law enforcement and communities, especially with the younger generations who have grown up with different perspectives on policing. It can also lead to better communication and understanding between police officers and citizens, ultimately resulting in safer communities. Community policing methods, for instance, placing officers despite their generation gap in specific neighborhoods and letting residents help make decisions, are especially good at bringing people of different generations together and building trust between police and the community. As a result, "community engagement and problem-oriented policing" approaches have grown in popularity in recent years, with many law enforcement agencies implementing them to improve public safety and reduce crime. Below are practical departmental recommendations for law enforcement administration.

Promote Intergenerational Job Engagement

It can be achieved by providing opportunities for mentorship and collaboration across different age groups and recognizing and valuing baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, or the millennials' unique strengths and perspectives each generation brings to the workplace. Additionally, offering flexible work arrangements and professional development opportunities can foster a sense of commitment and loyalty among law enforcement officers of all ages. Diversifying the members and teamwork for the different generations will foster innovation and promote the transfer of skills from one law enforcement officer to another, regardless of the generational cohort. As a result, this encourages a more collaborative and inclusive work environment that values each individual's unique perspectives and experiences, leading to increased job satisfaction and retention rates among law enforcement officers. Ultimately, career and organizational commitment are facilitated through diversification, job engagement, innovation, and connectedness within the workplace. Law enforcement administration is no exception to this rule. Officers who feel valued and connected to their organization are more likely to remain committed to their careers and the agency's mission. Effective leadership, ongoing training, and opportunities for growth and advancement can also contribute to increased commitment among law enforcement personnel. The latter eventually leads to reduced tension among generations and increased productivity and job satisfaction. Therefore, fostering career development and organizational commitment becomes inevitable within law enforcement agencies.

Offer Mentorship Programs

Connecting generations in a work environment brings cohesion; this can help bridge the gap between generations in a work environment by providing opportunities for younger employees to learn from experienced professionals and for older employees to share their knowledge and expertise. A more harmonious workplace is created as baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, or the millennial cohort, can be brought together and mentor each other. A mentorship program such as "reverse mentoring", where younger employees can mentor older employees on technology and social media while older employees can mentor younger employees on leadership and communication skills, can be implemented. It creates a culture of learning and collaboration, ultimately leading to a more productive and successful workplace. As a result, engaging in constructive feedback and encouraging open communication among team members can foster a positive work environment. Here, law enforcement officers, regardless of their generation, feel valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts, promoting career growth and organizational commitment as a work bond is created. It decreases turnover rates. It also helps build trust and respect among team members, which is crucial in law enforcement.

Boost Communication and Offer a Voice Platform

Law enforcement officers from different generations can learn from each other. It can help bridge the generational gaps between law enforcement officers. Leaders allow them to take the lead, voice their concerns, and make decisions by making it easy to talk about career development, growth, and organizational issues. As a result, it can help

officers do their jobs better, make better decisions, and keep both the public and themselves safer. The administration promotes and cares for law enforcement officers' well-being by allowing them to resolve internal conflicts.

Furthermore, providing regular training and access to mental health resources can also contribute to the overall well-being of law enforcement officers as their concerns are addressed. It ultimately leads to better performance and more effective policing. It improves career and organizational commitment as baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, or the millennial cohort, are valued within the organization. Moreover, it can also result in higher retention rates and reduced organizational turnover costs. It is because employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to stay with the organization for a more extended period.

Conclusion

This quantitative study, correlational in design, examined generational differences, and any distinctions thereof among the millennial cohort, and career and organizational commitment in law enforcement, in Ohio. The study, through RQs and the hypotheses formulated, I provided the basis for investigation from the RQs and hypotheses formulated, as well as through variables I created. Through the use of a demographic questionnaire, the OCS (with permission), and the OCQ, the variables were investigated. The findings indicated through various inferential analyses, that no statistically significant relationships existed between career commitment and/or organizational commitment among generational cohorts, including the millennial generation, in law enforcement, in Ohio. The study's limitations reflected generalizability

due to the sample size and using secondary data. Despite the findings, and the generation differences, law enforcement administrators need to understand the millennial generation and their career decisions. Recruiting and retaining the millennial cohort is a challenging task as the application pool needs amendment while aiming at attracting the right individuals. Many scholars have pointed out millennials' weakness concerning career commitment and growth as they are but a "flight risk" as they do not stay long in their current jobs. Having identified so, the need for measures to boost communication, provide platforms to voice concerns, offer reverse mentorship programs, and encourage intergenerational job engagement will bridge the generational differences and ultimately, promote the organizational and career commitment within law enforcement. Establishing so, postulated an increase in public safety, community engagement, and acting as agents of social change becomes inevitable. In order to effectively recruit, train, and retain the officers of tomorrow, administration must bridge the generational gap to enhance officer functions and organizational culture as an effective work environment for all generations for the future success of law enforcement in America resulting in a positive social change.

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Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is for you to provide some basic background

information about yourself and your experience within law enforcement. Please read

through the questionnaire and answer the following.

<u>Demographic Information</u>

1. Gender: _____Male _____Female _____Identifies as

2. Birth Year: _____

3. Ethnicity/Race (Please choose from one of the following):

   A. African-American

   B. American Indian

   C. Asian or Pacific Islander

   D. European American Descent or Caucasian

   E. Latino/a or Hispanic

   F. Other (Please specify)

4. Please indicate how many years of service you have in law enforcement:

   A. 1-5 years

   B. 6-10 years

   C. 11-15 years

   D. 16-20 years

   E. 20 or more years

Appendix B: Occupational Commitment Scale (Blau, 2003)

Please enter below on a scale from 1 to 4.

Affective Occupational Commitment

1. Law enforcement is important to my self-image.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

2. I am happy to have entered the law enforcement profession.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

3. I am proud to be in the field of law enforcement.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

4. I like being a law enforcement officer.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

5. I strongly identify with the law enforcement profession.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

6. I am enthusiastic about law enforcement.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

Normative Occupational Commitment

1. I believe people who have been trained in law enforcement have a responsibility to stay in that profession.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

2. I feel an obligation to remain in law enforcement.

   1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

3. I feel a responsibility to continue in law enforcement.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

4. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave law enforcement right now.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

5. I would feel guilty if I left law enforcement.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

6. I am in law enforcement partly because of a sense of loyalty to it.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

Accumulated Costs Occupational Commitment

1. I have too much time invested in law enforcement to change professions.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

2. It would be very costly for me, income-wise, to change my profession.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

3. I have too much invested, e.g., education, personal effort, in law enforcement to change professions at this time.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

4. For me to enter another profession would require giving up a substantial investment in training.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

5. There would be a great emotional price involved, e.g., disrupted interpersonal relationships in changing professions.

<center>1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree</center>

6. Changing from law enforcement to another profession would not be easy emotionally for me.

    1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

7. It would be hard emotionally for me to change from law enforcement because of the difficulties it would impose on my family.

    1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

8. Leaving law enforcement would cause some emotional trauma for me.

    1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

Limited Alternatives Occupational Commitment

1. Given my background and experience, there are other attractive alternatives available to me in other professions.

    1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

2. I would have many options if I decided to change professions.

    1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

3. I am pleased that I have many alternatives available for changing professions.

    1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

4. If I left law enforcement, I feel that I would have desirable options to pursue.

    1=Strongly Disagree   2=Disagree   3=Agree   4=Strongly Agree

Note. From "Testing for a Four-Dimensional Structure of Occupational Commitment," by

G. Blau, 2003, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *76*(4), 469–488

(https://doi.org/10.1348/096317903322591596). Copyright 2003 by the British

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Appendix C: Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979)

Please enter below on a scale from 1 to 7.

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.

3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization. (R)

4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.

5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.

6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.

7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)

8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)

10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.

11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. (R)

12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)

13. I really care about the fate of this organization.

14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.

15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. (R)

Note. Responses to each item are measured on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *moderately disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *neither disagree nor agree*, 5 = *slightly agree*, 6 = *moderately agree*, and 7 = *strongly agree*). An "R" denotes a negatively phrased and reverse scored item. From "The Measurement of Organizational Commitment," by R. T. Mowday, R. M. Steers, and L. W. Porter, 1979, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *14*(2), 224–247 (https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(79)90072-1). Copyright 1979 by Elsevier.

Appendix D: Permission to Use the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

PsycTESTS

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

PsycTESTS Citation: Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979).
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire [Database record].
Retrieved from PsycTESTS.
doi:10.1037/t08840-000
Test Shown: Full
Test Format:
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale with the following anchors: Strongly agree, moderately agree, slightly agree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly disagree, moderately disagree, strongly disagree.
Source:
Mowday, Richard T., Steers, Richard M., & Porter, Lyman W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. Journal of Vocational Behavior, Vol 14(2), 224-247. doi: 10.1016/0001-8791(79)90072-1, © 1979 by Elsevier. Reproduced by Permission of Elsevier.
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