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## **Workforce Strategies for Increasing Engagement Across Multiple Generations**

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# Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Margrett C. Baker

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University  
2024

Abstract

Workforce Strategies for Increasing Engagement Across Multiple Generations

by

Margrett C. Baker

MBA, Lincoln Memorial University, 2012

BLS, University of Memphis, 2006

Doctoral Study Prospectus Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2024

## Abstract

Some business managers need to gain an understanding of developing engagement strategies for the multigenerational workforce to implement cultural changes, decrease employee burnout, and increase job performance and company profitability. Grounded in the employee engagement theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to explore strategies business managers use to engage the multigenerational workforce. The targeted population was four business managers in the healthcare industry in Nashville, TN who used strategies to engage the multigenerational workforce. Data were collected using semistructured interviews. Using Yin's 5 step-analysis three themes emerged: (a) transparency, (b) effective communications, (c) and develop team collaborations. A key recommendation is for business managers to develop manager and employee relationships by conducting diversity and cultural sensitivity training to engage the multigenerational workforce. The implication for positive social change includes the potential for business managers to decrease organizational cultural toxicity and increase awareness of the engagement process with openness and trust when communicating and building teamwork with the multigenerational workforce.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to God- he sees all, my loving mother Gloria J. Baker and always faithful sister Janice B. Johnson. This journey was not an easy accomplishment it was earned, not given, and accomplished through hard work and dedication.

## Acknowledgments

First, I would like to give all the honor and glory to God, the head of my life. God has kept my life safe from harm and danger. I thank God for his hedge of protection on my life and for giving me the strength to make it through day by day. God rewards me with a long life and gives me his salvation. The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid (Psalm 27:1).

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

### **Background of the Problem**

Researchers have studied generational cohorts and multigenerational workforces in the workplace. Workplace settings are increasingly becoming multigenerational (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). The active cohorts that make up the workforce orientation are boomers born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X born between 1965 and 1979 and Generation Y born between 1980 and 2000. (Easton & Steyn, 2022). Embracing generational differences has become an organizational commitment for both business managers and employees by sharing the knowledge contributing to the multigenerational workforce (Ahmad et al., 2022). Understanding how each generation's cohort can assist business managers with benefiting the workplace environment with training methods and reducing turnovers.

Generational cohorts describe different age groups and stages within the workforce, giving business managers an outline of each age group's diversity and personality traits. Generational cohorts have similarities and differences; however, the manager's role is to connect generational diversity to achieve positive results (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Management is responsible for guiding employee engagement across multiple generations in the workforce. Managers must be able to support teams with the ability and insight to lead, strategize, and aid with common goals of the differences of generations (Elavarasan et al., 2021). In this study, I explored the strategies that business managers can use to engage their workforce effectively.

Understanding the generational differences is useful for business managers who are preparing the future generations for challenges. Business managers redirect their

focus on developing rules that fit the generational mix with older and younger workers (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). It is management's responsibility to engage work-related diversity to incorporate different attitudes, values, and work habits toward productive and cooperative workforces (Smeak, 2020). Akar (2020) evaluated generations and concluded the importance of fostering a more productive workforce by recognizing and understanding the legitimacy of generational differences. These expectations may be used by business managers to develop effective engagement strategies to develop a cooperative workforce. Business managers may need to modify their business objectives flexibly, adapt to each generation's uniqueness, and address the differences with the multigenerational workforce (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Business managers engaged with the different generational cohorts influence generational identities within the organization.

### **Problem Statement**

Embracing generations in a multigenerational workforce constitutes challenges for engagement with connecting both newer and older generations for some business managers (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Engaging younger and older workers in a multigenerational workforce poses challenges (Paros et., 2022). Some business managers struggle with employee engagement with multigenerational workforces, spending over 87.6 billion in 2018 on training expenditures annually (Els et al., 2022). The general business problem that I explored in this study was that some business managers have challenges creating employee engagement with a multigenerational workforce. The specific business problem was that some business managers need to gain an understanding of developing engagement strategies for a multigenerational workforce to

implement culture changes, decrease employee burnout, and increase profitability with job performance.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to explore strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. The targeted population was four business managers in the healthcare industry in Nashville, TN who successfully used strategies to engage their multigenerational workforce. The implications for social change from this study include the potential to increase opportunities for business managers to successfully engage a multigenerational workforce and reduce employees' intentions to resign. The decrease in employees' intentions to leave can lower the overall unemployment rates in the local communities. It is important to note that some communities with lower unemployment rates may unintentionally negatively affect social resources. The unemployed may have higher cases of mental and physical health problems, mortality rates, and a greater tendency to develop negative family relationships (Becker et al., 2020). Business managers understanding and respecting generational differences can benefit the organization.

### **Nature of the Study**

In this qualitative study, I explored strategies with multigenerational workforces from Nashville, TN, and participants between three generations: boomers, Gen-Xers, and Generation Y. The three commonly used research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method (Yin, 2018). Researchers use the qualitative method to explore what, why, and how of a phenomenon in its real-life setting (Pathiranage et al., 2021).

I used the qualitative research method because I explored the what, why, and how of a particular phenomenon which was the strategies business managers used to engage their multigenerational workforce. In contrast, researchers use the quantitative method to test hypotheses with sampling for theory and mechanistic evaluations (Lewis et al., 2020). I did not select the quantitative research method because I did not test a hypothesis or examine relationships among variables. Researchers conducting mixed-method studies integrate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (Vivek & Nanthagopan, 2021). I did not select the mixed-method research methodology because I did not conduct the quantitative part of the mixed method to address my study's purpose.

I considered several qualitative research designs, including phenomenology, ethnography, narrative, pragmatic inquiry, and case study. Researchers using the phenomenological method seek to understand participants' lived experiences with deeper human aspects regarding mood, sensations, and emotions (Frechette et al., 2020). I did not select the phenomenological design because I did not explore the meanings of participants' lived experiences. Researchers use the ethnographic method to understand cultural-centric social and urban problems resulting in conflict within ethnic groups (Snodgrass et al., 2022). I did not select the ethnographic design because I did not study social and urban problems within ethnic groups' cultures.

Researchers use the narrative method to obtain participants' experiences through the participants' personal stories in a relaxed and interpretative way (Miller et al., 2020). I did not select the narrative design because I did not explore participants' experiences through their personal stories. Researchers also use the case study design to study a phenomenon in-depth within the participants' environmental context and triangulate to

validate findings (Adler, 2022; Yin, 2018). Qualitative pragmatic inquiry study combines macro and micro research issues, allowing researchers to explore and investigate techniques (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). A qualitative pragmatic inquiry study design is most appropriate for this study as I was able to explore the working styles of business managers and different engagement strategies related to multigenerational workforces.

### **Research Question**

What strategies do business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce to implement culture changes, decrease employee burnout, and increase profitability with job performance?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies did you use to successfully engage your multigenerational workforce to reduce employee turnover?
2. How did your employees respond to those strategies?
3. How did you measure the successful engagement of your multigenerational workforce? What metrics, if any, did you use?
4. How, if at all, were the strategies to engage your multigenerational workforce communicated throughout the organizational ranks and among stakeholders?
5. What, if any, modifications did you apply to any strategy to improve its effectiveness in engaging your multigenerational workforce?
6. What were the key barriers to implementing strategies to successfully engage your multigenerational workforce?



7. How did you overcome the key barriers to implementing strategies to successfully engage your multigenerational workforce?
8. What else would you like to add about the strategies your organization used to engage your multigenerational workforce successfully?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was Shuck and Reio's (2011) employee engagement theory. Employee engagement has three essential features: the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state of an employee toward the organization (Shuck et al., 2011). Shuck and Reio developed the employee engagement scale to measure employee engagement, reflecting job satisfaction and commitment, including long-term emotional involvement (Shuck, Adelson et al., 2016; Shuck et al., 2011). I selected the employee engagement theory to explore strategies business managers used to engage their multigenerational workforce. I used this theory to explore developments and methods for understanding employee engagement.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Employee disengagement:* This phenomenon comprises the attitudes and behaviors of employees who are actively not engaged and make few or no contributions to the organization's goals (Wolff, 2019). Wolff (2019) stated that members of this group contribute to loss of productivity and profitability.

*Employee engagement:* The attitudes and behaviors of employees who are involved and committed with the workplace environment and endure long-term emotional involvement with the organization, such as job satisfaction and commitment (Shuck et al., 2011).

## **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are observable data classified by categorical variables and metrics conducted through expert analysis influencing reflections on the present data (Van & Joosen, 2022). In terms of the study approach, verifications of evaluations for studies and designs with text-based critical word analysis defining a roadmap exclusively specific to the survey (Van & Joosen, 2022). I identified two assumptions in this study. I assumed all participants would remain cooperative and answer questions honestly. Second, I assumed the participants would present a precise interpretation of their background knowledge regarding employee engagement.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are potential weaknesses centering on how the study could improve through future research (Cash et al., 2022). I identified two potential limitations for this research: researcher bias and small sample size. Researcher bias surrounding this study did not measure results among age diversity; instead the study revealed how the multi-generations contributed positively to their teams (Paros et al., 2022). A limitation of this study included that the small sample size may not have accurately depicted all views of employee engagement concerning generational constraints.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are characteristics considered when formulating polices to help narrow the scope of the research and define boundaries that are not limited to location, population, and sample size (Yildiz & Yüksel, 2022). Delimitations for this study included geographical area and sample size. The study participants were four business

managers in the healthcare industry in Nashville, TN, who have experience managing multiple generations in the workplace. The data may be specific to the healthcare industry and the organization's background information may not have similarities to other healthcare organizations.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is that business managers could use the results to engage their multigenerational workforces on a more cognitive dimension rather than means of short-lived mechanistic ways. Employee insights are imperative in workplace environments because employee engagement and performance are essential to maintaining and achieving organizational goals (Bazzoli & Curcuruto, 2021). Business managers could use the results from this study to find employee engagement improvements and identify strategies business managers used to motivate their workforce. Modifications may include performance recognition, open communication, and employee trust.

### **Contributions to Business Practice**

As the variation in employee demographics increases in some organizations, employee engagement has become more visible with developing techniques business managers can utilize to engage their changing workforce (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). Building resilience in the workforce can mitigate challenges through collaborations with engagement techniques to accomplish the organization's goals (Govender & Bussin, 2020). Business managers, who are the primary beneficiaries, can associate with multigenerational workforces to cultivate team building for increasing employees' performance. Business managers can bridge generational gaps to build work

environments supporting a forum for all generations to present different interests and ideas (Arora & Dhole, 2019). Business managers may gain knowledge and skills to foster employee engagement by exploring work-life balance techniques and blending younger generations with older generations to address differences in employees' expectations, personalities, and attitudes to improve productivity and profits.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study may affect positive social change by providing business managers with techniques in the workplace to encourage positive working relationships and promote low unemployment rates for their local communities, decreasing the need for social resources. Business managers engaging with their employees can reduce employee burnout, stress, and mitigate turnover rates by developing satisfying personal relationships in the workplace for benefiting employees and their families (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). The findings for this study may be used to enable business managers to craft solutions for well-being and effective multigenerational workforces.

### **Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to explore strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. With a literature review, a researcher aims to provide a conceptual framework by highlighting different perspectives and outcomes combined in the current body of knowledge. In this literature review, I presented published professional and academic research on multigenerational workforces to examine employee engagement strategies, including factors, methods, and techniques, regarding three generational cohorts: boomers born between 1946 and 1964;

Gen Xers born between 1965 and 1979; and Generation Y born between 1980 and 1999 (Wagoner, 2020).

By linking together multiple generations in the workplace, business managers connect engagement strategies with the different generations. Shuck and Reio's (2011) engagement model is used by business managers to implement strategies structured with engagement processes concerning multigenerational workforces. Each generation brings attributes to the workplace environment, and the managers' role is to attempt to engage and bridge the generational gap by providing work engagement and purposeful work for the generational cohorts (Brightenburg et al., 2020). This literature review is organized by the following topics: the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework, an explanation of multiple generations in the workforce, and literature on contrasting theories.

### **Literature Review Search Strategy**

Sutton et al (2019) indicated that composing a literature review consists of reviewing articles found by searching similar keywords and regarding the same themes to identify different variables related to the topic under study through explaining and exploring different, previously published viewpoints. I searched scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations; and other research material using the Walden University's Library and Google Scholar. The databases searched were Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, Ovid, ProQuest, and Science Direct. The primary keyword search terms were *employee engagement, engaging workforces, and generational cohorts*. The literature review consists of 102 references from peer-reviewed journals and books, with 82 (80 %) published less than 5 years ago.

### **Shuck and Reio's Engagement Framework**

I used Shuck and Reio's engagement framework for this study. This framework is a tool that has gained increasing attention as an emerging concept in recent years.

Employee engagement is evident through cognitive, emotional, and social energy (Shuck & Wollard, 2009). Kahn stated that employee engagement and personal engagement in the workplace are evident physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Business managers must understand how to use the best approach to employee engagement with multigeneration to ensure the examples of employee and personal engagement are met. Employee engagement is a popular resource for practitioners and academics, emphasizing human resource development and management behavior (Suomi et al., 2019). Business managers must identify and apply the tools to explore the physical, cognitive, and emotional levels.

Meaningful work is part of engagement by exploring the relationship with business managers and employees on where and how they place their focus regarding engagement. The existing literature on employee engagement links to Kahn's (1990) article on mental conditions surrounding personal engagement. Kahn's seminal work on emotional and cognitive engagement is shaped by and interpreted through meaningful work (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Employees associated with the need to belong, driving behavior triggers dominating social situations surrounding physical, cognitive, and emotional levels (Lappalainen et al., 2019). Factors surrounding the term *meaningfulness* share vital indicators with the foundation of engagement regarding the practical sense of value in one's personal goals at work (Kahn, 1990). An organization is responsible for providing employees with sufficient training and a meaningful workplace; in turn,

employees are motivated and influence other employees, boosting morale and creating higher levels of engagement (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020). Meaningful work is a concept organizations' business managers can use to motivate their employees through communication, commitment, and satisfactory performance.

Work experiences of meaningful outcomes promote workplaces with reduced turnover rates and more productivity. Influences can drive meaningfulness in work-related aspects through task outcome-focused engagement (Sandhya & Sulphery, 2020). Elevated levels of organizational engagement may include the constructive balancing of status, credibility, and privilege from employees' perspectives (Shuck, Collins, et al., 2016; Shuck & Rose, 2013). Ewing et al. (2019) noted that engaged employees bring more passion and feel empowered to do their jobs with upholding values and the company mission. They have more consistency with the work environment versus disengaged employees. Business managers who include strategic employee engagement may experience increases in employee productivity (Burnett & Lisk, 2019). Management bringing awareness and understanding to employees contributes to building morale and maintaining high engagement levels and promotes meaningful workplace environments.

Meaningful work is a category in Shuck and Reio's engagement framework that describes engagement levels in the workplace to balance leadership and employee work. Meaningful work drives employees to be more dedicated and seek more opportunities to realize their value within the organization, making them more engaged (Bak et al., 2021). Highlighting the advantages of developing highly engaged workforces helps organizations enhance employee engagement levels (Ewing et al., 2019). Researchers use Shuck and Reio's (2013) employee engagement framework to explore engagement

techniques by focusing on workplace climate, emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and psychological well-being. Shuck and Reio's engagement framework is valuable and significant in providing resources to organizations and equipping employees with positive or negative engagement with contributing influences from psychological empowerment (Sandhya & Sulphrey, 2020). Shuck et al. (2011) defined employee engagement as the employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state toward the organization. Counterbalancing meaningful work impacts performance and value, expressing unity and potential underlying work motivation.

Employee engagement is more prevalent in the workplace as the workforce becomes competitive. Employee engagement is a significant factor in the success of a business organization (Shuck & Reio, 2013). Shuck and Reio (2011) suggested that engaged employees are more likely to be productive, remain with their current employer, and have positive interactions overall. Researchers suggested that engaged employees achieve more significant organizational outcomes through social and community involvement (Shuck, 2011). Shuck, Collins, et al. (2016) further enhanced the employee engagement theory by introducing the employee engagement scale. Shuck et al. (2017) developed the employee engagement scale to measure the employee engagement experience from the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral perspectives. Shuck et al.'s theory contains multiple employee engagement constructs, including work, job, organizational, intellectual, and social engagement. By identifying each description associated with generational cohorts, business managers can use their skills and techniques to motivate employees of various ages.



Employee engagement is related to physical, cognitive, and emotional levels that factor into how employees feel about their organization, their expectations, and how they can work towards their goals to stay engaged. Employee engagement exemplifies how employees interpret, reflect, and understand their responsibilities, organization, culture, and value in a rational context (Shuck & Reio, 2011). Business managers influence their employees and impact their performance with consistent enhancements in their professional skills and knowledge (Baig et al., 2021). Employee engagement drivers are functions of the messaging communicated by leaders who support career development initiatives and employee well-being (Shuck & Reio, 2013). Business managers create opportunities for employee engagement in promoting a positive culture of ownership and implement team building for enhanced performance and a positive culture including feedback for employee improvements.

Business managers build morale by using solutions to help promote better workplace environments and maintain high engagement levels. Business managers have opportunities to apply problem-solving techniques to increase employee engagement (Shuck & Reio, 2013). Employee engagement enhances work-life balance, workplace climate, emotional exhaustion, and psychological well-being (Baig et al., 2021; Shuck & Reio, 2013). Business leaders applying engagement strategies in the workplace encourage improving management decisions and enhance performance and job placement through employee engagement (Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2020). According to Govender and Bussin (2020), building resilience in the workforce also addresses the challenges by building collaboration and motivational techniques to accomplish meaningful goals and

generational diversity. Business managers can lead by example by developing positive employee social engagement.

### **Workplace Climate**

Managers should define the organization's goals and clarify the employees' commitments and responsibilities to create a positive workplace climate. Workplace climate is shared situational worker attitudes and perceptions of their work environments (Sterling et al., 2022). Business managers need help with engaging multigenerational workforces with culture change. Helping employees interpret their work climate is vital and relative to social and physical cues (Shuck & Reio, 2013). Through their role and commitment, a manager can foster a workplace climate of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving (Ahmad et al., 2022). Workplace climate creates opportunities for business managers and employees to identify their diversity by valuing their differences and recognizing the long-term benefits (Stamps & Foley, 2023). Team building, recognition, and effective communication are creative ways business managers can maintain positive working environments.

A workplace climate is a working environment; if employee engagement is low, the work environment is below efficiency (Rasool et al., 2021). Business managers should define the organization's goals and clarify the employees' commitments and responsibilities to create a positive workplace climate. Through their role and commitment, a business manager can foster a workplace climate of creativity, innovation, and problem solving (Ahmad et al., 2022). Workplace climate creates opportunities for business managers and employees to identify their diversity by valuing their differences with understanding and recognizing benefits of social responsibility (Pfajfar et al., 2022).

By acknowledging and sharing examples of how sustainable engagement strategies are beneficial, managers can identify social connections to overcome challenges that impact organizations. Gabrielova and Buchko (2021) stated that boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y all have cultural intelligence related to their respective generations.

Business managers must identify how their behavior impacts their workforce and prepare themselves with positive tools to secure cohesiveness in the workplace. Business managers must identify ways to stimulate their employees by becoming more creative by engaging the diverse cultural shifts in the workplace (Azecedo et al., 2020). Team building and effectively communicating are creative ways business managers can maintain positive working environments.

Workplace climate is essential for business managers and employees. Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) explored factors of enhancing individual performances from perspectives regarding employee engagement and organizational alignment with the workplace climate that business managers use to connect with multigenerational workforces. In Cameron and Quinn's (1999) competing values framework, the authors provided definitions regarding generations as well as how they should establish connections and recognize there is room for improvement regarding their disconnects within organizations (Gong et al., 2022). When implementing engagement and collaboration strategies, the involvement of management impacts the workplace climate and provides an opportunity to build trust and resolve conflict (Turesky et al., 2020). Cameron and Quinn's (1999) framework is used by business managers to prepare themselves with developmental training and techniques to assist their workforce (Gong et

al., 2022). Leaders develop future leaders into change agents to provide stability and structure in business.

Cameron and Quinn (1999) suggested that workplace culture can be divided into culture quadrants that display dimensions of internal and external entities along with providing flexibility and control (Gong et al., 2022). Cameron and Quinn's (1999) framework can be used to examine how adopting and transforming an organizational culture attracts and retains the multigenerational workforce. (Gong et al., 2022). Employees are more than likely to have a better experience with motivational attributes when business managers implement role-modeling, creativity, and one-on-one feedback (Hartnell et al., 2023).

### **Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is a characteristic of a dysfunctional leadership style that overextends and decreases an employee effect due to feelings of low personal achievement (Elsaied, 2021). As business managers attempt to build a positive workplace, they may face challenges that could lead to low job performance and high turnover rates (Shuck et al., 2013). Shuck and Reio (2011) explained that detachment and burnout affect employees' connection to the workplace environment with diminished organizational commitment and personal accomplishment. Employees who demonstrate emotional exhaustion have issues with work-related targets connected to their organizational experiences (Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2016). The lack of communication can increase stress or emotional exhaustion due to the employees' lack of engagement and the absence of effective communication between employees and business managers.

Emotional exhaustion is negatively associated with the relationship between the manager and employees, consisting of job performance and organizational commitments. Low morale and disengagement in the workplace can trigger emotional exhaustion and reduced work performance (Bang & Reio, 2017). Emotional exhaustion can create challenges for business managers and result in the loss of productivity and employee turnover (Salama et al., 2022). Emotional exhaustion can arise from a lack of communication with the manager about employees' responsibilities and work performance measures.

Exhaustion sets in when employees demonstrate characteristics of being depleted by their workload, refuse to engage in productive work behaviors, and fail to complete tasks representing critical concerns for business managers (DeClercq et al., 2022). Emotional exhaustion combines personal, physical, and social moods for employee-manager relationships with direct and indirect effects on work pressure, leading to overload and ambiguity in the workplace performance (Lin et al., 2022). Business managers need to help identify emotional exhaustion surrounding workplace stress to prevent instances of workplace exhaustion, limiting opportunities for disengagement and employees forming meaningful relationships in an organization (Bergstedt & Wei, 2020). Emotional exhaustion mediates burnout and workplace stress, creating negative relationships and diminishing employee engagement; business managers should utilize their resources to implement strategies that engage employees to prevent emotional exhaustion (Bayighomog et al., 2021).

## **Personal Accomplishment**

Employee engagement offers researched materials with different variables to assist human resource management, employees, and the academic community to bridge generational cohorts (Shuck, 2011). Engagement promotes personal accomplishments through motivational and organizational commitments and acts in ways of identifying based motivation and efficacy to employees (Hu & Dollard, 2022). Encouraging employees to use creativity to expand their experiences of engagement is essential to management teams. Employees' behaviors in engagement efforts impact organizations along with business managers contributing elevated levels of engagement and empowerment during growth and recession periods (Casteleiro & Mendes, 2022). Providing opportunities for personal gain is vital for organizations because this process demonstrates that business managers care about their employees' growth and development within the organization.

Employees are more likely to develop their skills and abilities to gain knowledge to enhance their career paths when employers offer engagement opportunities for upper mobility (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2020). Business managers give praise to employees who are doing well and compliment their excellent work to help increase morale. When employees receive effective communication about their ongoing performance, they are motivated to contribute to positive efforts, which increases employee engagement (Shuck et al., 2011). Employee and management relationships create a company culture that contributes to elevated levels of growth and development (Sabuhari et al., 2020; Shuck, Collins, et al., 2016). An organizational culture with growth and development possibilities for employees is positive.

Business managers who coach and mentor employees may find that their feedback provides employee engagement opportunities. Broadening personal accomplishment regarding employee engagement includes collaborating training and development programs and opportunities to craft job behaviors. A relationship with job engagement is a critical element with organizational growth (Kuijpers et al., 2020). Business managers should encourage and recognize their employees' accomplishments and compliment them with positive feedback to reinforce good, desired behaviors. Employees who are engaged feel a sense of personal accomplishment; when employee engagement slows and competence levels decline with the lack of achievement towards one's work (Choi, 2021).

### **Psychological Well-Being**

Committed and motivated employees are essential in workplace environments with elevated levels of engagement. Psychological well-being, workforce motivation, and leadership styles combined with engagement are critical to the success of organizations (Guterresa et al., 2020; Sterling et al., 2022). Employee well-being includes increasing employee engagement. When employees are emotionally engaged, their connection to work increases, achieving their organizational goals (Shuck, Collins, et al., 2016). There is a similarity between employee engagement and employee well-being (Shuck, 2013). Future research linking well-being and engagement to turnover, and performance could help organizations understand health-related behaviors and education gaps (Shuck & Reio, 2013). Employees are more likely to have higher morale and less stress when business managers engage with workplace environments with job demands and resources.

Work-life balance, engagement, and psychological well-being include emotional factors surrounding community and social impacts on mental health. Psychological well-being between business managers and employees enhances job performance through teamwork to task psychological benefits and supportive behaviors for dual concerns for both self-serving and other-serving motives (Kim et al., 2022). Psychological well-being links to high job stressors and employee engagement and holds importance to how employees define value related to their work environment (Xia et al., 2022). Engagement influences the expected psychological needs and behavior with work performances, to which an employee is more attentive to their work performance (Shuck et al., 2015). Business managers not implementing work-life balance can lead to negative experiences that can make other issues stressful for the employees and employers.

Investing in employees with training and offering programs for employee assistance helps employee engagement. Organizations need emotionally invested employees who manifest positive work relationships between business managers who can boost employee engagement (Ren et al., 2022). If employees feel uncomfortable with their work environment, they may experience stress and negative emotions or attitude of employees at work; job satisfaction demonstrates a close relationship with work engagement in physical and psychological aspects (Orgambidez & Extremera 2020). Psychological empowerment and business manager support can enhance self-determination by cementing meaningful values to increase and implement support within the workplace (Tanuwijaya et al., 2022). Another way of increasing support is trust between managers and employees; building work engagement mediates satisfaction (Basit, 2020).



The employee and manager need meaningful engagement to achieve optimism and team building in the workplace. Employee engagement drives performance and helps broaden workplace identification and a sense of ownership to help improve work-life balance (Bazzoli & Curcuruto, 2021). The economic success of organizations suggests that employee engagement and well-being are essential to business environments (Rasool et al., 2021). Educating employees on improving work benefits expands cultural diversity and psychological well-being (Decuyperen & Schaufeli, 2020; Rasool et al., 2021). Improving business outcomes correlates with exploring engagement, which expands psychological well-being to improve engagement. Supportive feedback in the workplace builds employee engagement and links healthier behaviors for both employees and employers.

The employee and manager need meaningful engagement to achieve optimism and team building in the workplace. Employee engagement drives performance and helps broaden workplace identification and a sense of ownership to help improve work-life balance (Bailey, 2022). The economic success of organizations suggests that employee engagement and well-being are essential to business environments (Sarwar et al., 2020). Educating employees on improving work benefits expands cultural diversity and psychological well-being (Decuyperen & Schaufeli, 2020; Rasool et al., 2021). Improving business outcomes correlates with exploring engagement, which expands psychological well-being to improve engagement.

### **Opposing Theories and Models**

In addition to Shuck and Reio's (2011) Engagement Theory, researchers use similar ideas and materials to investigate employee engagement. Additional engagement

views may apply to Vroom's expectancy theory (VET) and Gilbert's behavior engineering model (BEM). Recent research on the engagement approach provides innovative ideas for understanding how other researchers explore employee engagement and improve employee retention.

### ***Vroom's Expectancy Theory***

Motivation and performance determine the outcomes or goals, leading with anticipation of satisfaction. The VET theory provides motivated behavior as goal-oriented and demonstrates how individuals can achieve the highest levels of satisfaction and opportunity (Osafo, et al., 2021). The VET theory is a motivation and performance evaluation process and how they can influence employees' behaviors (Zboja, et al., 2020). Vroom used research to describe three main elements: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence (Osafo et al., 2021). The first factor, expectancy, teaches employees to engage in moral reasoning and focuses on the individual's overall ethical perception of performance levels (Zboja et al., 2020).

Vroom's second-factor, instrumentality, is vital to achieving the needed behavior and performance. Performance-outcome expectancy has similarities with an individual expectation of rewards in turn, which has an emphasis that ties to the level of performance (Zboja, et al., 2020). In this category, performance is measured by what an organization follows within the rewarding process; this is vital for desired outcomes (Rehman et al., 2019). The third factor, valence, explains the more motivated individuals are for their efforts, the more energy they will place on their work assignments (Zboja, et al., 2020). The strength of behavior to act in a certain way depends on achieving goals, whether it is worth the individual, and the factors of the desired outcomes and their

availability (Hattie et al., 2020). Additionally, determining the most beneficial rewards is the vital key to the VET framework to achieve the needed behavior and performance.

### ***Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model Theory***

Gilbert (1978) developed the BEM theory and initially explored how employee observations led to addressing performance issues to accomplish their tasks (Muljana et al., 2020). The employee observations explored performance issues and inability to follow work assignments tasks. Gilbert's (1978) BEM theory creates an organizational performance to implement culture change management within organizations (Crossman, 2010). Gilbert elaborated on multiple factors: knowledge and execution, the employees' abilities to follow through with specific tasks, and the levels at which the organization contributes to performance or the lack of managers' part in developing communication and resource availability (Muljana et al., 2020)

The BEM model helps business managers develop more options for performance outcomes regarding their organization. Further, the BEM model expands by sharing two levels: the individual and the surroundings supporting performance factors for the employee and the workplace environment (Pan, et al., 2023). Although VET and BEM theories can influence employee engagement, VET Theory is goal-oriented behavior and consequences associated with specific actions guided by behaviors. BEM theory addresses internal factors related to organizational performance by assisting managers with acknowledging deficiencies, highlighting employees' performance, and developing behavior improvements.

### **Purpose of Employee Engagement Research**

The topic of employee engagement positively reframes cultivating the meaning and purpose of organizational management. Positive performance is the solution to growing involvement in cultivating business managers (Shuck & Rose, 2013). Although the boomers, Gen Xers, and Generation Y are adept at working together, increasing employee involvement is essential for developmental skills and performance (Shuck & Rose, 2013). Engaging generational cohorts aim to create a thriving, productive work environment and take full advantage of the differences in generation values and expectations (Arora & Dhole, 2019). All three generations in the workplace learn and grow collectively by addressing the needs, knowledge, and experience of generations growing in today's population (Arora & Dhole, 2019). Moreover, managers should foster a work environment that encourages all generations to share ideas.

Business managers can achieve employee engagement by motivating work-life balance, embracing culture shifts, and listening to employee feedback to gain structure and understanding. Building resilience in the workforce also helps with the impact of challenges by building coloration and motivational techniques to accomplish meaningful goals and generational diversity (Crane et al., 2022). The younger generations relate to resilience by removing negative feedback from workplace engagement. Employees in younger generations tend to define work-life balance as leisure activities versus older generations before them, which shares different perspectives, personalities, and attitudes to the workforce (Akar, 2020). Bridging the generational gap involves building a work environment that promotes a forum for all generations to present concepts and interests (Tan et al., 2021). Each generation will have different learning categories of how

business leaders can motivate various generations through motivational techniques and skills. Business managers can achieve workplace engagement through diversity and embracing logical employee feedback to gain structure and understanding. Embracing different generations in today's workplace environment is how organizations adapt to the changes in generational diversity.

### **Principles for Improving Employee Engagement**

Business managers must examine engagement measurements for each employee to understand the organization's overall need. Employee engagement is essential for organizations and can positively influence improvements and benefits (Shuck & Reio, 2013). Bazzoli and Curcuruto (2021) explored performance measurement and training methods within organizations and how adopting a framework of innovation performance can develop principles for business managers. Kristyanto et al. (2021) shared how individual and interpersonal learning practices benefit both business managers and employees from teaching and training development relating to organizational innovation. Business managers should prepare and plan intensive learning programs in the workplace for their employees to develop diverse workforces. Likewise, by educating their staff about employee engagement's positive outlooks, business managers can retain their staff and understand that each generation differs.

Arora and Dhole (2019) indicated that regular educational and training programs and career advice are practical principles for keeping all generations interested and engaged. When examining the organizational culture, one essential aspect to keep in mind would be to use continued collaboration within refining management involvement (Gabriellova & Buchko, 2021). Also, business managers must stimulate their employees

to help identify to help them become more creative in engaging with the cultural shifts in the workplace (Hui et al., 2020). Workplace culture linking boomers, Gen-Xers, and Generation Y with developing employee resilience is a common link needed for business managers to gain improvements with employee engagement. When business managers take on modeling creativity and giving appropriate feedback, employees are more likely to experience motivational attributes better (Afsar et al., 2020). Business managers are responsible for driving creativity into the workplace, which relates directly to generational learning.

### **Benefits of Employee Engagement**

For organizations to increase performance and productivity, developing engagement strategies is vital. The benefits of employee engagement contribute to an overall positive outcome with favorable conditions centering on energy, commitment, and involvement with workplace experiences (Ren et al., 2022). Exploring the benefits of engagement leads to fulfilling organizational goals from engaged employees. Richard (2020) indicated that establishing resilience in the workforce can help with stressors when employees lose motivation and decrease performance levels. Therefore, having positive levels of employee engagement can help employees experience a positive impact from employee resilience (Baker et al., 2021). Organizations benefit from engagement strategies by creating cornerstones of teamwork through effective communication.

Organizations recognize employees as valuable resources in a changing workforce and value their performance and recognize their employee dedication. Another benefit of increased employee engagement is that engaged employees contribute to organizational success with employee commitment and high performance (Baig et al.,

2021). Having satisfied employees promotes employee engagement and increases cohesion, resulting in higher levels of engagement (Sahi et al., 2022). Engaged employees generate motivational initiatives regarding various strategies for managing workforces that benefit employees and become assets rather than costs creating resourceful environments (Chua & Ayoko, 2019). Increasing employee work engagement is vital for organizations with increased health impairment, and motivational pathways for employees' well-being have benefits and costs (Garg & Singh, 2019).

Promoting and encouraging teamwork and collaboration yields positive consequences for employee engagement. Workplace engagement is intensive, helping employees navigate and building thriving organizations interested in concentrating on economic effects with the current economic outlook (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Business managers prepare with intensive learning in the workplace, retaining their staff by developing diverse workforces to include a proper perspective and understanding that each generation differs from its boundaries (Rudolph et al., 2020). Additionally, business managers ensure employee engagement with positive effects and help inspire workplace creativity.

### **Gaps in Employee Engagement**

Despite the ample research focusing on employee engagement for management within organizations, some areas in the literature still need to be explored. Business managers must examine employee engagement measurements to understand the organization's needs (Shuck, Adelson, et al., 2016). Employee engagement measurement contributes to organizational requirements to the extent they engage with management leadership practices at multiple levels (Nikolova et al., 2019). These multiple levels are

part of the organizational contexts not controlled, and the employer-causing feedback needs addressing (Nikolova et al., 2019). The gaps in employee engagement have a commitment and leadership issues from organizations that have yet to explore organizational context.

Saks et al. (2022) proposed that the gap between a supportive work environment and organizational engagement; is a positive formulation of employees entirely investing themselves in the tasks and activities of their role at organizations with total investment. Managing engaged working environments influences engagement levels for business managers to research the complexities surrounding the gaps between business managers and employees (Rahmadani et al., 2020). There is a need to formulate leadership behaviors affecting employment and how leaders prepare to address higher engagement levels (Al-Ghazali, 2020). The gap between leadership and employee engagement needs more valuable insight into organizational engagement.

Organizations add more talented employees who exhibit high potential to make a difference in organizational performance (Alparslan & Saner, 2020). Business managers use best practices when engaging with the workforce on employee career development, rewards, and recognitions to ensure managerial support for engagement and retention (Medina et al., 2021). Business managers can decrease the gaps in employee engagement by engaging in multigenerational learning through examples of sharing, learning, and growing (Saks et al., 2022). The link between job-related behaviors and commitment impacts how business managers use methods to manage employee engagement.



## **Generational Cohorts**

Generational cohorts have similarities and differences, but members accepting generational diversity, including engaged business managers, are critical to accomplishing positive results. Generational cohorts are translations of variables to distinct groups of individuals with generational differences categorized into consecutive aging experiences and life trajectories over the same period (An et al., 2021). A generation comes from descriptions of individuals born during different historical periods (Medina et al., 2021). Embracing generational differences has become an organizational challenge for organizations with understanding the generational concept of how each member represents their contributions back to the workforce (Akar, 2020). The need for business managers to learn to adapt to each generation's skill set is imperative with the generational cohorts.

Generational cohorts are members of groups who share the same historical background in the same social context that bestows identical values that may differ from other individuals from a previous or later time (Mahmoud et al., 2020). The workforce orientation of each generational cohort brings something different to represent them uniquely (Kim & Chung, 2022). Sakdiyakorn et al. (2021) indicated that it is vital for all three current generations in the workplace to learn and grow collectively by addressing the needs, knowledge, and experience of the growing population of multiple generations today. All three generations possess a stable relationship between work engagement and meaningful work, and understanding these complexities is critical in developing solutions for reconstructing commitment and meaningful work (Mahmoud et al., 2020). Combining

the differences with the experiences of multiple generations helps achieve organizational commitment and employee engagement.

One variable concerning generational differences in other countries will have different implications and outcomes; therefore, business managers cannot assume that research findings in one country can convert to another. The succeeding generations in America are exposed to various challenges with diversity and aging to foster economic security for generational cohorts (Azimi et al., 2021). The cohort's birth year does not reveal generational differences regarding experiences and opportunities, but correlating with organizational commitment and work culture exposes the generational experiences (Araora & Dhole, 2019; Sahi et al., 2022). Generational cohorts embrace the differences to help expose the workplace characteristics in multigenerational workforces.

### ***Boomers***

Boomers are the oldest generational cohort in today's workforce. The boomer generation was born between 1946 and 1964 (Easton & Steyn, 2022). The boomer generation grew following World War II; the cohort planned for social security and pension plans following the Depression era (O'Loughlin et al., 2020). Boomers may give some business managers mixed views on differences regarding the younger workforce and managers withholding opportunities for career advancements (Easton & Steyn, 2022). Also, this cohort will be older than age 65 by the year 2030, qualifying them for more significant amounts of social services (O'Loughlin et al., 2020). Boomers will differ from the other cohorts in their age gap and work commitments.

Boomers are motivated by tangible and visible rewards. Perks, prestige, and position motivate boomers; they strive for hierarchical structure and work prioritization

(Medina et al., 2021). Also, the boomer generation structured their beliefs through family and friends and lived through an era of divorce as the traditional family became unpopular (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). Boomers were beneficiaries of post-war democracies and created neo-liberal politics with their living standards improving their adult lives (O'Loughlin et al., 2020). Boomers are more likely to develop team-building skills in a group setting than in one-on-one meetings in the workplace (Acheampong, 2020). Boomers are well-rounded and adjust well to structure and leadership in the workplace.

Boomers need help with changes surrounding multitasking with technology with computer-based work. Though challenged with change, boomers are workaholics with a strong work ethic, optimistic, and driven by raises and promotions (Medina et al., 2021). Akar (2020) described boomers as passionate individuals in the workplace with a collegial style who enjoy communicating with their peers and sharing responsibilities. As boomers born in 1964 begin to retire over the next decade, some organizations will experience a scarcity of knowledgeable workers; therefore, identifying how to retain older workers with skills and expertise is vital for future generations in the workforce (Rubin & Sparzo, 2020). Organizations have a social responsibility to provide career trajectories to assist the generation with guidance and provide sufficient resources due to the impact this will continue to have over the long years the boomer generation is working, thus impacting the economy (O'Loughlin et al., 2020). As boomers leave the current workforce, so will the working knowledge be surrounding the grounded dependability the cohort has shared with the remaining generations.

### ***Gen Xers***

Gen Xers are the boomers' children, sometimes called the sandwich generation. Gen Xers was born between 1965 and 1980; this generation cohort is vocal about their concerns and addresses issues in the workplace as opposed to boomers (Medina et al., 2021; Akar, 2020). Also, Gen Xers are known as the "forgotten generation," growing up during the unfolding of technology and were ignored or left out of the financial industry because of their smaller size than the other two cohorts (Akar, 2020). The lack of building family relationships led the generation to create nontraditional family settings by bonding with their friends and peers (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). Gen Xers feel insecure due to their parents from the boomer generation and having to live up to expectations, causing inferiority.

Gen Xers are highly adaptable and independent in today's workforce. The cohort desires upward mobility with career choices, changing jobs over time to increase their outlook on marketability (Sesen & Donkor, 2023). Jolliffe and Foster (2021) mentioned that Gen Xers are direct, desire change, follow through with workplace regulations, and resist micromanaging. Gen Xers grew up as latchkey kids, which is one reason for their insecurity as they grew used to coming home after school and required less guidance and supervision (Jolliffe & Foster, 2021). Gen Xers developed different norms and cultural behavior, and the stigma of each generational cohort labeled and fulfilled the boomer generation's expectations.

Gen Xers are a unique generation who experienced both lives before and after technology, which adds a meaningful understanding of work-life balance from their boomer parents (Akar, 2020). Gen Xers are more aware of their financial implications

with beliefs driven by television, world-shaped events, educational value, and emphasized work-life balance (Acheampong, 2020). Gen Xers desire to learn independently, follow through without supervision, thrive in a friendly environment, and value their freedom (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). Additionally, Gen Xers are straightforward about their concerns, encourage change, and are honest with their opinions regarding boomers and Generation Y (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021). Gen Xers are the sandwich generation in that they are caretakers of both the boomers and Generation Y, which bestows their uniqueness.

### ***Generation Y***

Generation Y is the youngest of the cohort groups in the workforce today. Generation Y is the first to have computers in schools, engage with multitasking social media and techno devices, such as video games, and are self-directed in deciding career goals (Arora & Dhole, 2019). Generation Y will make up 50% of the nation's workforce, surpassing the boomer generation (Medina et al., 2021). Generation Y was raised with and shaped by the internet and was born into a digital age.

Generation Y will live their entire lives through the digital age and continue using and valuing technology. Generation Y cohorts grew up in the electronic era and adapted to change with the social network and online environment (Easton & Steyn, 2022). Generation Y is known as being lazy and narcissistic with a negative outlook instead of being described as creative and committed with a positive outlook to contribute to social change (Majer, 2020). Also, Generation Y values transparency and receives feedback about job performance and self-identifying with their generation to understand how they

can improve (Medina et al., 2021). Generation Y desires change and embraces one-on-one coaching to aid in job development for upper mobility.

Generation Y is distinct from other generations. They engage with sophisticated technology and are successful with multitasking and savvy at self-promotion to keep pace with the digital age (Easton & Steyn, 2022). They expect clear expectations and preference for one-on-one coaching from upper management (Lissitsa & Laor, 2021). They challenge management decisions, seek honest answers and social interaction, and collaborate in teams (Akar, 2020). Moreover, the Generation Y cohort groups look at how they can invest in a company and feel they are assets with a sense of validation regarding their cohort outlooks.

### **Transition**

This qualitative pragmatic inquiry study includes a business problem exploring engagement strategies with four business managers engaging the multigenerational workforce. Employee engagement is vital to the success of organizations with generational differences. I dedicated Section 2 to the doctoral study methodology, including the researcher, research method and design, participant selection, research method and design, and sampling method. I used the research material to conduct ethical research. Section 3 contains research findings, implications for social changes, application to professional practice, reflections, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion.

## Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes the approach I used to organize the study. In this section, I provide detailed information on the research project plan, study method, population sampling, data collection techniques, and collection instrument.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to explore strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. The targeted population was four business managers in the healthcare industry in Nashville, TN who successfully use strategies to engage their multigenerational workforce. The implications for social change from this study include the potential to increase opportunities for business managers to successfully engage a multigenerational workforce and reduce employees' intentions to resign. The decrease in employees' intentions to leave can lower the overall unemployment rates in the local communities. It is important to note that some communities with lower unemployment rates may unintentionally negatively affect social resources. The unemployed may have higher cases of mental and physical health problems, mortality rates, and a greater tendency to develop negative family relationships (Becker et al., 2020). Business managers understanding and respecting generational differences can benefit the organization.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher, data collection instrument, and observer, I defined the role of the participants. Qualitative researchers examine concepts to generate new research ideas for theories by using proper data analysis procedures (Collingridge & Gantt, 2019). One purpose of the researcher is to summarize the data they collect (Cash et al., 2022). Yin

(2018) explained that a qualitative researcher collects data and accommodates the participants by providing specific research guidelines. I used a qualitative pragmatic inquiry study to gather information from business managers through semistructured and face-to-face interviews to collaborate and interact with the participants.

My role as the researcher included data collection methods, analyzing data, and presenting the results and recommendations. Researchers must report reliable and factual forecasts on their data and its usage of editing and verification to disclose errors and premature misuse beforehand (Goñi & Labruto, 2022). The researcher must collect their research in a planned and well-thought-out process with a systematic series of steps and stages regarding participants (Marnewick & Marnewick, 2022). Reflective practice is used by the researcher to understand how to interpret different challenges with biases and in-the-moment issues and how to develop reasonable options to address them carefully without emotional reflections (Meyer & Willis, 2019). Journaling occurred each time I worked on the study and will be stored on encrypted flash drives.

Researchers must protect the participants and provide informed consent to ensure ethical and moral standards used during the research (Hutchings & Michailova, 2022). I followed the *Belmont Report* outline (National Commission for Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research [NCPHSBBR], 1978). The recommended guidelines contain principles a researcher should incorporate for human subjects' research. The necessary ethical standards include respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (NCPHSBBR, 1978). I obtained Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval # 12-08-24-0674579 before I contacted participants and collected data. I adopted Walden's IRB requirements and asked participants to sign



informed consent forms to develop ethical parameters and follow steps to eliminate possible ethical concerns from the study.

I chose participants with whom I had no relationship to decrease the influence of researcher bias. For the researcher to achieve a parallel system of negotiated activity with participants and limit personal biases, the interview protocol is vital for the qualitative research process (Marnewick & Marnewick, 2022). I documented the interviews through audio recordings and took notes. I also maintained ethical parameters to protect the participants and conduct the research without bias. As the researcher, I obtained Walden approval from the participants by communicating with them.

Additionally, as a manager for the United States Postal Service with over 23 years, I am familiar with employee engagement strategies. I am a member of Gen X and might have some reserved biases toward the multigenerational workforce. I used reflective journaling to reduce any impacts on data collection and analysis. My knowledge, experiences, and techniques working with multigenerational cohorts expand my understanding of employee engagement strategies.

My involvement, exposure, and relevant experience managing multigenerational workforces piqued my interest in learning business managers' skills. As the researcher, ensuring research quality on the study's concept is imperative in conducting and publishing the study's research. In addition to using reflexive journaling, I chose participants I had no previous relationship with to reduce the influence of researcher bias.

### **Participants**

The study participants were four business managers in the Nashville, TN, healthcare industry with experience managing multiple generations in the workplace. The

minimum requirement for this study includes the individual must be capable and well-informed about the research procedure, and participants can exit at any time (Goñi & Labruto, 2022). I identified the participants' eligibility and established strategies for a working relationship with the participants. Confidential information about the participants was not disclosed. I ensured the interview conditions and eligibility requirements for participation by following up with a participation invitation letter (See Appendix A). I gained access to the participants by using feedback from networking with professional peers through LinkedIn to compile background information on the company's chain of command.

After inviting the participants, I built a working relationship with the business managers by understanding their skills and perspective for their field by directly supervising employees and using successful engagement strategies to engage their workforce. The researcher should formulate a system that includes building trust and rapport with the participants before and during the interview process (Nizza et al., 2021). The need is to bond with business managers who have demonstrated successful engagement strategies in the workplace. I ensured confidentiality and established a working relationship with participants through continued communication through email and phone. This will also ensure that the participants answer the interview questions more truthfully.

The interviews should have a participant-oriented research approach through developing interpersonal and interactive relationships, allowing smoother transitions to gather information from the participants (Nizza et al., 2021). After receiving IRB approval for the study, I conducted semistructured and face-to-face interviews with the

participants' consent to implement employee engagement strategies. I followed Walden University's IRB guidelines to ensure participants' privacy and rights.

I used the interview questions to address overarching research question, and interviews occurred in a private place of the participant's choice. I established eligibility requirements and develops sampling strategies and labeling requirements for the researcher (see Alam, 2021). Purposive sampling is a process whereby the researcher achieves a manageable amount of data (Ames et al., 2019). Establishing data saturation for the researcher may vary with multiple methods because no universal outline exists for the process (Alam, 2021).

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

I explored engagement strategies by conducting a qualitative pragmatic inquiry study. When selecting a method and design for a research method, it is vital to choose the appropriate research for examining the study (Yadav, 2021). In this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study, I investigated how some business managers can engage successfully with their multigenerational workforce. Xue et al. (2020) advised positive learning links with empirical data through case study designs like qualitative research. Yin (2018) stated that the interview's nature is more than asking open-ended questioning but focusing on the interviewee's behavior and body language. I selected the qualitative research design for collecting the research data because the participants' settings share the phenomenon of employee engagement.

A quantitative approach is used to examine relationships between variables and gives an impression of experimental design (Siedlecki, 2020). Quantitative research is

useful for describing associated characteristics regarding the central focal point that examines the data collected patterns to test hypotheses of interest. I did not explore participant feedback with the qualitative approach; the researcher will understand the strategies that some business managers use for engagement.

Mixed methods are another methodology that researchers can apply. Leko et al. (2021) stated that mixed methods merge qualitative and quantitative methods and capitalize on the opportunity to blend strengths allowing the research to address complex problems. A mixed-method approach was not appropriate for my study due to the research using quantitative and qualitative elements. I explored a particular phenomenon's what, how, and why in a qualitative pragmatic inquiry study.

### **Research Design**

I used qualitative pragmatic inquiry study approach to explore successful engagement strategies business managers utilize to engage with their multigenerational workforces. A qualitative pragmatic inquiry study complements the research by improving the understanding of the process with the experience of analysis findings of this study. Qualitative researchers explore new knowledge and theories to effectively analyze and expand data deployment in research models (Cash et al., 2022). The participants were experienced business managers who use successful engagement strategies to engage with multiple generations in the workforce. The qualitative pragmatic inquiry study is used by researchers to promote collaborations regardless of the philosophical orientation (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020).

I considered other potential research designs: phenomenology, ethnography, and narrative study. Chauhan and Leeming et al. (2019) defined a phenomenology as

exploring the human aspect of an expressed mood, attitude, and emotion. A phenomenology study because I did not explore the participants' lived experiences through interviews. Researchers use phenomenology to share human experiences through a phenomenon event. Exploring employee engagement will not require understanding human experiences' (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2019).

Researchers use the qualitative pragmatic inquiry study to collect data on observations from examining behaviors. Also, researchers use ethnography to gather and share data concerning cultural groups (Russell & Barley, 2019). Likewise, ethnography design is to create written descriptions of ethnic groups of people who share the same space and interact (Snodgrass et al., 2022). I did not gather information concerning group behaviors; therefore, I did not select the ethnography design. I did not explore shared culture or collect data that influenced participants' behaviors, nor did I collect data over a prolonged period.

Narrative inquiry is another qualitative design. Researchers use the narrative technique in a singular approach or a research method to collect data from study participants' lives through storytelling (Moller et al., 2021). My goal for this study was not storytelling.

A vital prerequisite of a qualitative study is ensuring a plan for data saturation the researcher can implement to determine when no new information has emerged (Doyle et al., 2019). Member checking, known as participant feedback, is widely used for qualitative research as a thoughtful strategy and is widely recognized as a trustworthiness standard for qualitative analysis (Motulsky, 2021). To ensure data saturation, I conducted member checking of the semistructured interviews.

### **Population and Sampling**

The study participants were four business managers in the Nashville, TN healthcare industry with experience managing multiple generations in the workplace. Maxwell (2021) suggested that researchers must ensure data saturation. Researchers use purposive sampling to test robustness from different sampling frameworks, establish participants' qualifications, and develop the nature of the phenomenon (Ames et al., 2019; Leko et al., 2021). I used purposive sampling to gain from participants in the healthcare field in Nashville, TN.

I followed IRB guidelines and used a participant consent requesting permission for this process to ensure alignment with ethical standards. Stirling et al. (2024) stated that data saturation is when the data collection process produces little or no change in analysis.

Participant selection criteria are critical when performing qualitative research. In this case, I selected current leaders who engage and empower their workforce (see Teng-Calleja, 2023). I selected business managers with 4 or more years of experience and managers with four or more employees within the different generational cohorts. Braun and Clarke (2021) suggested that data saturation is when the data collection produces little or no change with analysis. I ensured data saturation through member checking. Alam (2021) advised that the interview location provides meaningful data and should have little or no distractions for the interviewers and interviewees. Therefore, the face-to-face interview schedule and location were the participants' choice.

### **Ethical Research**

Researchers must protect participants' identities and provide them with informed consent to ensure the use of ethical and moral standards during the research (Mann et al., 2016). Therefore, I followed the guidelines outlined in the *Belmont Report* (NCPHSBBR, 1978). The guidelines contain principles a researcher should incorporate for research involving human subjects: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (NCPHSBBR, 1978). I adopted Walden's (IRB) requirements essential to upholding ethical principles and standards.

Participation in this study was voluntary. Participants could withdraw at any time from the study without repercussions (see Honey et al., 2020). The participants can withdraw from the study by notifying them through email, phone, or delivery of a withdrawal letter. Researchers use informed consent to protect the participants' situational and informational privacy and ethical values (Honey et al., 2020). I sent electronic documents to explain the study and gain permission from each participant with IRB approval. All participant research and information will remain confidential, and the data obtained will be retained in the cloud on a password-protected account for five years. If the participants want a copy of the signed consent, I provided them with one. The Belmont Report's recommended guidelines (NCPHSBBR, 1978) reduce potential risks using consent forms and eliminate risks to the participants' privacy.

Utilizing the content analysis to reflect on the participants' feedback regarding employee engagement will help synthesize the data collected during the interview process. To ensure an ethical approach, I provided participant confidentiality and developed transparency with the data collection process. For example, each participant in

the study will be assigned numbers such as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), and so on. Confidentiality is a core principle of research ethics, and the researcher has a role in protecting the participants' feedback (Moriña, 2020).

Researchers face an ethical dilemma with making choices between moral and immoral behavior (DeTiene et al., 2019). Advising participants of the possible risks and benefits of participation is a primary ethical fundamental (Taquette et al., 2022). Before starting this study as the researcher, obtaining Walden IRB approval was imperative. The Walden's IRB requirements included participants' voluntarily signing an informed consent form, developing ethical parameters, and taking steps for agreement to participate. The invitation template explained the research background and the purpose and how the benefits could help future research in addition to being audio recorded, incentives for participation, and protecting the participant's privacy.

Additionally, researchers follow ethical guidelines and appropriate stages in safeguarding the research. I secured and stored the data for 5 years following the completion of the study. After 5 years, I will delete all files from hard drives, digital devices and shred all paper data. All participation will be voluntary, and their identity will remain confidential. I conducted this study with ethical and moral standards while safeguarding the participants' rights. The interview protocol process authorizing the study's cooperation and approval adheres to the IRB's rules and procedures (See Appendix B).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

As the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study, the goal is to explore engagement strategies that business managers use to improve



employee engagement. Yin (2018) suggested that researchers obtain six sources of evidence: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts. I used semistructured interviews and company documents as part of this study's data collection instruments.

Rutakumwa et al. (2019) suggested that the utilization of tape recorder devices may help reduce bias and capture, preserve, and bind the interview process's central location. As the researcher, logging direct observations regarding specific details of the participants' nonverbal expressions is essential. I created an interview protocol, providing steps to apply before, during, and after the interview process (See Appendix B). I conducted member checking after participants' interviews to verify the accuracy of the interpretations. Member checking is an interactive method that focuses on corroboration, qualification, and verification of the interview transcript (Motulsky, 2021).

The data collection process consists of two phases. The first phase of the collection process will be to conduct semistructured interviews and collect documentation from the participants. I used eight detailed, open-ended questions to understand the strategies business managers use to engage with their workforce. One advantage of conducting semistructured interviews is the quality of data and the opportunity to ask for additional feedback from observations the participants demonstrate through body language (Husband, 2020). Qualitative researchers use semistructured interviews to ask predetermined questions, allowing them to gather more participants' experiences with follow-up questions (Roberts, 2020). The second stage of the collection process includes the review of supportive documents. Yin (2018) suggested that documents provide additional information to corroborate from other sources, such as verifying correct

spellings, titles, names of people, and organizations. At the end of the interviews, I asked the participants to share any documents they have that are relevant to employee engagement activities that support their answers.

In qualitative research, according to Doyle et al. (2019), triangulation is a critical practice to ensure the study meets the reliability and validity of the data by using different data of the same event and discovering commonalities with diverse settings. Leko et al. (2021) recommended using observations, member checking, and peer review as strategies to ensure validity. To further improve the reliability and validity of data collection, I reviewed all relevant documentation to ensure trustworthiness to confirm the information's validity. Tomaszewski et al. (2020) stated that trustworthiness is a critical component of qualitative research. As the researcher working towards methodological triangulation is the best practice to ensure the collection and analyzing process meets reliability standards (Mulijana et al., 2020). Adopting elevated levels of academic standards increases trustworthiness and consistency for this study.

### **Data Collection Technique**

I used semistructured interviews, and document analysis for this study as data collection methods. I developed an interview protocol (Appendix B) to collect interview data; self-introduction to the participant, going over the consent form and interview process, and reminding the participant they can end the interview process at any time. According to Yin (2018), using two data collection sources increases credibility and improves data saturation. Roberts (2020) stated that the semistructured interview protocol is the qualitative researcher's common choice to utilize predetermined questions to seek further clarification for additional insight that the researcher may have omitted. During

the interview, asking participants open-ended interview questions allows them to explain and express their firsthand experiences. Davies et al. (2020) stated that face-to-face interviews are the traditional means of data collection and were typically the norm over online and e-mail consultations.

Yin (2018) suggested that researchers use the interview protocol to learn about participants. With participants' advance permission, the interviews will be audio recorded. I will transcribe the discussions and share the transcription with each participant for member checking. Researchers can use open-ended questions and other interviewing techniques to develop deeper understandings to explore topics to analyze outcomes of observed correlations (Leko et al., 2021). There are multiple ways researchers can interview: face to face, telephone interview, written responses, and online (Davies et al., 2020). Typically, some advantages of conducting face-to-face interviews are establishing trust through rapport, informed questioning, and detailed gathering from careful observations (Davies et al., 2020).

Some advantage of face-to-face interviews is that the interviewer can view the participant's body language and make direct contact. Face-to-face interviewers can build rapport, improve cooperation, and encourage the completion of the interview (De Villiers et al., 2021). Building rapport helps build a common interest and human touch to understand the elements of the research assessment (Horsfall et al., 2021). Face-to-face interviews help the interviewer gain meaningful data and better understand participant experiences. With complex research, face-to-face interviews allow the interviewer and respondent the best way to collect data through verbal contact (Horsfall et al., 2021).

A disadvantage with face-to-face interviews is the time and place for both the interviewer and interviewees. Allowing the participants to choose the time that fits their schedule can eliminate this issue. Planning and prepping the participants by introducing the study in advance through e-mail and securing consent forms before discussing the interview protocol in detail are steps to help conduct a successful interview. Another disadvantage with conducting qualitative interviews is Covid-19 pre- and post-pandemic. Researchers must explore alternative methods such as videos and telephone interactions to collect data.

I gathered data about employee engagement strategies and triangulate the data and participants' interviews. The supporting documentation is secondary data that could consist of human resources methods and standard operating procedures. The advantages of obtaining company documentation help strengthen the data findings. On the other hand, the disadvantage of the interview is not getting the information promptly. After each interview, member checking is most appropriate for the data interpretation process. Member checking allows participants to validate the data analysis, which involves confirming a summary of the collected data and analysis of the participant's responses (Motulsky, 2021). Also, member checking will help establish the collected data's accuracy, transcription, and analysis.

Data saturation is when no additional information repeats or insights identified with the data redundancy begin to repeat, signaling the sample size is complete (Hennink & Kaier, 2022). I conducted a field test for the content validity of the interview questions by recruiting subject matter experts with employee engagement backgrounds. I completed the fieldwork of designing a questionnaire with a total of six phases: the study

of the subject matter, questions development, structure, and format of the questionnaire, contact validity and face validity, pilot study, and field test (Ahmad et al., 2020; Buschle et al., 2021).

Each interview's objective with the participant is to explore strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. I used an interview protocol and follow up by listening to the participants' feedback and conducting member checking. I secured all sensitive documents in a safe deposit box and digital paperwork stored on encrypted flash drives. After five years after the completion of the study, I will destroy the data. The researcher's journal will be kept in a locked file cabinet.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Organizing and transcribing the data to ensure confidentiality is part of the qualitative research data collection process. For this study, I used Microsoft Excel to code the data into themes to address the overarching research question and a researcher journal to log data results accurately. Draissi et al. (2021) stated that researcher journaling is a practical writing method that improves the researcher's overall learning process. I recorded each participant's name, date, time, and location setting, along with observation notes about what I will see during the research process.

McQuade et al. (2020) recommended that researchers take detailed record-keeping notes to demonstrate clarity and achieve alignment to reduce researcher biases. To protect and secure participant identity, each manager will receive an assigned number from 1 to 4 and ensure all sensitive information is scanned and stored on a cloud account with password protection. The researcher's journal will be kept in a locked file cabinet and permanently destroyed with the other electronic documents accordingly. I secured all

sensitive documents in a safe deposit box and digital paperwork stored on encrypted flash drive for 5 years after the completion of the study it will be destroyed. The researcher's journal will be kept in a locked file cabinet.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative researchers use thematic analysis to enhance methodological triangulation, the most common type of triangulation (Natow, 2019). For this study, I used methodological triangulation to validate the multiple data sources I collected. Tuval-Mashiach et al. (2021) suggested that researchers could use various sources to compile and establish recurring patterns. I analyzed, gathered, and sorted the interview transcripts to identify themes. Microsoft Excel helped save time and was easy to organize, research, and code the data.

Yin (2018) identified five steps for qualitative research analysis: (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding. I will compile the data into one destination and group the relevant information into Microsoft Word: transcripts, notes, and researcher journal. Next, I disassembled the data regarding each participant, keep a tally of similar phrases, and assign codes (Yin, 2018). The third step consists of following up with assigning coding themes, then reassembling the interpreted codes by hand into coding ideas. The last step consists of drawing out conclusions from the themes previously identified for the study. The research question is as follows: What strategies do business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce? I used the findings to serve as the basis of the study after the analysis and answer the research question.

The framework for this study is Shuck and Reio's (2013) employee engagement theory. I selected the employee engagement Theory to serve as a potential means to explore strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. The qualitative analysis reduces the volume of information and helps identify and combine groups of themes for further analysis (Lindgren et al., 2020). The data and research analysis will be through the lens developed by Shuck and Reio's (2013) engagement theory through the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state of employee aspects and uses the model to compare themes with supportive categories in the literature review.

### **Reliability and Validity**

#### **Reliability**

The concepts of reliability are necessary components of quality and critical research aspects (Rose & Johnson, 2020). The reliability principle for qualitative research lies with consistency and measures the ability to produce the same outcome with the study's duplication (Leko et al., 2021). Yin (2018) defined reliability as the consistency and repeatability of a case study's research process. Researchers use reliability to measure consistency with participants to gain similar responses (Fonseca, 2022). The researcher's role is to assert rigor to uncover concepts and ensure the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Reliability is a central focus of research quality, which is necessary, although it does not stand alone to capture valued research quality.

**Dependability**

Dependability is another concept a researcher must consider. Dependability measures consistency and integrity with insights associated with the accuracy of qualitative research studies' findings (Quintão, et al., 2020). I used member checking by reviewing the interview feedback with all the participants beforehand. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) throughout the data collection process to ensure alignment and consistency with each question. Each participant is given the same open-ended questions regarding strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. The use of open-ended questions helps contribute to the researcher's study because the participants' perspective gives more details about experiences that may have similar associations with the study (Leko et al., 2021). I used member checking by reviewing the interview feedback with all participants. I used an interview protocol (See Appendix B) throughout the data collection process.

**Validity**

Leko et al. (2021) indicated that validity refers to appropriateness regarding the implementation of purpose for design, processes, and data. I established validity by collecting data from organizational documents and through semistructured interviews. Qualitative researchers use two kinds of validity that resonate individually with the methods reviewed in this study, internal and external validity (Maxwell, 2021). Yin (2018) stated that data triangulation helps to strengthen the construct validity of the case studies. Validity is a component that must be well established, along with contributing data collection methods that are accurately measuring the intended measurements.



**Credibility**

A qualitative study must comprise interview questions that correlate to the research question and the study method; all three must be in alignment to show the research's reasoning. A qualitative study's credibility determines the range of systematic data collection procedures, multiple data sources, triangulation, and external reviews (Adler, 2022; Morgan, 2022). Credibility refers to how the researcher shares experiences and how it translates to verifying the participants' findings (AlFarraj et al., 2021). To ensure credibility for the study, I reviewed the transcript, triangulate the collected data, and used member checking.

**Transferability**

Another consideration to increase the study validity is transferability. In a qualitative study, transferability occurs when findings are transferable from one study to another (Morgan, 2022). Transferability notes the researcher's capability to demonstrate, describe, and measure how findings might be purposeful and promote to readers in different circumstances (Bush & Amechi, 2019; Naidoo & Sibiyi, 2019). I ensured proper documentation and sharing descriptions of the researcher process so other researchers can replicate the study.

**Confirmability**

A researcher can achieve confirmability when the results demonstrate a link to the conclusions and share replication outcomes (Tuval-Mashiach et al., 2021). To ensure confirmability, I kept detailed notes of the decisions and analysis, using semistructured interviews, and store interview notes. Confirmability of the research demonstrates the process of gathering data, data analysis, interpretations, and dependability principles for

other researchers to build on the study (Naidoo & Sibiyi, 2019). The interview protocol is a vital asset for the proposed research methods to see if they are relevant to the study (See Appendix B). Additionally, I remained neutral in gathering data for this study and examine the study recommendations based on the results.

### **Data Saturation**

Another component of qualitative research is data saturation. Data saturation is the point in data collection that focuses more on the sample size that has been exhausted from the data point, signaling an adequate sample size is complete (Hennink & Kaier, 2022). I used data from semistructured interviews and organization documents to achieve data saturation. Researchers face factors concerning the summary of the amounts of data they will collect and are subject to qualitative analysis (Cash et al., 2022). Additional interviews are needed if data saturation is not achieved in the original sample, resulting in missing data and not providing descriptive factors to duplicate the study (Doyle et al., 2019).

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 2, I explained selecting research methods and designs, describing the population, and meeting the guidelines for this study. This qualitative pragmatic inquiry study explored strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. I conducted the study using a qualitative pragmatic inquiry involving business managers in Nashville, TN.

Section 3 of the research study will include applying the results to professional practice and social change implications. I presented a comprehensive overview of the data analysis, findings, and recommendations for future research and discuss how the

existing literature impacts multigenerational workforces. The conclusions will be included in Section 3, as well.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to explore strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. I conducted eight semistructured interviews (see Appendix C) with business managers with healthcare backgrounds in Nashville, TN. I collected data on their strategies to manage their multigenerational workforces. The interviews were audio recorded. Each participant reviewed the participant consent form beforehand and had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the interview process and return the form as "I consent." I explained to each participant that the interview was entirely voluntary, and that the participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I used Microsoft Excel to code the themes for this study.

I conducted interviews via audio recording, and the interviews were within a 30-minute time frame. I performed member checking with each participant and transcribed the interviews with the cleaning process to ensure I successfully validated their feedback and corrected where needed. I used Microsoft Excel for the coding process, transcribing the data, and tracking and organizing all significant documents for the study. The following themes emerged after analyzing the interview data: (a). transparency, (b) effective communications, (c) and develop team collaborations. The three themes illustrate potential strategies for business managers to engage their multigenerational workforce effectively.

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

The conceptual framework that I used to support this study was Shuck and Reio's (2011) employee engagement theory. The study's findings support how business

managers engage with their multigenerational workforces. I addressed the research question during the data collection process: What strategies do business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce to implement culture changes, decrease employee burnout, and increase profitability with job performance? I used the interview protocol (see Appendix B) to answer eight open-ended questions and completed each interview within 30 minutes. I interviewed four business managers, P1, P2, P3, and P4, who have successful experience in implementing employee engagement strategies in the workplace.

I conducted semistructured audio-recorded interviews with four business managers to answer the research question. Each participant was given time to review the participant consent form beforehand and allowed to ask questions regarding the interview process and return the form as “I consent.” I explained to each participant that the interview was completely voluntary, and that the participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Interviews were conducted via audio recording and lasted a minimum of 20 minutes. The participant interview data were coded based on the following themes: transparency, effective communications, and developing team collaborations. The three themes illustrate potential strategies for business managers to engage their multigenerational workforce effectively.

### **Theme 1: Transparency**

The first theme that emerged was transparency. All four participants shared that establishing employee transparency was imperative to increasing engagement. The demand for transparency from leadership with business managers and employees requires ways to encourage trustworthiness, openness, and the present participatory to improve

engagement perspectives (Zainab et al., 2021). The participants shared that their workforce demonstrates transparency, communication, and flexibility to be successful with their teams.

P1 shared, "Bridging the gap with the younger and older generations and sharing what they have in common as an example of engagement strategies." P1 stated that they use transparency to reduce turnover and retain employees. P1 emphasized, "Transparency is key; everyone comes from different backgrounds and comes together and works as a team." P1 maintained how transparency could positively impact increased engagement with multiple generations in the workplace. P2 and P3 emphasized the importance of transparency and how it motivates workforce strategies for employee-manager relationships to increase engagement across various generations. P2 spoke about receiving unsolicited feedback from their employees in addition to surveys to measure the success of the engagement and how the employees contributed to an open environment. P2 expressed how survey feedback helps gather information on what employees consider team-building challenges. P2 shared, "Gauging feedback, we sent surveys asking employees what they think. Did you have fun? Would you want to do the outing again?" P2 explained that measuring the engagement's success must be based on feedback from surveys to help build transparency in employee-manager relationships.

P3 explained that they used transparency in their leadership role to share updates on job performance to ensure everyone is on the same page. P3 shared, "Have check-ins and quarterly and midyear evaluations to ensure everyone understands their tasks and does not trend outside the gray area." Transparency from leadership requires open communication and accountability with the organization's current and future status for

future decision asking (Wang et al., 2023). P3 expressed that providing a clear understanding of everyone understating their role and responsibilities and ensuring they are trained property to increase transparency with engagement with multigenerational workforces.

P4 shared, "Business managers are advocates who are realistic, open, honest with work-life balance and flexible and supportive of their team." P4 added,

You have to be flexible to try and help them. It would help to be more realistic about things that can happen and support them in those things. Help find solutions. Yes, it is their personal life, but it always goes into the work environment. Doing the best to be there and support that person's life.

Being supportive, open, and flexible are ways P4 established transparency to increase engagement. Open communication and providing employees with regular training and education help raise awareness and build a culture of compliance (Srivastava, 2023). All four participants illustrated transparency by establishing employee-manager relationships and increasing engagement with the multigeneration in the workplace.

### ***Alignment With the Literature***

Theme 1 (transparency) aligned with Bazzoli and Curcuruto's (2021) findings that managers can achieve organizational goals by identifying how businesses recognize openness, trust, supportive feedback, and flexibility. Business managers who demonstrate creativity and knowledge management practices can increase the transparency culture of an organization by collaborating with mutual trust (Lam et al., 2021). In this study, the business managers shared their thoughts on transparency and improving openness with

honesty and trust to cultivate supportive workplace interactions to build positive relationships. Likewise, strengthening the manager and employee relationship can improve generational cohorts' engagement.

### ***Alignment With the Conceptual Framework***

Theme 1 (transparency) aligned with Shuck and Reio's (2011) findings of employee engagement theory, which state that employees are motivated by the positive efforts they experience in the workplace. Linking transparency through engagement with multiple generations requires business managers to increase their engagement and develop successful team management strategies. With employee engagement changing generationally, there is a need for business managers to share openness with their teams. When business managers practice practical approaches to influence a positive workplace climate, transparency with team building and effective communications are extensions to strengthen employee relationships to affect positive transformative ways (Osam et al., 2020). In this study, the participants shared awareness of the need for transparency to remove team barriers.

### **Theme 2: Effective Communications**

The second theme was effective communication. This theme is needed for business managers to engage with their staff to achieve support from the business managers and employees. Encourage employees to ask questions and provide feedback. Business managers can communicate with their workforces successfully by knowing and understanding the attitudes and motivators of their multiple generational groups (Smeak, 2020). Business managers can increase employee engagement by embracing effective and clear communications through employee feedback to gain structure and



understanding. Business managers managing different generations of employees depend on the level of expertise and knowledge detailing professional guidelines with an excellent organizational climate (Pitout & Hoque, 2022). Communication is vital for business managers to motivate cohorts through the organization's mission commitments.

When business managers address issues upfront and do not allow them to accumulate over time and communicate and share ongoing concerns, it is in the best interest of the employee-manager relationship to establish effective communication to increase engagement. P1 shared, "We have weekly meetings to discuss the changes and give updates through emails." Effective communication is a two-way process through which employees and managers collaborate and provide clear instructions in group meetings, daily talks, and performance evaluations. An ongoing constructive dialogue between manager and employee relationship gives a much greater chance of achieving communications objectives; it is better suited to facilitate two-way communications with employees throughout the organization (Schmidt, 2023). P1 established effective communications to increase engagement by communicating organizational goals with weekly feedback and email correspondence.

P2 spoke about receiving unsolicited feedback from their employees in addition to surveys to measure the success of the engagement and how the employees contribute to an open environment. P2 added, "Monthly team meetings and explain the goals and objectives and solicit feedback to measure the success of engagement based on feedback." Employees' feedback often contains valuable information and suggestions for enabling necessary changes and helps track opinions, perceptions, and expectations of management (Schmidt, 2023). Suggestions and opinions from management and employee

relationships are critical when things seem least considerable. Business managers can increase engagement by embracing employees' feedback, which brings about shifts in gaining structure and understanding. Listening and giving constructive feedback in employee-manager relationships are ways in which P2 establishes effective communication to increase engagement.

During the interview process, P3 shared, "It is important to have quarter and mid-year job performance evaluations to keep them aligned with their job duties and performance." P3 emphasized using a multifaceted approach when engaging with the workforce to create a positive communication approach. P3 went on to share that one barrier to implementing successful strategies is not getting feedback promptly back to the employees. Business managers improve effective communications by motivating and building trust with employees. Performance appraisals are examples of effective communications with a two-way discussion of the past and current performance measures and are significant in improving efficiencies and performance (Muhammad, 2022). According to P3, effective communication to increase engagement was an ongoing struggle in manager-employee relationships; good organization and timeliness are crucial and a best practice.

P4 shared "Needing to work with their strengths, not with their weaknesses, and working on strengthening those weaknesses." Communicating with staff allows interactions to help create an influential atmosphere. Communication in one's work and experiencing a sense of purpose refers to being happily absorbed in one's work and dedicated engagement (Gemedda & Lee, 2020). P4 expressed that supporting employee with their work-life balance and being flexible in a realistic manner means meeting needs

and interacting with the employees. Effective communication in manager-employee relationships allows employees to share problems or issues clearly and concisely, along with getting feedback that they are looking for the support they need. Focusing on the strengths and becoming more flexible with sharing feedback with employee-manager relationships are ways P4 established effective communications to increase engagement.

### ***Alignment With the Literature***

Theme 2 (effective communications) was consistent with Pfajfar et al. (2022), identifying how communications tie into workplace climate, team building, and recognition with creative ways to bring diversity into the manager and employee relationship to build foundations of valuing differences. Business managers expound upon the value of their employees' differences to motivate them to boost productivity and job satisfaction by interjecting multiple communication styles, verbal and written, to help bring variety to the team's generational cohorts. The participants noted how they spoke with their employees through one-on-one, weekly meetings and shared performance evaluations.

### ***Alignment With the Conceptual Framework***

Theme 2 (effective communications) aligned with Shuck and Reio's (2011) findings of employee engagement theory, which state that engagement entails communication between managers and employees. Effective communication between managers and employees is imperative to maintain long-term positive working environments. The participants shared their thoughts on communicating with their teams and their manager's role in connecting with the teams to achieve positive results and increase engagement to improve their workflow effectively. Effective lines of

communication are imperative for teams to exchange how they interpret their role associated with their job duties and company mission, in addition to retention and performance.

### **Theme 3: Develop Team Collaborations**

All participants shared examples showing the development of team collaborations in managing different generations of employees in the workplace. P1 suggested that business managers lead by example and show others how to look at a new way of doing things to implement a quicker way to complete tasks through sharing. P1 gave examples of leading by example, showing the employees how to process claims faster to improve efficiency and meet budget targets promptly. P1 established the development of team collaborations to increase engagement by leading the team by giving examples and sharing how to complete tasks more efficiently.

P2 stated,

We conduct several teams-related events throughout the year, one of them being a day of service. One example is volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank, packing boxes, and separating frozen foods. We strategically break up the team to get members in different roles within our organization to have an opportunity to serve together and experience team building.

P2 highlighted team collaborations in managing different generations of employees in the workplace by giving examples of team members volunteering to build morale and trust by taking on different roles with others in various settings to build relationships with peers and constituents.

P3 stated, "First, I try to provide training. I don't know if everyone understands their role and responsibilities. On an annual basis, sometimes we would come together and do team building to role play with case studies." P3 highlighted the importance of establishing team collaborations and relationships with additional training to ensure employees understand their organizational role. Identifying the hierarchy and everyone's role is essential to team collaboration, and ensuring everyone is on the same page along with understanding one size may only fit all or assuming everyone is aware, but train and provide the tools to ensure they are successful in their roles.

P4 stated, "When you see a need for something to change or to be better if somebody has a better idea at doing it, you need to let them try." P4 shared, "This is how I do it, and this is why I do it this way. You can do it the same way I do it, or you can do it your way, working alongside them is important." P4 highlighted the importance of establishing team collaborations with team building with the manager and employee relationship, working alongside one another to show teamwork, and demonstrating the importance of getting everyone involved with team building.

### ***Alignment With the Literature***

Theme 3 (develop team collaborations) aligns with Barreiro and Treglown's (2020) findings in that organizations create environments for training and develop a facilitating experience of employee engagement. The business managers identified with the leadership traits by building team collaborations by showing other team members how to complete assignments or giving one-on-one training to understand job duties and responsibilities better. From a managerial perspective, business managers facilitate

employee engagement with coaching and mentoring to improve teamwork and allow each generational cohort to feel connected with team building.

### ***Alignment With the Conceptual Framework***

The findings for Theme 3 (develop team collaborations) align with Shuck and Reio's (2011) employee engagement theory findings in that business managers link and connect multiple generations with engagement strategies to engage and inspire the different cohorts to work as team members to accomplish the current and future goals. Induced teamwork and employee engagement align with related workplace outcomes by encouraging employees to work with their direct and indirect teams to accomplish challenges and their uniqueness. The participants shared their thoughts on working together and accomplishing goals by helping one another; this allowed them to connect as a team. They also shared ideas on how to gain more insight into completing tasks quicker and more efficiently.

### **Professional Practice**

The objective of this study was to identify what strategies business managers used to engage their multigenerational workforce. Business managers can benefit from this study's findings by applying engagement strategies to meet their daily efficiencies and organizational goals. Additionally, the participants in this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study were business managers with experience implementing employee engagement strategies in the workplace and experience in multiple generational organizations. Supportive solid leadership skills from business managers are critical job resources that increase positivity with employees' social and effective engagement (Zhu et al., 2023).

The participants in this study provided strategies that business managers found to be helpful when they implemented strategies for culture changes, decreasing employee burnout, and increasing profitability with job performance.

The participants shared how they used best practices as their guidelines. After analyzing the data collected, the three emerging themes were transparency, effective communications, and developing team collaborations. The findings are relevant to business managers who are open and trusting when communicating and building teamwork with multigenerational workforces. All participants expressed the need for the emerging themes and how these experiences can help business managers better understand the benefits and challenges of managing a multigenerational workforce.

Transparency with business managers is imperative for employee workplace climate. Deep understanding and openness to manager-employee relationships regarding organizational changes are closely related to transparency. All four participants outlined the need for openness to reduce turnover rates and build stronger professional relationships for positivity that would develop and maintain a more robust workforce. When employees perceive that the organization invests in maintaining a relationship with them due to transparency, they will reciprocate the same behavior by positively advocating on behalf of the company culture (Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022). When business managers use transparency with organizational changes, this will outline contributions to employees staying engaged.

Effective communication is critical for job satisfaction. Encouraging employees to ask questions, share suggestions and opinions, and listen before answering are examples the participants shared that were closely related to effective communication.

All four participants emphasized the importance of effective communication as essential for job satisfaction in terms of a sense of belonging and the need to exercise knowledge on demand for both manager-employee relationships. Effective communication and positive motivation from managers to employees or among employees will reduce stress and workplace conflicts (Karaferis et al., 2022). Better knowledge of employees' job satisfaction and performance can directly contribute to effective communication and is critical for the success of organizations (Kraferis et al., 2022). When business managers communicate effectively in manager-employee relationships, employee engagement and job satisfaction could potentially increase.

Team collaboration is closely related to team building and teamwork. Business managers who build morale and trust across multigenerational workforces increase manager-employee relationships. Employee engagement training and collaboration in teamwork can lead to better results and benefit employees and work-life balance in organizations (Kraferis et al., 2022). Employees engaged with their jobs and dedicated to their organizations will likely feel that their organization cares about them and is vested in strengthening their ties through team building (Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022). Business managers who demonstrate team collaboration with their employees will likely foster increased motivation and engagement.

Implementing the findings of this study that were relevant to improving business practice by helping business managers develop professional employee-manager relationships. Developing and implementing increased employee engagement across multiple generations could increase job satisfaction, workplace climate, and work-life balance. Decreasing emotional exhaustion leads to burnout and loss of time and energy



put into training development. Implementing an increase of employee engagement to longevity with quality manager-employee relationships.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for positive social change include the organization's understanding that engagement strategies are vital for business managers among multigenerational workers. This study affects positive social change by providing business managers with active thinking and interactions with diversity techniques in the workplace to encourage practices of positive working relationships and promote increased engagement for their organization (Min et al., 2021). Change management comes with new challenges in organizations' environments and significant social change implications (Sopow, 2020). The study findings contribute to positive social change by bringing awareness of the engagement issues and sharing how to build a culture of transparency, effective communications, and team collaboration within the organization.

Successfully managing these diverse groups, such as multigeneration, requires talented business managers to find ways to balance the complicated obstacles and merge the numerous differences (Smeak, 2020). Business managers should strive to boost employee confidence and encourage and emphasize diversity with culture changes (Min et al., 2021). Organizations may benefit from the strategies described in this study to improve culture changes, decrease employee burnout, and increase profitability with job performance. Healthy relationships depend not on a single cause but on a multifaced approach to productivity, job satisfaction, morale, and employee engagement (Sopow, 2020). Business managers who practice openness, strong communication skills, and teamwork with all team members to have a balanced manager-employee relationship.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Business managers can use the results of this study to engage employees in the workplace. An engaged workforce results in business managers achieving workplace engagement through diversity and embracing employee feedback to improve productivity and decrease employee burnout (Min et al., 2021). Based on the findings, I recommend the following actions:

1. Business managers should consider more flexibility and effective communication with their employees to ensure they are clear about job expectations. Complete performance appraisals on time.
2. Business managers should conduct more training to ensure employees are fully aware of their job duties, responsibilities, and organizational roles.
3. Business managers should invest in more team-building exercises through volunteer group settings, team-building retreats, and encouraging leadership development to build a more positive work culture.
4. Business managers should encourage openness in the workplace with daily, weekly, and monthly meetings to ensure employees' concerns and interests are addressed to ensure employee productivity and job satisfaction.
5. Business managers should cultivate leadership development within the team to ensure strong teams can be transparent and effective in fostering problem-solving techniques.

This study will be available through Walden University scholar works for academic purposes. Sharing the findings of this study with organizations can share a positive

approach to employee engagement, leadership, and managing multiple generations in the workplace.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to explore strategies business managers use to engage their multigenerational workforce. The target population was four business managers who were engaged with a multigenerational workforce. Recommendations for further research with a wider geographic area allow the researcher to connect more data to compile, explore, and expand on strategies that business managers can use to engage their workforce effectively. The recommendations for future studies address the limitations for this study.

I identified two limitations in this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study. The first limitation was this study included a small sample size that may not have depicted all views of employee engagement. I recommend a wider geographic area and a larger sample size for future research. Additionally, a larger sample size allows the researcher to gain more business managers with connections with generational cohorts and capture the similarities and differences, achieving increasing results.

The second limitation identified was researcher biases. I did not have a healthcare background; therefore, I needed to familiarize myself with the participants or their areas of expertise for this study. As a researcher, I recognized that researcher bias may exist if there is a previous personal experience with a specific field. I recommended that future researchers not have professional associations to ensure there is no connection with researcher biases. I also recommend replicating the study within the private healthcare field to detect if they may have similar or different data points in a different workplace

setting. Likewise, this point may warrant further research to adopt different insights and best practices for employee engagement. Employee engagement is an important topic that incorporates workplace engagement and tremendous efforts from business managers.

### **Reflections**

My experience within the Walden Doctor of Business Administration Program was challenging. My mother, sister, lifelong friends, and family encouraged me not to quit and stay with the program until I finished. Throughout this journey, I experienced multiple setbacks that were sometimes self-inflicting; however, I chose to channel through the hardships and proceed. Stress and time management were two of the top contenders for the setback, along with tasking my day-to-day priorities. My outlook with these two combinations and managing my work balance became more challenging than anticipated. Along my journey, I gained loyalty for my review committee and respect for their firm advice and outpour of support and help. This process helped me move forward, overcome the setbacks, and complete the program.

Business managers will experience different learning settings, managing and developing multiple generations in the workplace, and the overall goal is to find engagement strategies to engage with those generations successfully. I am a manager with over 23 years of experience and have seen employees become disengaged and move on from organizations due to the need for more communication, training, and support. The results of this study can help create, adopt, and gain new perceptions of successful strategies that organizations can use to increase employee engagement.

## **Conclusions**

The purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry study was to explore strategies business managers used to engage their multigenerational workforce. Business managers can achieve workplace engagement through successful engagement strategies.

The conceptual framework for this research study was Shuck and Reio's (2011) employee engagement theory. From the data collected, three themes emerged: transparency, communications with staff, and team collaborations. The study findings can help business managers understand engagement strategies that fit their multigenerational workforce for organizational success. In conclusion, I recommend that business managers engage with their multigenerational workforce by leading by example and continuing learning to increase engagement with employees in the workforce.

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## Appendix A: Invitation Template for email, social media, and flyer formats

There is a new study about strategies being used that could help business leaders better understand the benefits and challenges of a multigenerational workforce. For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences learning about multigenerational workforces.

### **About the study:**

- One 30–60-minute phone interview that will be audiorecorded (no videorecording)
- You would receive a \$20 Visa gift card as a thank you.
- To protect your privacy, the published study will not share any names or details that identify you.

### **Volunteers must meet these requirements:**

- The business manager must have experience in implementing employee engagement strategies in the workplace.
- The business manager must have experience in a multiple generational organization.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Margrett Baker, a DBA student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during the week of December 18, 2023, Monday through Friday, the time frame is open morning or afternoon.

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Title: Workforce Strategies for Increasing Engagement

### Across Multiple Generations

- A. Self-introduction to the participant.
- B. Go over consent form and interview process.
- C. Ask participant if he or she have questions.
- D. Ask permission to record the interview.
- E. Ask permission to begin the interview.
- F. Start the recording.
- G. Start with interview question 1 and follow the interview questions sequence until the last interview question.
- H. Ask follow up questions.
- I. Observe the participant for any physical cues like facial expressions, body movements, and interaction.
- J. Verify interview responses with the participant.
- K. Ask participant if he or she has questions.
- L. End the recording.
- M. Thank participant for their time and participation in the statement.

### Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. What strategies did you use to successfully engage your multigenerational workforce?
2. How did your employees respond to those strategies?
3. How did you measure the successful engagement of your multigenerational workforce? What metrics, if any, did you use?
4. How, if at all, were the strategies to engage your multigenerational workforce communicated throughout the organizational ranks and among stakeholders?
5. What, if any, modifications did you apply to any strategy to improve its effectiveness in engaging your multigenerational workforce?
6. What were the key barriers to implementing strategies to successfully engage your multigenerational workforce?
7. How did you overcome the key barriers to implementing strategies to successfully engage your multigenerational workforce?
8. What else would you like to add about the strategies your organization used to engage your multigenerational workforce successfully?