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Leading a Multigenerational Workforce in the Public Sector

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Abstract

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MBA, University of Phoenix, 2008

BS, Wingate University, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

One of the demographic changes in the workplace is the presence of multiple generations working together. Some managers may find leading a multigenerational workforce a challenge, because the generational cohorts may have different work values and approaches to work. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how generational characteristics manifest in the workplace, how managers perceive a multigenerational workforce, and whether macro-level descriptions of generations creates stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. Mannheim's theory of generations and diversity management theory provided the conceptual framework for the study. Data were collected through interviews and a focus group discussion from 40 participants from the public sector. The participants consisted of members from the veterans, baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennial cohorts. Summative content analysis was used to analyze data with the use of NVivo software, and member checking was used to enhance the trustworthiness of interpretations. The key themes from the analysis indicated that, among these 40 participants, intergenerational conflicts in the workplace were attributed to generational descriptors of work values, communication styles, productivity, work-life balance, leadership styles, organizational change, and the future of the public sector. The findings may enhance managers' understanding of generational perceptions and may help managers take steps to reduce intergenerational conflict in the workplace.

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Dedication

This completed work would not have been possible without the support of my family and close friends. They have all been supportive and provided much encouragement to me throughout this long endeavor.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my dissertation committee chair and members. Thank you to Dr. Teresa Lao, dissertation chair, and Dr. Anthony Lolas for your patience, dedication, and support of my dissertation.

In loving memory of my dear grandmother, Mrs. Rosie Lee Thompson, who instilled a spirit of learning in me at an early age. I would like to thank my family Mr. Doffer Thompson, Ms. Annie Reid, Mrs. Lena Thompson, Wanda Nolan, Kena Nolan, and Erica Nolan for their motivation and support throughout this journey. Thanks to my colleagues, and close friends Vivian Simmons and Johnella Walker, for their words of encouragement and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The demographic changes in the U.S. workplace may have an impact on how managers in the public sector lead their workforce. One of the demographic changes occurring in the workplace is the presence of four different generations working together (Chekwa, Chukwuanu, & Richardson, 2013). Bright (2010) noted that age diversity is an issue in the U.S. public sector workplace. Garib (2013) indicated that age diversity has increased as people are working longer, which has led to a larger group of older employees. Around 2020, a new generation of employees will enter the workforce, which has been labeled Generation Z (Angeline, 2011). Public sector managers are challenged with creating a strategy to retain and motivate highly skilled older employees who are transitioning out of the workplace while remaining attractive to lesser skilled younger employees who are entering the workplace (Bright, 2010).

Because there are multiple generations working together in the public sector, understanding each of their orientation is important in reducing the potential conflict (Haynes, 2011). Karsh and Templin (2013) stated that the oldest and smallest generational cohort in the workplace is the *veterans*, who are sometimes referred to as the silent generation or traditionalists. Rothenberg and Gardner (2011) indicated that for a growing number of older adults, retirement is no longer an affordable option. The second group of workers in the workplace is the *baby boomers*. Baby boomers are described as workaholics, who are optimistic, confident, and independent; they seek personal gratification, like to work in a team environment, and believe they can change the world

(Tang, Cunningham, Frauman, Ivy, & Perry, 2012). The third group is the *Gen-Xers*. These individuals are unwilling to sacrifice their personal lives for a career, tend to consider themselves free agents in the business world, change jobs frequently, and see every company as an opportunity to do something better, or to enhance their skills (Chi, Maier, & Gursoy, 2013; Tang, et al.,2012). The fourth and newest generational cohort to enter the workforce is identified as *millennials*. Researchers agree that millennials will be working fulltime in the workplace by 2020 (Angeline, 2011).

The assumptions that there are differences in these generational cohorts are based on findings from various studies that show managers experience challenges and difficulties in dealing with a multigenerational workforce (Gilley, Waddell, Hall, Jackson, & Gilley, 2015; Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012; Kapadia, 2015). For the purpose of this study, *generational cohort* is defined as a group of individuals who share birth years, age, and significant life events at critical developmental stages (Shragay & Tziner, 2011). A *multigenerational workforce* is defined as two or more generations working side by side (Cheeseman & Downey, 2012; Hansen & Leuty, 2012). Workforce diversity has the potential to improve service delivery and performance by providing managers with an understanding of the values and norms of target populations the organization serves, particularly for public employees in service delivery organizations (Wyatt-Nichol & Badu Antwi-Boasiako, 2012).

The research problem in this case study was the challenges of leading a multigenerational workforce. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore

whether macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I found that there were intergenerational conflicts in the workplace that could be attributed to the generational problems, which are manifested in the workplace. The results of this study may help managers take action that could reduce conflict in the workplace. Many researchers have addressed generational work values and diversity management; however, after searching four databases and reviewing 200 articles, I found only a few that addressed generational differences and stereotypes that created conflict in the workplace, and that addressed managing a multigenerational workforce in the public sector (Benson & Brown, 2011; Bright, 2010; Ng & Gossett, 2013; Tang et al., 2012). To manage a diverse workforce, managers must understand the values, attitudes, and organizational factors that may influence different generations in the workplace (Gladwell, Dorwart, Stone, & Hammond, 2010). Chapter 1 contains the background of the study, problem statement, significance of the study, purpose of the study, conceptual framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, conclusion, and a summary.

Background

Since the turn of the 21st century, the U.S. workplace has undergone changes (Hewins-Maroney, & Williams, 2013; McCollum & Na'Desh, 2015). One of those changes is the makeup of the workforce. Older working adults have the option of working into their normal retirement years, possibly due to the advances in science and technology or due to longer life expectancy (CDC, 2012). Toossi (2012) projected that

labor force growth over the next 10 years would be affected by the aging of the baby boomer generation. The baby boomers will be between the ages of 56 and 74 in 2020, but with lower participation rates than those of the prime age group of 25 to 54-year-olds because many will have retired or died (Toossi, 2012). Because the age range is wide, managers in the public sector may need to identify how to lead a multigenerational workforce (Sloane-Seale & Kops, 2013).

In qualitative research on generations in the workplace, scholars have addressed differences in work values among the generational cohorts (Campbell, Campbell, Siedor, & Twenge, 2015; Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013; Latkovikj, Popovska, & Popovski, 2016; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015; Papavasileiou & Lyons, 2015). The term *work value* is defined by Lyons, Higgins, and Duxbury (2010) as the relative desirability and preferences toward various aspects related to the workplace. Many researchers have addressed generational differences and diversity management; however, academic research into intergenerational differences and its effects has been limited (Benson & Brown, 2011).

Allen, Plunkett, and Attner (2013), defined *productivity* as the relationship between the amounts of input needed to produce a given amount of output. In the workplace, productivity is considered the core factor of success and has always been paid special attention by managers (Martin, Razavi, & Emamgholizadeh, 2014). Productivity may be an issue with public sector managers when it comes to dealing with a multigenerational workforce because public organizations need to demonstrate that they

have the capacity to improve their performance (Chatzoglou, Chatzoudes, Vraimaki, & Diamantidis, 2013).

I conducted a search for articles that addressed leading a multigenerational workforce from four different databases. I also reviewed 200 articles and found that only a few addressed this problem. Therefore, I attempted to fill the gap in research on generational differences and stereotypes that created conflict in the workplace, and on managing a multigenerational workforce in the public sector. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature pertaining to this study.

Problem Statement

With advancements in science and technology increasing life expectancy, and with the elimination of pensions, older adults are staying in the workforce longer (CDC, 2012). With high school and college students entering the workforce, there is an increased possibility of managers supervising four generational cohorts at one time. Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010) indicated additional labels identifying the four different generations: veteran, (also referred to as the silent generation or the traditionalist), baby boomers, Generation X or Gen X, and Generation Y or Gen Y or millennials.

The general problem in this study, as supported by Dwyer (2009) and Deyoe and Fox (2011), was that each generational cohort brings its unique characteristics to the workplace, which causes conflict in how cohorts work with each other. As Dwyer noted that the lack of unified diversity practices when dealing with a multigenerational

workforce could result in conflicts or problems in the workplace. Salahuddin (2010) stated that stereotyping and the lack of generational understanding may lead to decreased productivity, increased employee dissatisfaction, and increased employee turnover. Weingarten (2009) noted that organizations that do not address these challenges may experience increased absenteeism and interpersonal conflict and decreased communication and motivation. The specific problem for this qualitative case study was that the macro-level descriptions of different generations create harmful stereotypes, or they may be indicative of genuine differences that can arise in the workplace. I explored whether the presence of different generations is an issue among managers and workers and explored how these differences are dealt with in the workplace.

Purpose of Study

The research problem in this case study focused on the challenges of leading a multigenerational workforce. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether the macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I discovered that there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that may be attributed to the generational differences. The results of this study may help managers take action that could reduce conflict in the workplace.

The different work-related value of each of the generational cohorts creates a challenge for managers in the public sector. Salahuddin (2010) stated that differences in work values such as dedication and sacrifice may cause organizational strife and

dissatisfaction, which may lead to reduced productivity in the workplace. If these generational differences are manifested in the workplace, having an increased awareness of the differences and similarities in working values of each of the generational cohorts may help managers in the public sector be proactive in addressing likely points of conflict and choosing a leadership style that is best suited for a multigenerational workforce (Gursoy, et al, 2013).

The study consisted of 40 public sector employees in North Carolina. The first group included 20 employees from the four generational cohorts. These participants were interviewed face to face in a public library conference room in Charlotte, North Carolina. The second group consisted of 10 employees from the different cohorts who were part of a focus group discussion conducted at a public library conference room in Charlotte, North Carolina. The third group consisted of 10 managers of multigenerational workforce who were interviewed face to face at a public library conference room in Charlotte, North Carolina. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing managers with a general description of the different generational perceptions that could help managers take action that could reduce conflict in the workplace.

Research Questions

The general research question (RQ) of this case study aligned with the framework and goal of the case study: To what extent does a multigenerational workforce create conflict? This general research question was answered by analysis of the data collected

from individual interviews and a focus group session guided by the following two research questions:

RQ1: How do generational differences manifest in the workplace?

RQ2: What managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce and how are they handled?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was drawn from the fields of sociology and management. Mannheim's theory of generations addresses how people are influenced by the socio-historical environment (notable events that involve them actively) of their youth, yielding generations that become agents of change, and give rise to events that shape future generations. Mannheim (1952) emphasized the importance of generations as a guide to understanding the structure of social and intellectual movements. Mannheim's theory of generations has been redefined by Turner (Edmunds & Turner 2002) who defined *generation* as a cohort of persons passing through time who come to share common habits and lifestyle and who have a strategic temporal location to a set of resources as a consequence of historical accident and the exclusionary practices of social closure. Feng (2011) and Strauss and Howe (1991) defined generations as a group of people who possess given social qualities because their age stipulates that they should group up and be active in the period and environment.

Researchers have assigned different timeframes to each generation; however, I used the dates identified by Twenge, et al. (2010). These classifications include the

following: veterans (also referred to as the silent generation and the traditionalists; (born 1925-1945); baby boomers (born 1946-1964); Generation x, or Gen X; (born 1965-1981); and Generation Y or Gen y (also referred to as genme or millennials born 1982-1999). Ferri-Reed (2012) stated the oldest generation in the workplace is the veterans. The veteran cohort continues to work due to the decimation of their retirement accounts by the recession of 2008. Many veterans enjoy the challenge of work, the social aspect of work, and maintaining a daily schedule. Veterans have a knowledge base and carry a wealth of historical organizational information (Brown, 2012). Cox, Hannif, and Rowley (2013) found that veterans have wisdom that enables them to anticipate problems and respond to problems effectively. Brown (2011) also noted that veterans prefer a top-down chain of command, are open to learning new technology, work well in teams, and enjoy mentoring younger staff.

Baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1964. Baby boomers have a strong work ethic, concentrate on getting the job done, and expect others to work as hard as they do in the workplace (Ferri-Reed; 2012; Schoch, 2012; Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early, & Shepard, 2016). Brown (2012) noted that baby boomers defined themselves by their professional accomplishments, working long hours, and being competitive. The Generational X cohort members were born between 1965 and 1981. Generation X or Gen X employees are self-reliant, independent, resilient, and adaptable. During their childhood, Gen-Xers grew up in single-family homes or dual-income homes, and

normally came home to an empty house (Brown, 2012; Ferri-Reed, 2012). Gen-Xers had to be independent and do not enjoy being micromanaged.

Millennials are the youngest and largest generational cohort to enter the workforce. Millennials were born between 1982 and 1999. Millennials are tech savvy and self-confident (Bannon, Ford, & Meltzer, 2011; Ferri-Reed, 2012). Millennials are multitaskers, are accustomed to frequent feedback, crave collaboration, and are ambitious (Balda & Mora, 2014; Brown, 2012; Ferri-Reed, 2012; Lewis, 2015; Schullery 2013; Suleman & Nelson, 2011). Generation Z will be entering the workforce around 2020 (Angeline, 2011). Researchers differ on the date of birth for this generation, but most researchers state this generational cohort was born between 2000 and 2004 (Berkup, 2014; Feng, 2011; Gilbert, Raffo, & Sutarso, 2013; Mukundan, Dhanya, & Saraswathyamma, 2013; Srinivasin, 2012).

In the field of management, the theory of diversity management formed the foundation for this study. Wyatt-Nichol and Badu Antwi-Boasiako (2012) indicated the concept of diversity management came from Thomas (2011) who defined *diversity management* as the capability to make quality decisions in the midst of differences, similarities, and related tensions and complexities. With employees representing a variety of backgrounds and preferences, human resource personnel have come to view diversity management strategies as critical for the effective performance of organizations (Wyatt-Nichol & Badu Antwi-Boasiako 2012). Public sector organizations are often more racially and ethnically diverse than private sector organizations (Hur & Strickland,

2012).The conceptual framework of generational differences and diversity management theory served as the lens to generate research questions and interview questions and to gather and analyze date for this study.

Nature of the Study

I chose a qualitative, descriptive case study design for this study. Qualitative methodology was used to explore and understand of individuals or groups associated with a social or human phenomenon (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014). Denzin (2011) noted that qualitative research addresses the meaning and interpretation of concepts in specific contexts of inquiry, while quantitative are used to examine concepts regarding the amount intensity, or frequency. Eriksson and Kovalaine (2008) stated that the qualitative approach gives a researcher an opportunity to focus on the complexity of business-related phenomena in their contexts. Qualitative methodology was a better fit than quantitative methodology in exploring whether macro-level descriptions of different generations create stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behaviors in the workplace. Through this study, I discovered that there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace.

Toloie-Eshlaghy, Chitsaz, Karimian, and Charkhchi (2011) defined *case studies* as the facts about the real situation of the participants, which include people and events happening in an existing organization. When a researcher has little control over events, and the focus is on contemporary phenomena in real life, a case study can be used

(Toloie-Eshlaghy, et al, 2011). Eriksson and Kovalaine (2008) noted that business case studies could be used to increase diversity and complexity and avoid simplistic research methodology. A qualitative research methodology allows the researcher to interpret the life experience of those in the study, and address the research problem and questions.

Baxter and Jack (2008) stated that type of case study is determined by whether the researcher is describing, exploring, or comparing cases. There are many types of case studies such as collective, descriptive, evaluative, explanatory, exploratory, instrumental, intrinsic, multiple, or single case studies. A collective case study is used when the number of cases is studied jointly to inquire into the phenomena, population, or general condition (Stake, 1995). An explanatory case study includes as existing theory to affirm the phenomenon under study, whereas the exploratory approach examines the situation (Yin, 2003). Intrinsic case studies are used to explore a particular case to gain a better understanding of a phenomenon, whereas the instrumental approach addresses a particular case to provide information on issues or refine a theory (Stake, 1995). Yin (2003) described a multiple case study as one that includes two or more cases, and a single case study focus on one case.

The most appropriate design for this study was the descriptive single case study. A descriptive single case study was a good fit for this study because the design is used to answer research questions for the purpose of describing a phenomenon (Yin, 2013). Neuman (2011) defined *descriptive case study* as a study starting with a well-defined issue or question and the need to describe it accurately. Tobin (2010) indicated that a

descriptive case study is one that is focused and detailed in which propositions and questions about a phenomenon are carefully scrutinized and articulated at the outset. A single case study was selected because the study addressed a common case regarding a multigenerational workforce and diversity management in the public sector.

A descriptive case study was appropriated because I explored managers 'and employees' perceptions of a multigenerational workforce. A descriptive case study was appropriate to investigate one or a small number of social entities or situations about which data are collected using multiple sources to develop a holistic description through an iterative research process (Easton, 2010). For this case study, three sources of data were used to answer the research questions: (a) interviews with 20 public sector employees from each of the generational cohorts, (b) focus group discussion with 10 public sector employees from a mixed cohort, and (c) interviews with 10 managers who lead a multigenerational workforce. Yin (2003) noted that a descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. This study provided a detailed description of the working values of four generational cohorts and the diversity practices managers in the public sector use to bring the different generations together.

This descriptive single case study was designed to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations create stereotypes or perceptions that are not easily recognizable in the workplace. Through this study, I found there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace. The sample consisted of 40 public

sector employees, including employees who are in upper and middle management. The participants were selected based on their year of birth ranging from 1950 to1989. There were five members each from the veterans, baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and millennial cohorts. The responses of each of the participants from the four cohorts served as one source of data. The participants from the four generational cohorts were asked the same interview questions.

The public sector employees in the focus group were asked the same questions as the employees who were interviewed one on one. I also conducted face-to-face interviews with public sector managers regarding their experiences managing a multigenerational workforce, and to discuss possible consequences of expressed differences. The focus group participants addressed whether there was a shared perception of how public sector managers leading a multigenerational workforce. The data were analyzed using NVivo 10 to identify common themes and patterns from the participants' responses.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions included the specific meaning of key terms throughout this study.

Baby boomers. Born between 1946 and 1964, this cohort currently make up the largest segment of population in many countries, including the United States (LeRouge, et, al, 2014).

Generation X. Born between 1965 and 1980, is also known as latchkey kids, theirs was the first generation growing up with two parents working full-time. Gen-Xers are independent, resourceful, self-sufficient, and less trusting than other generations (Schoch, 2012).

Generation Z. Born between 2000 and the present (Johnson, 2013; Nielsen, 2013;. The defining feature of Gen Z is that they have lived their entire lives with the existence of the Internet and other technology devices (Matier, 2011; Srinivasin, 2012).

Millennials. Born between 1982 and 1999 and are more technologically savvy, better educated, and ethnically diverse than any previous generation (Bannon, et al, 2011).

Multigenerational leadership. Managers who adapt their attitudes about rewards, work styles, communication preferences, and motivators to match generational expectations (Ballone, 2009).

Public sector. Public sector and public administration are used interchangeably. Public sector is a governmental entity, that has a prominent role in the formulation of public policy and is a part of the political process (Rosenbloom & Kravchuk, 2005).

Strategic diversity management. A leadership-driven systems approach in which organizational policies, practices, and the workforce promote inclusion and address the needs of diverse staff and communities through cultural and linguistic competence (Dreachslin, Gilbert, & Malone, 2013).

Veterans. The veterans cohort is also known as the silent generation and the traditionalists, born between 1925 and 1945. The veterans cohort is the smallest in the workplace and spent their adolescence during World War II (Sullivan Havens, Warshawsky, & Vasey, 2013).

Workforce diversity. The differences among people in an organization. Diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education background, and more (Sreedhar, 2011).

Assumptions

I made three assumptions about the participants. The first assumption was the participants were honest and forthcoming in providing responses to the interview questions. Mattson and Haas (2014) suggested that researchers build rapport with participants to encourage them to provide open and honest responses. Because the data were collected via interviews and focus group discussion, it was important that the participants provided detailed responses regarding their experiences working with colleagues from a different cohort. The second assumption was that all participants had at least 5 years of continuous service with the city of Charlotte and were willing to share work experiences about other generations. Questions were not gender- based, so I assumed that both men and women would answer the questions based on their real-life experiences in the workplace and on gender. The third assumption that different generations are sufficiently different and that challenges result for the managers of an intergenerational workforce.

Scope and Delimitations

This study included participants from multiple generations employed in a single organization in the public sector. To meet the criteria for the study, participants had to be employed in the public sector for more than 5 years and had to be willing to participate in the study. I chose not to include public sector employees with fewer than 5 consecutive years of employment in the public sector because those employees may not have been able to provide responses to the interview questions and the focus group questions. The criterion of 5 years of employment in the public sector was important because I assumed that participants would have had a chance to work with people from each of the generational cohorts.

The conceptual framework of this study was based on the topics of generational differences and diversity management. These theories provided the foundation for articulating the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions. Because the target population was employed in the public sector, the findings may or may not be suitable for the private sector industry. Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) found that case study researchers enhance the transferability of case studies by providing rich descriptions of the rationale for the selection of case study populations and describing the details of case study contexts. Such details allow the consumer of the research to determine the relevance and transferability of the findings to his or her experiences. Because any organization at a particular time is unique, the results may not be rich and meaningful for

people in other situations (Checkland & Holwell, 1998). Even though the public sector was the targeted industry, the private sector may find the findings helpful.

There were three delimitations in this study. The first delimitation was the decision to use a qualitative approach instead of a quantitative approach. The phenomena studied by qualitative researchers are often long, episodic, and evolving. The researcher often takes a long time to understand the phenomenon (Stake, 2010). Berg (2009) shared that qualitative researchers assess the quality of abstractions or generalizations drawn from experiences using words, images, and descriptions, whereas quantitative researchers rely on numbers. Some researchers erroneously regarded quantitative strategies as more scientific than qualitative strategies (Berg, 2009). The second delimitation of this study was the geographical location. The location of this study is in North Carolina, I focused on this area, because I am resident of this state. The third delimitation of this study was the public sector. I focused on a multigenerational workforce in the public sector and excluded the private sector. I chose the public sector because of my many years working in the public sector. There may be an opportunity for future researchers to address both the public and private sectors.

Limitations

This qualitative descriptive case study had three limitations. The first limitation was the worldviews of the participants of each generational cohort. Gursoy, Maier, and Chi (2008) found there is a difference among generations in worldviews, attitudes toward authority, and perspectives on work. The veterans and baby boomers respect authority

and hierarchy while the Gen-Xers rebel against authority. The second limitation was researcher bias. Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003) suggested the potential reasons for researcher bias include researcher's mental and other discomforts posting a threat to the truth-value of data collected and analysis, and the researcher conducting inappropriate interviews. Chenail (2011) noted that instrumentation rigor and bias management are challenges for qualitative researchers employing interviewing as a data generation method in their studies. Feng and Jament (2011) found that a researcher who facilitates the flow of communication and identifies cues sets respondents at ease. Qualitative researchers tend to construct study specific questions that are open-ended in nature and that provide opportunities for participants to contribute their perspectives with no limitations imposed by closed-ended questions (Chenail, 2011).

I noted my personal beliefs and biases regarding the study prior to conducting interviews and remained conscious of my personal biases throughout the data collection and analysis process. Biases included my views of the generational cohorts that I am not a member of in the workplace. Because I interviewed the participants and facilitated the focus group discussion, I posed the questions in a neutral manner and listened attentively. A researcher's personal experiences, beliefs, attitudes, culture, and generational views need to be set aside (Moustakas, 1994), and I kept an open mind to reduce bias. I also composed a handwritten journal after each encounter with the participants to record my observations.

The third limitation in this study included honesty of participants regarding their responses to the interview questions and focus group questions. I informed participants of the benefits of this study prior to the interviews. Making participants aware of the benefits may have helped them answer the questions honestly. In addition, because the interviews and focus group session were conducted face-to-face participants were encouraged to answer questions honestly. Having a personal interaction encourages a degree of personal honesty in the respondent (Barnham, 2012).

Significance of Study

Since the turn of the 21st century, the U.S. workplace has undergone changes (Hewins-Maroney, & Williams, 2013; McCollum & Na'Desh, 2015). One of those changes is the makeup of the workforce. Older working adults have the option of working into their normal retirement years, possibly due to the advances in science and technology or due to longer life expectancy (CDC, 2012). Toossi (2012) projected that labor force growth over the next 10 years would be affected by the aging of the baby boomer generation. The baby boomers will be between the ages of 56 and 74 in 2020, but with lower participation rates than those of the prime age group of 25 to 54-year-olds because many will have retired or died (Toossi, 2012). Because the age range is wide, managers in the public sector may need to identify how to lead a multigenerational workforce (Sloane-Seale & Kops, 2013).

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I conducted a search for articles that addressed leading a multigenerational workforce from four different databases. I also reviewed 200 articles and found that only a few addressed this problem. Therefore, I attempted to fill the gap in research on generational differences and stereotypes that created conflict in the workplace, and on managing a multigenerational workforce in the public sector. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature pertaining to this study.

Summary

The landscape of the workplace has changed; the age range of workers is 20s to 70s. Researchers found that human resource specialists believed one of the challenges managers in the workplace face is leading a multigenerational workforce (Benson & Brown, 2011; Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012). With this broad age range of people working together, managers need to understand the needs of each generation. Deyoe and Fox (2011) stated that challenges faced by managers in the workplace include the following: emphasis on work-life balance, struggle over respect from each generation, personal use of workplace technology, desire to work away from the office, and methods of communication. Salahuddin (2010) found that the lack of generational understanding and stereotyping allows for potential organizational strife and dissatisfaction that can lead to decreased productivity, increased employee dissatisfaction, and high increased employee turnover rates. Weingarten (2009) noted that organizations that do not address are likely to experience increased absenteeism and interpersonal conflict and decreased communication and motivation. Bright (2010) found that there is little research on the multigenerational workforce in the field of public administration.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature including the conceptual framework of generational differences and diversity management. I also address the multigenerational workforce in the public sector and clarify the values of the four generations in the workplace.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The research problem in this case study focused on the challenges of leading a multigenerational workforce. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I found that there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace. The results of this study may help managers take action that could reduce conflict in the workplace. Working with a multigenerational workforce may present a challenge to managers because managers may have to use different leadership styles and diversity practices to help different generations work together (Dwyer, 2009).

Dwyer (2009) noted that the lack of unified diversity practices when dealing with a multigenerational workforce could result in problems in the workplace such as limited emphasis on work-life balance, struggle over respect from each generation, use of workplace technology, and a desire to work away from the office. The demographic changes in the U.S. workplace may have an impact on how managers in the public sector lead their workforce. There are multiple generations of workers in the United States working together (Cogin, 2012; Moon, 2014; Nicholas, 2011). The four different generations, according to Twenge, et al (2010), are veterans, baby boomers, Generation X or Gen X, and Generation Y or millennial.

Around 2020, a new generation of employees will begin entering the workforce: Generation Z (Angeline, 2011). In state and local governments, the United States has witnessed growth over the past 60 years (Sheingate, 2009). Benson and Brown (2011) found that human resource specialists believed that one of the challenges managers in the workplace face is leading a multigenerational workforce. With each generational cohort bringing unique values to the workplace, managers have to be able to bring the cohorts together to increase productivity. The differences among the generations in the workforce creates some problems for managers who are responsible for making sure that tasks are being completed (Kaifi, et al, 2012).

Henderson (2012) indicated that employment in state and local government sector is projected to increase from 19.5 million in 2010 to almost 21.2 million in 2020. Because of an increase of employees entering the state and local governments, there is an increased likelihood of a multigenerational workforce. Chapter 2 includes review of the literature focusing on the working styles of the four generational cohorts and fifth cohort who will be entering the workplace soon. I discuss the gap in the literature and a provide historical overview of the generational differences and diversity management theories. I focus on work and personal values of the generational cohorts, diversity management, and the role of human resources in managing a multigenerational workforce.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy for this qualitative descriptive case study included books and journal articles from the Walden University online library I used the following

databases: ProQuest, EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ABI/INFORM Complete, SAGE Premier, and Business Source. The key words included *qualitative*, *case study*, *generations*, *generational cohorts*, *generational differences*, *work values*, *work teams*, *work environment*, v*eterans*, *baby boomers*, *Generation X*, *Generation Y*, *millennial*, *Generation Z*, *diversity management*, *training*, and *public sector*. The searches for this literature review included 33 documents published between 1982 and 2011, and 187 sources published between 2012 and 2016. For generational differences, there were 10 sources between 1991 and 2010 and 123 sources between 2011 and 2016 2016. Diversity management had 24 sources between 1982 and 2010 and 64 sources between 2011 and 2015.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was used to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. The conceptual framework consisted of generational theory, generational differences, and diversity management. Through this study, I hoped to determine whether stereotypes or perceptions are an issue among managers and to explore the different generations in the workplace. Generational differences and diversity management may not appear to be related, but these theories helped me understand the basis for differences due to age and the management of those differences in the workplace. Analyzing findings using a conceptual framework composed of generational differences and diversity

management may provide public sector managers with the tools to understand and deal with the issues that arise in a multigenerational workforce.

Generational Differences

Strauss and Howe (1991) defined *generation* as people born into a particular political and social movement who develop unique values, belief systems, and peer personalities. Strauss and Howe found that historical events defined the personality of a generation, whereas the personality of a generation defined how historical events contribute to society. Although events in a generational cycle raise questions about when and how certain racial, ethnic, or gender issues arise, generations are units and not subunits within them (Legas & Sims, 2012; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Twenge and Campbell (2008) expanded on the generational theory in their research. Twenge and Campbell used psychological scales taken over eight decades to determine the differences that can be generalized to understand and make predictions about tendencies of prototypical individuals. Some individuals attach themselves to the characteristics of other birth ranges.

A *generation* is defined as "a group of individuals born and living contemporaneously who have common knowledge and experiences that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors" (Johnson & Johnson, 2010, p. 6). The individuals born within the same time period are grouped together into a generational cohort. Debevec, Schewe, Madden, and Diamond (2013) defined *generational cohort* as a group of individuals who are born during the same time period and journey through life

together. Different researchers assign different timeframes to each generation; in this study, I used the dates identified by Twenge, et al. (2010). These classifications include the following: the veterans (born 1925-1945), the baby boomers, (born 1946-1964), Generation X or Gen X (born 1965-1981), and Generation Y or Gen Y also referred to as GenMe, millennials, and nGen, (born 1982-1999). Several researchers have labeled the cohort after the millennials as Generation Z (Johnson, 2013; Nielsen, 2013). The Generation Z cohort was born between 2000 and the current time (Johnson, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Srinivasin, 2012). Shaw (2013) stated there are additional generational cohort classifications, which include the cusper. Cuspers are people who are born close to the dividing line between generations. Cuspers have an advantage of being a part of two generations. Each generational cohort may have different values and beliefs.

Veterans Generation

The oldest and smallest generational cohort in the workplace is the veterans, who are sometimes referred to as the silent generation or traditionalists (Cahill & Mona Sedrak, 2012; Chekwa, et al., 2013; Dixon, Mercado, & Knowles, 2013; Karsh & Templin, 2013). The veteran cohort was born between 1925 and 1945. During this time period, the veterans were influenced by the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, radios, and automobiles (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012; Riggs, 2013; Salahuddin, 2010; Schoch, 2012; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Even though the veteran cohort is the oldest and smallest in the workplace, this cohort has experienced and witnessed some of the greatest historical events and technological inventions during their

lifetime. Meister and Willyerd's (2010) findings showed that since the end of World War II, veterans were introduced to the first credit card issued in 1946, the color television in 1950, the personal computer in 1981, the first mobile phone in 1987, the World Wide Web in 1991, Google in 1998, and a host of social media such as MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (Salahuddin, 2010; Srinivasan, 2012).

The core values of veterans are patriotism, loyalty, and sacrifice (Coburn & Hall, 2014; Salahuddin, 2010; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Growing up during the Great Depression shaped veterans to value rationing, economic conservativeness, family togetherness, and faith (Hendricks & Cope, 2012). The work values are similar to the core values of the veterans cohort. The work values of veterans are hard work, conformity, dedication, sacrifice, and patience (Salahuddin, 2010). Members of this generation are comfortable with delayed recognition and reward. Verschoor (2013) also noted that work and family life rarely coincide, and the veterans cohort dresses formally at work.

Baby Boomers Generation

Baby boomers make up the largest percentage of the workforce (Fitzpatrick, Nguyen, & Cayan, Q., 2015; Hannay & Fretwell, 2011). Baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 (Badley, Canizares, Perruccio, Hogg-Johnson, & Gignac, 2015; Fingerman, Pillemer, Silverstein, & Suitor, 2014; Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2014; Toossi, 2013). The views of the baby boomers was shaped by the Civil Rights Movement, women's liberation, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, the Trudeau era of

multiculturalism, Woodstock, the Cold War, the United States landing on the moon, and the Kennedy assassination (Badley, et al., 2015; Delli Carpini, 2014). Meister and Willyerd (2010) noted that even though the television had the most impact on the home lives of boomers, the personal computer directly transformed their jobs in the workplace.

Baby boomers core values are different from their parents the veterans. Baby boomers share the core values of optimism, personal gratification, confidence, independence, team orientation, self-reliance, and the belief that they can change the world (Salahuddin, 2010; Zeeshan & Iram, 2012). Karsh and Templin (2013) stated baby boomers believe that work is more than just work: Work is life. Baby boomers are much more defined by their work than other generations. Baby boomers are service oriented, driven, career focused, and collegial team players who want to feel valued and needed (Hernaus, & Pološki Vokic, 2014; Salahuddin, 2010). The Baby boomer cohort relishes long workweeks and define themselves by professional accomplishments (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Even though baby boomers love to work, they are uncomfortable with conflict, are judgmental, and are concerned that technology is phasing out face-to-face human interaction in the business world (Salahuddin, 2010).

Generation X

The Generation X or Gen X cohort was born during the 1965-1981 timeframe (; Malik & Khera, 2014). During this time period, the life focus changed from children and families to broad sweeping social issues (Karsh & Templin, 2013). Members of Gen-Xers cohort witnessed the Gulf War, Black Friday, hippies, Exxon Valdez spill, rise of MTV,

Challenger disaster, fall of Berlin Wall, Rodney King beating, Dotcom boom, birth control pill, AIDS crisis, and the first cellular phone (Gurwitt, 2013; Inceoglu, Segers, & Bartram, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2010; Karsh & Templin, 2013; Scheck, 2012). Gen-Xers was the first generation to experience a high rate of divorce, both parents working, or single family homes (Acar, 2014). Gen-Xers also had the label of latchkey children because many of the children would wear their house key around their neck to let themselves in at the end of their school day (Bianchi, 2014; Karsh & Templin, 2013; Schullery, 2013; Sutton Bell, Hamilton, McMinn, & Bell, 2014).

Members of the Gen-Xers cohort are independent, resourceful, resilient, adaptable, self-sufficient, and less trusting than other generations (Karsh & Templin, 2013; Mihelich, 2013). Gen-Xers prefers to work alone and is keen on developing new skill sets to maintain marketability (Hernaus, & Pološki Vokic, 2014; Schoch, 2012). Gen-Xers work and play hard on their terms, and this cohort invented extreme sports. Family life is important to them, and they want to be available to their children (Schoch, 2012). Gen-Xers is different from the baby boomers because, Gen-Xers work to live, but do not live to work. DelVecchio, (2009) noted that Gen-Xers saw their parents be laid off or face job insecurity (Brown, 2012). Many of them also entered the workplace in the early 80, when the economy was in a downturn. Because of these factors, Gen-Xers have redefined workplace loyalty. Instead of remaining loyal to their organization, Gen-Xers have a commitment to their work, to the work team, and to their boss (Gilley, et al.,

2015). Although Gen-Xers take employment seriously, they are not attached to a career ladder.

Millennials Generation

The most recent generational cohort to enter the workplace is the millennials. Members of the millennials cohort were born between 1982 and 1999 (Choi, Kwon, &, 2013). The U.S. Census Bureau (2015) estimated millennials to be over 83.1 million individuals worldwide, and one-third of the U. S. population, making them the largest generational cohort in history. During their lifetime, millennials have experienced the global war on terrorism following September 11, 2011, Columbine School shooting, Oklahoma City bombings, environmental decay, and crumbling institutions (Allison, 2013; Hahn, 2011; Salahuddin, 2010; Schoch, 2012). Millennials like to have fun and socialize. The parents of millennials choreographed their after-school time with multiple activities requiring carpooling, such as swimming, soccer, and dance (Hahn, 2011). Even though millennials grew up with technology, they are the first generation to take technology for granted (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Amayah & Gedro, 2014; Hendricks & Cope, 2012; Robbins, 2013; Sherman, 2014). Millennials grew up wired using to electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets, video games, and personal computers (Jerome, Scales, Whithem, & Quain, 2014).

At work and in their personal lives, millennials multitask, they need ongoing feedback, value diversity, prefer to communicate electronically, function well working with team members, are civic-minded, eco-aware, confident, conventional, optimism, and

socially conscious (Church & Rotolo, 2013; Coulter & Faulkner, 2014; Ferri-Reed,2013; Kuhl, 2014; Mencl, & Lester, 2014.). Millennials use sophisticated computer applications, such as the Internet, blogging, text messaging, and social networking (Appelbaum, et al., 2012; Rai, 2012). Millennials also, "want it all" and "want it now" in terms of good pay, benefits, rapid advancement, work-life balance, challenging work, and making a contribution to society (Bolton, et, al., 2013; Kong, Wang, Fu, 2015; Latkovikj, Popovska, & Popovski, 2016; Vanmeter, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2013). There is also a preference for a more "casual" working environment and in some instances wardrobe, as some millennials believed that if they are getting their work done, their appearance should not be of concern (Thompson & Gregory, 2012, p. 242). Millennials do not value work as much as their families, friends, social networks, coworkers, and themselves (Campione, 2014; Gibson & Sodeman, 2014). Managers reported millennials as having no work ethics, lack of respect, distraction with social networking and they show little if any loyalty to the company they are employed (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Heng & Yazdanifard, 2013). Managers must understand what millennials value to attract and retain this cohort in the workplace.

Generation Z

Generation Z was born between 2000 to the present (Johnson, 2013; Nielsen, 2013). This generational cohort has several titles, Children of the Internet, Digital Generation, Digital Natives, iGen, Gen Tech, and Gen Wii (Berkup 2014; Lee, 2015). During the short lifetime of Generation Z has experienced being online since a young

age, swine flu outbreak of 2009, the first African American President, and laws making texting while driving illegal (Debevec, Schewe, Madden, & Diamond, 2013; Johnson & Johnson, 2010). Malloy (2012) indicated that Generation Z would have no memories of a time when diversity was not the norm. Wellner (2000) noted that Generation Z would likely come from more varied family backgrounds than has been experienced in recent history. The parents of the Generation Z cohort involve their children in one organized activity, from weekly matches during soccer season to basketball leagues for both boys and girls (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). University professors frequently complain of grade inflation and about students expecting an A and certainly no less than a B simply for attending class. Some of the literature, indicate these young people are naïve and enter the workplace with unrealistic expectations (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013).

Generation Z is very familiar with using the technology for school and play. This cohort uses the Internet, IPods, text messaging, Facebook, Snapchat, smartphones, and YouTube as part of their daily lives (Castellano, 2016; Hartijasti, & Fathonah, 2014; Moulton, 2015; Rickes, 2016; Voorveld & van der Goot, 2013). Igel and Urquhart (2012) found members of Generation Z to be smarter, more self-directed, and able to process information quicker than previous generations. Generation Z prefers independent work and tends to be reluctant to become involved in teamwork (Adecco, 2015). Wiedmer (2015) noted that Generation Z dominant trait is that they are masters of multitasking and can talk text, listen to music, and look up information on the Web at the same time. Ozkana and Solmaz (2015) found that social environment is important for the Generation

Z that is adapted to team spirit. Tulgan (2013) noted that Generation Z wants to learn from their managers and not just from computers. Renfro (2012) found that flexibility is going to be important for this generational cohort as they expect quick results (promotions) and will keep their resumes handy and current.

Theory of Generational Differences

Understanding the similarities and differences between the four generational cohorts is important for everyone. Managers may become better equipped to lead a multigenerational workforce by recognizing these similarities or differences. A lack of understanding the similarities or differences may prevent the organization from meeting their organizational goals (Longo, Dean, Norris, Wexner, & Kent, 2011). By bridging the generational gap, managers may be able to use the strengths of their employees (Hahn, 2011).

The work value generational cohorts bring to the workplace is based on their life experiences, historical events, attitudes, and expectations (Brown, Fluit, Lent, & Herbert, 2013). Ruey-Juen, Chen-Wei, and Bor-Wen (2014) stated that work value is the degree to which employees value their work attitude toward commitment, job satisfaction, and loyalty. The literature on generational differences in work values is diverse. Managers may be better equipped to lead a multigenerational workforce if they have a clear understanding of the work values of each generational cohort. A few of the work values examined by researchers are communication, altruistic, extrinsic, and intrinsic motivation, work-life balance, and job satisfaction (Twenge, 2010).

Communication

Competent oral communication skills are essential to personal success in the field of business (Conrad & Newberry, 2012). In the workplace today, managers and employees communicate with each other verbally or in writing. Face-to-face or phone conversations involve spoken or oral communication, whereas, texting, messaging, tweeting, and most online conversations involve written communication (Berger & Iyengar, 2013). Organizations are experiencing issues with effective communication between the generational cohorts (Salahuddin, 2010). Managers may need to have an understanding of the different communication styles and expectations of each of the generational cohorts (Gursoy, et al., 2013).

There have been several changes in the workplace, one of those changes is how the generational cohorts communication with each other and with managers (Miller, 2012). Cekada's (2012) research showed people learn to communicate based on generational backgrounds. For example, members of the veterans cohorts prefer communicating face-to-face or by phone rather than sending an email (Lancaster & Stillman, 2006). Researchers found that baby boomers value face-to-face communication to a greater esteem than the younger generations (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012; Morris, 2012). French and Shim (2016) noted that Gen-Xers and millennials place more value on e-mail communication and texting than face-to-face communication. Millennials favor open and frequent communication with their supervisor, and a work environment where the organization's mission, values, operations, problems, and

conflicts are shared with all employees (Ferri-Reed, 2014). With these different methods of communicating, frustration may occur and could contribute to negative perceptions between the different generational cohorts (Goudreau, 2013).

Altruism

D'Souza and Adams (2014) described altruism as the practice of unselfish concern for the well-being of others coupled with an associated measure of personal cost. Many people show altruism by volunteering for service activities that require extra time and are not a part of their formal job requirements. Researchers found that there were no significant generational differences in altruistic values (Schullery, 2013; Twenge, 2010). O'Neil (2014) noted that for millennials workplace volunteer policies affect his or her decision to apply for a job. There is very little research on Generation Z concern for others, but Brotheim (2014) found Generation Z lacks the kind of empathy that allows them to feel concern for others.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Rewards

Each generational cohort views extrinsic and intrinsic rewards differently. Motivating a multigenerational workforce may be a challenge for managers. Extrinsic motivation in the workplace is defined as an employee need for material and direct rewards (Birkinshaw, 2012). Extrinsic values typically involve pay, occupational status, and opportunities for advancement (Chen, 2014; To & Tam, 2014). Baby boomers value extrinsic rewards, and want money, prestige, and status symbols such as title and parking spots (Olson & Brescher, 2011). Millennials are extrinsic and materialistic also, this chort

values money, image, and fame over concern for others (Kim & Jang, 2014; Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, & Herzog, 2011; Twenge & Kasser, 2013). Millennials are perceived as having an attitude of entitlement as they placed a high value on extrinsic rewards (Bahe, Ruiz, Rejeda, Sill, & Poole, 2014; Schullery, 2013).

Intrinsic motivation involves performing a work activity because intrinsically is inherently interesting, pleasurable, satisfying, positive work environment, employees are heard and respected, and the most self-determined form of motivation (Deal, et, al., 2013; Stinchcomb & Leip, 2013). Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, Kanfer, and Dikkers (2011) found the veteran cohort has a positive approach to work if given intrinsic awards. Schullery (2013) and Twenge (2010) both found baby boomers rated intrinsic values higher than Gen-Xers or millennials. Ng and Gossett (2013) noted that millennials are looking for ways to lead more purposeful and interesting lives, and seek out intrinsic rather than extrinsic rewards. Millennials are less focused on intrinsic values such as community feeling and are more focused on extrinsic values (Twenge, Freeman, & Campbell, 2012).

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance has become an important issue for both employees and organizations (Madipelli, Veluri-Sarma, & Chinnappaiah, 2013). Gursoy, et al., (2013) described work-life balance as a separation of work and personal life. Work-life balance is defined as a person balancing the demands of work with personal, family, domestic, and social responsibilities (Kumar & Chakraborty, 2013; Sundaresan, 2014). Work-life balance benefits such as flextime, compressed workweeks, childcare benefits,

telecommuting, and eldercare benefits enhance employers' recruitment effectiveness (Berg, Kossek, Misra, & Belman, 2014). In the workplace today, work-life balance is important to baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and millennials. Several researchers show that for midcareer and older workers, work–life pressures may not decrease but rather change focus, with many combining parenting of teenage children with eldercare (Fingerman, Pillemer, Silverstein, & Suitor, 2012). Gen-Xers and millennials place a higher value on work-life balance because these two generational cohorts feel life outside of work is far more important than anything at work (Gursoy, et al., 2013). Lyons, Urick, Kuron, and Schweitzer (2015) suggested that employers should consider offering flexible work-life benefits that are customizable to employees' evolving needs.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is directly related to positive job performance and workplace attitude (Al-Hawary, Al-Qudah, Abutayeh, Abutayeh, & Al-Zyadat, 2013; Ibrahim Al-Shuaibi, Subramaniam, & Mohd-Shamsudin, 2014). Twenge (2010) added that job satisfaction is showing a commitment to the organization. Leppel, Brucker, and Cochran (2012) indicated that the veteran cohort is satisfied working in an organization that presents an older worker-friendly policy. Benson and Brown (2011) found baby boomers have a higher life and job satisfaction, and a lower willingness to quit their jobs than the other generational cohorts in the current workplace. Gen-Xers were more likely to seek personal and job satisfaction and were more individualistic and loyal to occupations (Benson & Brown, 2011; DelVecchio, 2009). Twenge (2010) noted that millennials have

the highest job satisfaction of any of the other generational cohorts. Leppel, Brucker, and Cochran (2012) stated that job satisfaction appears to increase with age.

Diversity Management Theory

The landscape of the workforce is changing in the United States. The millennial cohort is the largest to enter the workforce since the baby boomers (Hutchinson, Brown, & Longworth, 2012; Saxena & Jain, 2012). Millennials are tolerant toward diversity and are accepting of other cultures and lifestyles (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Gurrie, 2015). As the diversity of the U.S. workforce continues to increase, public managers are faced with the pressure of creating organizational cultures that encourage employees from different backgrounds to succeed (Pitts, Hicklin, Hawes, & Melton, 2010).

According to Cottrill, Lopez, and Hoffman (2014), the concepts of diversity and inclusion are distinct but interrelated. Diversity refers to the differences, similarities, and complexities that can characterize a collective mixture like the workplace, and moving beyond appreciating diversity toward leveraging and integrating diversity into everyday work life (Joshi Pant & V., 2015; Thomas, 2011). Diversity is not limited to gender, religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds but also relates to the various generational values found in the workplace today (Halvorsen & Hvinden, 2014; Ryan & Wessel, 2015). Workplace diversity not only covers the differences between coworkers and colleagues, but the concept reflects acceptance, understanding, and celebration of those differences (Fitzsimmons, 2013; McKay & Avery, 2015). Most literature on organizational inclusion acknowledges an organizations willingness to engage in positive

interactions, building a vision and active strategy for inclusion, information sharing, recognition of employee contribution, creating a sense of belongingness among employees, and open communication are ways to create an environment that positively impacts performance (Shore, et, al., 2011). Although most scholars mention the importance of inclusion, none of the public sector studies that were reviewed had empirically testing the impact on performance beyond diversity management (Sabharwal, 2014).

Diversity management aims at reducing discrimination and promoting equal opportunities for diverse workers (Hekmen & Foo, 2014). Diversity management is not about equal employment opportunity or affirmative action; diversity is what the management team does daily on the job (Pitts, 2009). Yang and Konrad (2011) noted that diversity management practices consist of formalized practices developed and implemented by organizations to manage diversity effectively. The primary dimensions of diversity include racial, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age (Crampton & Hodge, 2011). These dimensions may also represent behavioral variations, such as thought, problem-solving approaches, or behavioral traits associated with personality categories (Garib, 2013; Rice, 2010; Thomas, 2011). The second dimensions of diversity include educational background, geographical location, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, and work experience (Rice, 2010).

Thomas's Theory of Diversity Management

Wyatt-Nichol and Badu Antwi-Boasiako (2012) defined the concept of *diversity management* originally attributed to Thomas and most definitions include some variation of the original definition. Thomas (2011) defined *diversity management* as the capability to make quality decisions in the midst of differences, similarities, and related tensions and complexities. Berrey (2014) noted that diversity management consist of personnel policies, programs, and initiatives such as training, mission statements, and task forces personnel professionals characterize as relevant to diversity. Res Asst (2012) added diversity management is a strategy that provides a positive workplace environment and relationships among people.

While individuals have, their own ethics, characteristics, thoughts, and values, diversity management may encourage people to tolerate others. Olsen and Martins (2012) added to the definition of diversity management as the utilization of human resource management practices to (1) increase or maintain the variation in human capital on some given dimension(s), (2) ensure that variation in human capital on some given dimension(s) does not hinder the achievement of organizational objectives, (3) ensure that variation in human capital on some given dimensions facilitates the achievement of organizational objectives. Managing diversity effectively refers to the process of creating and maintaining a workplace free of discrimination where stakeholders (employees, customers, suppliers, investors, and people from the local or global community),

regardless of their differences (based on gender, culture, religion, personality) feel included and supported (Roberge, Lewicki, Hietapelto, & Abdyldaeva, 2011).

Strategic Diversity Management

Thomas (2012) was active in the diversity arena for over 25 years. Strategic diversity management is a cognitive craft for enhancing the way people make quality decisions in situations where there are critical similarities, differences, and tensions. Strategic diversity management is a leadership-driven systems approach in which organizational policies, practices, and the workforce promote inclusion, and address the needs of diverse staff and communities through cultural and linguistic competence (Dreachslin, Gilbert, & Malone, 2013; Pringle & Ryan, 2015). Fraser (2013) discovered that flexibility policies could demonstrate an organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Strategic diversity management is a bridge to the next level of diversity (Thomas, 2011). People and organizations can become diversity-capable by mastering the process of strategic diversity management (Rice, 2010). There are five fundamentals that promote the effectiveness of strategic diversity management. The first is a shared understanding of core concepts. The second fundamental is ensuring all decisions must be appropriate for the internal and external environments. The third fundamental is a list of five is diversity efforts must focus on what is necessary to accomplish the individual's or organization's mission, vision, and strategy. The fourth fundamental is diversity aspirations of individuals, and their enterprises must be considered. The last fundamental is

organizations and individuals must apply strategic diversity management universally (Thomas, 2012, pp. 119-135).

Diversity Management and Work Values of a Multigenerational Workforce

Managers today are faced with many challenges leading a multigenerational workforce. Yarbrough, Martin, Alfred, and McNeill (2016) found differences in generational values and attributes contribute to the complexity of the work environment and present challenges to maintaining a stable workforce. Jin and Rounds (2012) described work values as the importance individual places on their work including work settings and work-related outcomes. Researchers found that work values may change at different age periods in an individual's life (Jin & Rounds, 2012; Lee, Hung, & Ling, 2012). Hansen and Leuty (2012) argued certain events occur as individuals grow into adulthood, shaping values imprinted for life.

Hansen and Leuty (2012) suggested traditionalists valued status and autonomy in the workplace more than baby boomers and Gen-Xers. Gen-Xers and baby boomers valued security, working conditions, and compensation (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). The extrinsic values for Gen-Xers and millennials are money and status that was higher than baby boomers, and millennials. Baby boomers and millennials appeared not to favor altruistic work values more than Gen-Xers and millennials (Twenge, et al., 2010). Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance's research showed millennials rated intrinsic and social values lower than baby boomers. Those values included the desire to have an interesting results-oriented job and friends in the workplace (Twenge, et, al., 2010).

Diversity Management and Improving Productivity in the Workplace

Diversity management considerations have emerged in the workplace to retain employees, promote acceptance, and improve productivity (Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, & Brown, 2007). Gwal (2014) maintained that workforce diversity enhanced organizational effectiveness and productivity. Kochan, et al. (2003) found that efforts to create and manage diverse workforces have paid off by eliminating many of the potentially negative effects of diversity on group processes hereby improving productivity in the workplace. Researchers found age diversity could be a considerable source of productivity growth for companies (Backes-Gellner & Veen, 2013; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Okoro and Washington (2012) found ignoring the implications' of workforce diversity can affect productivity, performance, and undermine the overall business performance.

Lopez-Rocha (2006) suggested diversity training improved workforce understanding of cultural differences individually, group level, reduced stereotypical attitudes, and improved self-awareness leading to higher productivity levels. Diversity management programs make a significant difference in the communication and relations among employees, and the general employee performance and productivity of the organization (Sridhar & Sandeep, 2014). Regarding team productivity, researchers claimed the influence of cultural diversity is both positive and negative (Sims, 2014). Research suggest that multicultural teams when compared to homogenous teams, have a more complex set of processes to manage, specifically related to communication, reaching consensus, and evaluation of perspectives. Multi-culturally diverse teams

sometimes sabotaged themselves by allowing problems of dislike and mistrust to influence interpersonal actions (Lau, Lam, & Wen, 2014).

Diversity Management in the Public Sector

Rice (2010) found that diversity has the potential of becoming the most important consideration for public service organizations in the 21st century. Hewins-Maroney and Williams (2013) discovered diversity management in the public sector goes beyond adherence to the laws and sanctions that emanated from the civil rights era. Over the past three decades, the need for public organizations to embrace diversity has been echoed. The changing color, gender, and ethnicity of the workforce, coupled with a shrinking labor pool, have created numerous challenges for public organizations (Ewoh, 2013). The graying of the workforce may change the way people expect their government to serve them. This may also increase workforce diversity that managers face when engaging the present and future workforce to do more with less (Smith & Nichols, 2015). There has been a wealth of information on diversity initiatives in the federal government, and less is known about the state and local levels (Wyatt-Nichol & Badu Antwi-Boasiako, 2012). While state and local agencies are often confronted with unique challenges, such as accountability, and equitable treatment consideration should be provided to increasing efforts to elicit employee input and participation will provide legitimacy and ownership, and increases support for diversity management initiatives (Orazi, Turrini, & Valotti, 2013; Wyatt-Nichol & Badu Antwi-Boasiako, 2012).

Human Resources Role in Implementing Diversity Management

Human resource management is the process of managing human talent to achieve an organization's objectives (Snell & Bohlander, 2013). Snell and Bohlander also noted that some of the administrative tasks of human resources personnel are recruitment, staffing, job design, training, appraisal, communications, compensation, benefits, and labor relations. The role of human resource management has expanded and moved beyond more administration of traditional activities of employment, labor relations, compensation, and benefits. Human resources management is much more integrated with both the management and the strategic planning process of the organization (Soldan & Nankervis, 2014). Olsen and Martins (2012) stated that workplace diversity is high on the agendas of human resource departments and managers.

Many firms now believe that effective management of employee diversity is an integral component of their strategy (Egerová, 2012; Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2012). Kormanik and Rajan (2010) found that in the United States, diversity is a human resource management function, limited to increasing the workforce representation of historically underrepresented groups through recruitment and hiring practices. In an organization, senior management must lead the process of diversity management (Yang & Konrad, 2011). Some of the areas to make changes in the process of diversity management are strategy, implementation, education, and training.

Strategy and Implementation

Strategic planning involves a set of procedures making decisions about an organization's long-term goals and strategies (Fratričová & Rudy, 2015). Strategic human resource management combines strategic planning and human resources planning, and once the strategy has been created, the plan has to be implemented (Snell & Bohlander, 2013). Larson and Gray (2011) stated that implementation requires action and completing tasks. The strategic management process consists of four components, reviewing and defining the organizational mission, setting long-range goals and objectives, analyzing and formulating strategies to reach objectives and lastly implementing strategies through projects. These four steps create a diversity strategy for an organization. Most practitioners advocate that diversity is a business skill for all employees, from senior management to hourly workers, must be competent (Anand & Winters, 2008). Diversity management is seen as a best practice that organizations must use to achieve success. Organizations have implemented initiatives and practices without examining the need for them or evaluating their effectiveness (Holladay, Day, Anderson, & Welsh-Skiffington, 2010).

Education and Training

One of the many roles of human resources is to provide training to all levels of an organization (Snell & Bohlander, 2013). Leadership development programs focus on individual development with concepts such as knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to assume leadership roles (Reichard & Johnson, 2011). Kormanik and Rajan's (2010)

research showed training for employees and managers could come from stand-alone training, discrete course modules, or a leadership course. Leadership development programs can take many forms, from short workshops that last only a few hours and focus on a narrow set of skills, to programs that last for a year of more and cover a wide range of skills (Reichard & Johnson, 2011). Jain and Anjuman (2013) found most leadership training programs increase soft skills and behaviors relevant to managerial effectiveness.

Leadership Development

Leadership is now a valuable commodity, and organizations should look at global trends including the rapid pace of change, the increased use of technology globalization, increasing workforce diversity, and the rise of multinational corporations that produces cross-cultural diversity (Ghosh, Haynes, & Kram, 2013). Phipps, Prieto, and Ndinguri (2014) stated that leadership development is popular, and some organizations have decided to invest in this valuable but costly enterprise. Researchers have found the best leadership development methods are executive coaching and mentoring (Bartlett II, Boylan, & Hale, 2014; MacKie, 2014). Gentry, Manning, Wolf, Hernez-Broome, and Allen (2013) found that executive coaching is a form of leadership development that takes place through a series of contracted one-on-one conversations with a qualified coach. In executive coaching, a coach is commissioned and paid to help his or her client (Bachkirova, Arthur, & Reading, 2015; de Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013; Gentry, Manning, Wolf, Hernez-Broome, & Allen, 2013). Executive coaching provides

the learner with skills to set specific goals, primarily used for improving interpersonal relations with staff, managers, and facilitate continued learning (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013; Smith, 2015). Mentoring is another method used for leadership development. Mentoring is a process of informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional growth (Aora & Rangnekar, 2014; Kaur, 2015). The use of mentoring as a leadership development tool may be invaluable to a new professional. A mentor acts as a counselor, guide, tutor, and advocate a mentee (Bawany, 2014). Rueywei, Shih-Ying, and Min-Lang (2014) found that mentoring may help a mentee succeed in their professional field by improving their productivity, enhancing the likelihood of promotion in their job, and increasing their income.

Diversity Training

Cocchiara, Connerley, and Bell (2009) found seven reasons for diversity training. The seven reasons include (a) complying with moral and legal standards, (b) succeeding in business and remaining competitive in a global marketplace, (c) building leadership skills necessary to maximize increased organizational diversity, (d) dealing with firm-specific diversity issues, (e) developing an awareness of individual feelings about diversity, (f) disseminating information about diversity-related issues and policies, (g) enhancing leadership development and management effectiveness. Managers and human resource personnel are using diversity training to enable the development of awareness,

knowledge, and skills to efficiently work with, work for, and manage diverse others in various contexts (Herdman & McMillan-Capehart, 2010).

Through diversity education, an individual may develop awareness, understanding, and a variety of skills in the area of diversity. Bucher and Bucher (2010) noted that diversity education refers to all of the strategies that enable a person to develop diversity consciousness. Before beginning a diversity training program, human resources, and senior leadership should determine the reason for diversity training. Regardless of the training's purpose, it should be interactive, relevant, informative, and reflective. To achieve this, the approach must be evaluated and restructured, addressing the specific needs of the organization to promote change (Ford, 2009).

Diversity Recruitment Processes

Recruiting is the process of generating a pool of qualified applicants, in sufficient numbers with appropriate qualifications, to apply for jobs within an organization (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2012). There are several avenues that organizations use to recruit candidates. Researchers identified some of the strategies for recruiting applicants: internal job posting, identifying talent through performance appraisals, advertisements, Internet, social networking, job fairs, and employee referrals (Ghazzawi & Accoumeh, 2014; Ollington, Gibb, & Harcourt, 2013; Snell & Bohlander, 2013).

The United States passed several amendments, federal laws, and executive orders to protect the rights of minorities in the workplace (Gates & Saunders, 2016). The federal government also created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to ensure that

covered employers comply with the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (Snell & Bohlander, 2013). In the United States, under the general umbrella of EEO policy, several laws prohibit organizations from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability, including the Equal Pay Act of 1963; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII) and 1991; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Commission United States Equal Employment Opportunity 2012; Figueiredo, 2015).

One of the diversity objectives of a public organization is to effectively recruit and retain a multicultural workforce (Rice, 2010). Recruiting and retaining highly qualified employees to provide the services citizens take for granted is becoming difficult in a competitive labor market because, even though the responsibilities may differ, the private and public sectors are in direct competition for the same scarce qualified applicants (Klinger, Nalbandian, & Llorens, 2010). Gomez-Meji and Balkin (2012) indicated an integral part of many organizations' recruitment efforts, both externally and internally, is attracting women, minorities, people with disabilities, and employees in the protected classes. Organizations have several opportunities to reach out to members of minority groups by recruiting trips to high schools or colleges, advertising in an array of sources, national and regional job fairs, developing community partnerships, and alliances with minority associations (Hur & Strickland, 2012; Rivera, 2012). Snell and

Bohlander (2013) noted that to reach minorities, organizations may want to offer internships for minorities, and advance minorities to management positions.

Knowledge and expertise about the organization's human resource strengths and challenges are integrated into organization-wide strategies. As a strategic partner, human resource leaders develop strategic goals with other organizational leaders. Institutionalizing knowledge and changing activities are organization-wide processes that require strategic development and coordination (Rice 2010). Human resource managers know they can be key players in creating the business strategies of their organizations (Snell & Bohlander, 2013).

Designing and implementing the diversity management agenda requires a systematic managerial strategy that starts with a diagnosis of how diversity affects organizational performance (Popesu & Rusko, 2012). An organization confronts challenges in making employees' diversity work to their advantage. These include (a) genuinely valuing employee diversity, (b) balancing individual needs with group fairness, (c) coping with resistance to change, (d) promoting group cohesiveness, (e) ensuring open communication, (f) retaining valued performers, and (g) managing completion for opportunities (Polat, 2012; Rice, 2010). There are two pitfalls in diversity management that organizations should avoid based: giving the appearance of "White male bashing" and unintentionally promoting stereotypes (Gomez-Meji, Balkin, & Cardy, 2012).

Gap Identification

There is a gap in the current literature pertaining to the intergenerational conflicts in the workplace. A few of the problems caused by intergenerational workforce are the struggle over respect from each generational cohort, and leading a generational workforce (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Heng & Yazdanifard, 2013; Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012; Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012). The literature reviewed confirmed there is research available that focused on multigenerational workforce and diversity management (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Gurrie, 2015; Ryan & Wessel, 2015). However, no research exists combining the macro-level descriptions of different generations to determine whether this created stereotypes or recognizable behavior in the workplace, and if there are intergenerational conflicts in the workplace.

Many researchers have addressed generational differences and diversity management, but after searching four databases and reviewing over 200 articles, there were only a few that addressed the macro-level descriptions of these different generations regarding the manifestation of these qualities in the workplace. Further, a few have shown there is an issue among managers and the different generations in the workplace (Benson & Brown, 2011; Bright, 2010; Ng & Gossett, 2013; Tang, et al, 2012). The study addressed the gap in the literature of public sector managers managing a multigenerational workforce by determining how the generational conflicts manifest in the workplace and how managers and employees effectively deal with them.

Research Approaches to the Problem

The most effective diversity management model is one that is adaptable to the changing landscape of the workforce in the public sector. Therefore, it is important to know the extent of intergenerational conflicts that arise in the workplace and how managers should respond. Past researchers who conducted studies on managing a multigenerational workforce utilized phenomenological, narrative, and action research as their qualitative methodology (Abang, Balacuit, & Martinez, 2013; Bourne, 2015; Clendon & Walker, 2012; Harms, Luck, Kraus, & Walsh, 2014; Skinner, Elton, Auer, & Pocock, 2014). By using the descriptive case study method, the researcher will be able to present a detailed account of the phenomenon.

Researchers who examined the relationship among managers, employees, and the role human resources plays in the strategic plan of the organization may find this study helpful. Wilson (2009) found a well-functioning multigenerational workplace recognizes that different cohorts have different preferences, for everything from communication styles to work values, and benefits of recognition for a job well done. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing managers with a general description of generational perceptions that could help managers take action that could reduce conflict in the workplace.

Summary

In the literature review, I discussed the challenges managers face leading a multigenerational workforce (Benson & Brown, 2011; Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi,

2012). Researchers noted that workforce diversity in the public sector is an issue (Ewoh, 2013; Rice, 2010). The changing color, gender, and ethnicity of the workforce, coupled with a shrinking labor pool, have created numerous challenges in the public sector (Ewoh, 2013). Not only is the workforce in the public sector changing because of color, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity, but the public sector workforce is also older than the private sector (Christofides & Michael, 2013; Dur, & Zoutenbier, 2015).

Researchers who are researching the relationship between managers, employees, and the role human resources plays in the strategic plan of the organization may also find this research helpful. The public sector's workforce has witnessed a growth over the past 60 years, from this, there is a likelihood of a multigenerational workforce (Sheingate, 2009). Wilson (2009) stated a well-functioning multigenerational workplace recognizes that different generations have different preferences, for everything from communication styles to work schedules, benefits, and recognition for a job well done. From the findings, public sector managers may become aware of the work values of the four generations in the workplace.

The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing managers with a deeper understanding of generational differences of the generational cohorts in the workplace. Understanding the differences and similarities in working values of each of the generational cohorts in the workplace, and diversity practices managers in the public sector may be able to bring different employee generations together. Chapter 3 include a description of the research methodology of this study and

rationale. Additional sections include the role of the researcher, issues of trustworthiness, and protection of participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The research problem in this case study focused on the challenges of leading a multigenerational workforce. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I found that there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace. The results of this study may help managers take action that could reduce conflict in the workplace. Hannay and Fretwell (2011) noted that for the first time in U.S. history, corporations are challenged with managing four generations of employees at once, each with different values, expectations, and attitudes. Managers must account for individual and generational differences (Ferri-Reed, 2012). Bright (2010) found there is little research on the multigenerational workforce in the field of public administration. Chapters 3 include a description of the research methodology and rationale. Additional sections include the role of the researcher, issues of trustworthiness, and protection of participants.

Research Method, Design, and Rationale

Research Method

Most of the researchers addressed in the literature review used qualitative research methodology to approach the problem. Qualitative research methodologies were valuable in exploring the differences and similarities in working values of each of the generational cohorts in the workplace, and to bring the four different generations together

to overcome differences. Qualitative methodology was used to explore and understand individuals or groups assigned to a social or human phenomenon (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014). Qualitative methodology was used to answer research questions by examining how individuals arrange themselves and their settings, and how individuals make sense of their surroundings through rituals, social structures, and social roles (Berg, 2009). Sinkovics and Alfoldi (2012) defined qualitative research as a set of interpretive activities used to understand the situated meaning behind actions and behaviors. Qualitative methodology was a better fit than quantitative methodology in exploring whether macro-level descriptions of different generations are manifested in the workplace, and how leaders manage this workforce.

There are several characteristics of qualitative research that appeal to researchers. VanderStoep and Johnston (2009) stated that qualitative research is more descriptive than predictive; the goal is to understand the viewpoint of a participant. This research method also provides participants with a voice. In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009; Pezalla Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). As the instrument in data collection and analyzing, I demonstrated my skills in interviewing and data analyzing transcripts. Qualitative methodology was suitable because, I explored whether macro-level descriptions of the different portrayals of generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. Quantitative methodology was not suitable because of the nature of the data to be collected. VanderStoep and Johnson (2009) noted that quantitative researchers specify

numerical assignment to the phenomenon under study, whereas qualitative researchers produce a narrative or textual description of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research involves developing rich descriptions of processes and building concepts with data collected by the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The rich descriptive textual data collected from the interviews and focus group discussion will provided a picture of the experiences and views of the participants from each of the generational cohorts, and how managers lead a productive multigenerational workforce.

Research Design

A case study was the most appropriate design for answering the research questions for this study. The research questions for this investigation are as follows: How do the generational differences manifest in the workplace? What managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce and how are they handled? According to Yin (2009) the case study design supports the exploration of a specific phenomenon and enables the investigation and description of the phenomenon within a particular context. Yin (1994) showed that case studies are the preferred approach when how or why questions are to be answered, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on the current phenomenon in a real-life context.

Stake (2000) suggested that case studies have become "one of the most common ways to make qualitative inquiry" (p.435). VanderStoep and Johnson (2009) stated that a case study is to understand the characteristics that define a bounded system and to describe an event or process occurring within that system. Thomas (2011) defined the

case study as a holistic analysis of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or systems using one or more methods. Elmes, Kantowitz, and Roediger (2012) added that case studies are individual histories, which means that much of the evidence is retrospective. When a researcher has little control over events and the focus is on contemporary real-life phenomena, a case study can be used.

I used a qualitative descriptive case study design because the focus was to explore the challenges that managers may be experiencing leading a multigenerational workforce. Through this study, I hoped to discover whether intergenerational cohorts resulted in problems in the workplace. I further explored how stereotypes of the different generations manifested in the workplace and created an issue among managers. The case study design supports the exploration of a specific phenomenon and enables the investigation and description of the phenomenon within a particular context (Yin, 2009). This case study design was appropriate because I gathered participants' statements in face-to-face interviews and a focus group discussion on how public sector managers may want to approach leading a multigenerational workforce.

A case study was one of many qualitative research designs. Other qualitative research designs are ethnography, grounded theory, narrative research, and phenomenology. An ethnographic researcher describes and analyzes shared learned patterns of behaviors, values, beliefs, knowledge, and language of a social group (Hunter, 2012). Dharamsi and Charles (2011) shared that ethnographies provide an in-depth description and analysis, and paint a portrait of the ways in which culture-sharing groups

interpret their experiences and create meaning from their interactions. Ethnography was not a good choice for this study because the focus was more than experiences and interactions of a social group.

Maz (2013) defined *grounded theory* as a qualitative design to generate a theory that advances the understanding of people's behavior in terms of underlying meaning and change in varying circumstances over time. The grounded theory design is based on the notion that a social group, or groups, have shared social interpretations that are not always well described (Ellis, 2010). Farrelly (2013) added that grounded theory is designed to uncover and describe social processes. The grounded theory method enables the development of theories based on the observation of patterns and themes that emerge from the data collected. Ground theory was not a good choice for this study because the focus was not to create a theory.

The narrative design was not appropriate for answering the research questions for this study. The narrative design is biographical following the life of individuals, while an oral history is used to explore the personal reflections of events from one or more individuals (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Data for a narrative study are collected by the first person accounts of a person's life history, oral history, or autobiography (Merriam, 2009). Because my data were collected by interviews, a narrative design was not appropriate. A phenomenological study is designed to provide an understanding of participants' lived experience. The researcher employs a phenomenological design to understand the essence of individuals' life experiences and how these individual

meanings shape group or cultural meanings (Farrelly, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). A phenomenological design was not appropriate because this study addressed the previous, current, and future experiences of the participants. Barratt, Choi, and Li (2011) asserted the value of qualitative case studies for exploring and understanding modern phenomena within the field of management.

Baxter and Jack (2008) provided six examples of case study designs: collective, descriptive, explanatory, exploratory, intrinsic, and instrumental. The designs may have single or multiple-case applications. A collective case study design involves extensive study of several instrumental cases, to enhance understanding to improve the ability to theorize about a broader context (Berg & Lune, 2012). Stake (2005) stated collective case studies are designed to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition. A descriptive case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003). This type of case study requires formulation and identification of a conceptual framework before articulating research questions (Yin, 1994). The conceptual framework for my study included theories of generational differences and diversity management. This study provided a rich description of the phenomenon as a result of data collection guided by the conceptual framework. Tobin (2010) noted that a descriptive case study is focused and detailed, and propositions and questions about a phenomenon are carefully scrutinized and articulated at the outset.

Explanatory case studies are used to discover and analyze factors and conditions to build a causal explanation for the case (Berg & Lune, 2012). The goal of an

exploratory case study is to discover a theory through directly observing some social phenomenon in its natural and raw form (Yin, 2003). An exploratory study may be useful as a pilot study when planning a larger, more comprehensive investigation (Swanson & Holton, 2005). An explanatory design was not appropriate for my study because I did not conduct a pilot study preparing for a larger investigation.

Intrinsic case studies are undertaken when a researcher wants to understand a particular case (Berg & Lune, 2012). An intrinsic case study was not a good choice because my purpose was not to understand an abstract construct of the generic phenomenon (Stake, 1995). An instrumental case study provides insights into an issue or refines a conceptual explanation, making it more generalizable (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) added that in an instrumental case study, the researcher is focused on a single issue or concern and identifies a single case to illustrate this concern. An instrumental case study was not appropriate because I focused on more than one issue. Yin (2003) shared that multiple cases may be selected to replicate insights found in individual cases or to represent contrasting situations. Multiple case studies are used to examine several cases to understand the similarities and differences between the cases.

Case studies designs can overlap when they have the following similar aims: (a) to depict the relatively incontrovertible details of the people, place, events, transactions, and processes of the case and a description others would likely make if they had been there; (b) to give a clear picture of what is happening without making judgments, and (c) to develop and expand on relevant concepts. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive

case study was to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I found that there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace. In this study, the descriptive case study design was the best method to explore the intricacies of participants' experience and the real-life context in which they occurred.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researcher is the primary instrument (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). The researcher observes action and contexts, often intentionally playing a subjective role in the study, using his or her personal experience in making interpretations (Stake, 2010). In a case study, the role of the researcher is less defined. The researcher's voice and perspective are typically more prevalent than the voice and perspective of the informants (VanderStoep & Johnston 2009).

I did not have any personal or professional relationships with any of the participants in this study. There were not biases with the participants because I did not have a relationship with any of them. In the interviews and focus groups, I used an objective approach in the data collecting process. There were no leading questions, and I removed personal perspectives regarding participants' responses. Salkind (2012) indicated that researchers should avoid having bias interfere with data collection and analysis.

Methodology

Population

The city of Charlotte employs over 6,000 individuals engaged in various professional, administrative, public safety, technical, clerical, skilled, and general laborer positions (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Services and Information, 2013). The sample population for this study consisted of three separate groups of public sector employees located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The first group consisted of 20 employees selected from four generational cohorts. The second group consisted of 10 employees from the different cohorts participated in a focus group. The third group consisted of 10 managers who manage a multigenerational workforce. The participants were selected based on the age range of each of the four cohorts, and were familiar with working with members of other generational cohorts.

Setting and Sampling Strategy

In qualitative research, there were no set requirements for sample size. The researcher must ensure the sample size chosen does reach a saturation level where the collection of new data does not offer any additional information regarding the issue under investigation (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011). Even though there were no set requirements for sample size, Merriam (2009) stated in a case study, the sample size was determined by a number of factors relevant to the study's purpose. I used criterion sampling, a purposeful sampling strategy, as my method to create the sample group. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight

(Merriam, 2009). VanderStoep and Johnson (2009) added purposeful samples are comprised of people based on a particular attribute, and are often designed arbitrarily to include equal representation of groups that may not be equally represented in society. Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011) stated that purposeful sampling occurs when the researcher selects participants because they have characteristics that will be representative or informative in relation to the population of interest. Purposeful sampling requires access to key informants in the field who can help in identifying information-rich cases (Suri, 2011). Thus, purposeful sampling was the best method for selecting the sample for this case study.

The participants were selected by criterion sampling. Criterion sampling was effective in qualitative case studies because all participants must follow criteria to be included in the study (Borrego, Douglas, & Amelink, 2011). Borrego, Douglas, and Amelink (2011) noted that qualitative researchers who employ a case study design prefer criterion sampling because the study participants must align with the predetermined criteria and have experience with the area of inquiry. The criteria for selecting the 40 participants was based on birth year, a willingness to be open to sharing his or her experiences of working in a diverse work environment, and have five or more years of service with the city of Charlotte. However, the demographic questionnaire was provided to determine if these participants met the requirements. The sample size of the unit of analysis was appropriate for this study with the participants being selected from the same industry (Dolma, 2010).

The city of Charlotte's Human Resources Management System Workforce Planning Reports was used to determine who was selected to participate in this study. The Workforce Panning reports consisted of the employees' names, dates of birth, job titles, personal phone number, email address, and years of service. The participants were selected based on the data collected from the Workforce Planning Report. The participants selected was based on their willingness to volunteer for this study, their age, and if they have worked in the public sector for five or more years of service. If the selected potential participants were not able to be a part of this study, I asked the ones that were not a selected during the original selection process.

When I contacted the potential participant's by phone, I verified the participant date of birth, and years of service with the city of Charlotte, and asked each of them if they have ever worked in a diverse workplace. As mentioned above, 40 participants will be a part of the study. The first group consisted of 20 employees each selected from the four generational cohorts. The second group consisted of 10 employees from the different cohorts who will be part of the focus group. The third group consisted of 10 managers who manage a multigenerational workforce, with questions that focused on their experience managing a multigenerational workforce. Once these participants were selected, I contacted these potential participants by phone and determined if were willing to share their experiences working in a diverse environment. I used the same Workforce Planning report to determine the participants that will be a part of the focus group.

Instrumentation and Materials

A case study is a history of the past or current phenomenon, drawn from multiple sources of evidence (Voss, Tsikriktsis, & Frohlich, 2002). By using multiple sources of evidence in a case study, ensures the unit of analysis is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008). For this study, I used interviews and a focus group to collect data. I had a demographic questionnaire to identify what group the public sector employees would belong to in the data collection.

Interviews

Interviews are very common in management research (McDonald & Simpson, 2014). There are three different types of interviews used in qualitative research. Oun and Bach, (2014) found three different types of interviews are structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. The interview style used in this study was semi-structured. In structured interviews, each participant was asked the same questions using the same wording and in the same order as all the other participants (Corbetta, 2003). Holloway and Wheeler (2013) found the strengths of a structured interview are that it is efficient concerning time, it limits researcher subjectivity, and bias, the researcher controls the topics, format of the interview, making it easier to code, compare, and analyze data. Unstructured interviews are very flexible and generally have no fixed questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). In the informal conversational interview (unstructured interviewing), there is no predetermined set of questions (Brayda & Boyce, 2014). The most common type of

interviews used in qualitative research is semi-structured interviews, and involve the use of predetermined questions, where the researcher is free to seek clarification (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Holloway & Wheeler, 2013). The semi-structured interview involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses (Dane, 2010; Qu & Dumay, 2011).

The participants that I interviewed for this study consisted of employees who had at least five years of service, and 10 of the participants will be in a leadership role. I contacted the employees who are not in a leadership role first. In an introductory phone call, I introduced myself to prospective participants, explained the purpose of the study, and informed the potential participants the interview would be 45-60 minutes of their time, the content of the interview, location, and withdrawal process. The potential participants were given an opportunity to ask any questions during our phone conversation. If the potential participant agreed to be a part of this study, the participant received an email with the consent form and interview questions (see Appendix A) with a request to email the form back, within three business days, affirming participant consent to participate. I discussed my study and the interview questions with five employees who worked in the public sector. One of the public sector employees was a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Elections Board, two employees worked with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public School System, and the last two of the employees worked for Mecklenburg County. Based on the feedback from these discussions, a cover letter was

created for the participants whom are in a leadership role, and the interview questions were changed to ensure the interview questions would be appropriate for the research questions and participants of the study.

The employees who were in a leadership role responded to questions from an interview about the presence of observable generational differences among their workers. I contacted the employees in a leadership role by phone first. In the introductory phone call, I introduced myself to prospective participants, explained the purpose of the study, and informed the potential participants of the withdrawal process. The potential participants were given an opportunity to ask any questions during our phone conversation. If the potential participants agreed, they received an email with the consent form (see Appendix F) requesting the participants to email the form back, within three business days, affirming participant consent to participate. After I had received the email from the potential participants, I scheduled an interview that would be 45-60 minutes of their time, and we discussed the content of the interview, location, and withdrawal process. The participants were provided the consent form, along with the cover letter and interview questions, to ensure complete transparency and understanding of the expectations. Each of the participants was asked to elaborate on their responses to the interview questions.

Focus Group

A focus group was one of the data collection methods for this study. Focus group interviewing has been in practice since the mid-twentieth century (Merriam, 2009). Focus

groups are unique because they combine interviewing, observation, and group interaction (Plumer-D'Amato, 2008). Lawal (2009) shared that focus groups are a systematic questioning of many people to obtain qualitative data. In focus groups, individual participants' perceptions, feelings, and experiences are shared and stimulated, so as to widen the range of opinions on specific topics and avoid the drawbacks of individual bias (Fisher, 2011).

Focus groups are unique because they combine interviewing and group interaction (Plumer-D'Amato, 2008). The focus group session consisted of 10 participants of a mixed generational group. This focus group discussion were under the guidance of a moderator to engage in a group question-and-answer discussion (VanderStoep & Johnston, 2009). The focus group session was held in a conference room and was 90-120 minutes. The participants in the focus groups and I did not have a personal or professional relationship. I gained access to the focus group participants by selecting 10 employees who were willing to have an open discussion on how stereotypes of different cohorts created an issue among employees and managers. In an introductory phone call, I introduced myself to prospective participants, explained the purpose of the study, along with the withdrawal process. I provided each of the potential participants an opportunity to ask any questions during our phone conversation. If the potential participant agreed to be a part of this study, I e-mailed the consent form (see Appendix C) asking participants to email the form back, within three business days, affirming participant consent to participate.

Before the start of the focus group, I reviewed the consent form to ensure complete transparency and understanding of the expectations. The focus group discussion were held in a private conference room at a location outside of their office and after business hours. During the focus group session, I asked the participants to expand on their answers to the questions that I asked and prodded for further clarity and understanding of the statements made during the focus group session.

Krueger and Casey (2009) suggested that often times focus group interviews are conducted in organizations by researchers who are "unfamiliar with the culture, traditions, and communications style within the organization" (p. 186). Such is not the case with this study. As a current employee, I was keenly aware of the organizational culture, and traditions. In the focus group, my role was that of a moderator and researcher. Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011) noted that the role of the moderator is to introduce the topic, keep the group focused, and ensure that all participate. Often researchers find it difficult to facilitate a focus group and take notes at the same time (Glesne, 2011). Therefore, I recorded the focus group discussion with a digital tape recorder and I used an iPad Pro for video recording. Transcribing an audiotape of a focus group session can be challenging Creswell (2009) suggested that each participant speaks his or her name prior to their comment thereby making it easier to distinguish between the speakers during the transcription process.

Data Collection

A data collection instrument (Appendix A, C, and F) was used to collect information from the participants in this study. The data were collected through interviews and a focus group session with public sector employees. The sample consisted of 40 public sector employees located in North Carolina. The first group consisted of 20 employees each selected from the four generational cohorts. These participants were interviewed face-to-face at a public library private conference room in Charlotte, North Carolina. The second group consisted of 10 employees from the different cohorts who were a part of the focus group. The focus group was conducted in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. The third group consisted of 10 managers who manage a multigenerational workforce. These participants were interviewed face-to-face in a private setting, possibly a public library conference room in Charlotte, North Carolina. The managers had a one-on-one and face-to-face interview on their experience managing a multigenerational workforce. A demographic questionnaire was distributed to determine if these participants meet the requirements of each cohort group.

I did not foresee any issues with not having any participants. I offered a gift card to local restaurants to the participants that were a part of the one-on-one interviews. I provided a catered lunch for the 10 participants in the focus group. After the data were collected from the interviews and focus group, there was a debriefing with the each of the participants. Neuman (2011) noted that there are three reasons to conduct a debriefing.

The first reason is to ensure that all participants were treated ethically. Secondly, the researchers must learn what participants thought and how their definitions of the situation affected their behavior. The third reason for the debriefing process was used to answer any questions about the informed consent, and after the end of each interview and the focus group session, I asked the participants if there are any questions. I informed each of the participants that once the interviews, focus group session, and member checking were completed, all information gathered will be confidential. The use of member checking, data triangulation, and audit trail enhanced this study.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data differs from quantitative data whereas quantitative data deals with numbers and can be measured. The data analyzed for this qualitative case study were based on responses from the interviews and the focus group. I reviewed the digital recordings and transcripts, my personal notes, and the video recording to search for common themes and patterns in the responses from the participants. Neuman (1997) shared the essence of data analysis is to search for patterns in the data. In fact, the ultimate goal of the case study is to reveal patterns and determine meanings of the data collected (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003). I reviewed all of the data collected and identified common themes or categories as these will be the building blocks of my analysis (Thomas, 2011). All data collected related to exploring whether the macro-level descriptions of these different macro portrayals of the generations created stereotypes that were manifested in the workplace. Through this study, I found how intergenerational

cohorts interactions resulted in problems in the workplace and how they are resolved. I explored if the stereotypes of the different generations manifested themselves in the workplace to such an extent that they created issues for the managers. The data collected provided patterns, categories, and themes that were analyzed for this research (Snyder, 2012).

Coding is the process of categorizing sections of the data into phrase, sentence, or paragraph. Coding is a way to see which parts of the data are connected to one another in terms of issues, concepts, themes, or hypotheses. The process of analysis includes a two-step coding process. In the first step of coding, the data collected were provided a value. Coding is defined by Saldana (2009) as codes that reflect a person's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview. Johnson and Johnson (2010) defined a generation is a group of individuals born and living contemporaneously who have common knowledge and experiences that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Parry and Urwin (2010) noted that there are also generational differences in work values. The values, attitudes, and beliefs of the participants were coded based on their responses to the interview questions and responses from the focus group.

The second step in the coding process is to identify the sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and theoretical organization from the first step of the coding process (Saldana, 2009). I used NVivo 10, a qualitative software program, to analyze the data. Davidson and Jacobs (2012) described NVivo 10 as a qualitative software program

that allows researchers to control, contour, access, and evaluate informative text and is valuable in qualitative research studies. The NVivo 10 qualitative software program categorized, arranged, and managed information to identify common themes more simplistically (Davidson & Jacobs, 2012). The NVivo 10 qualitative research software program identified common themes among the study participants' responses.

The individual interview questions were related to exploring whether the macro-level descriptions of these different generations created useful or harmful stereotypes that are recognizable in the workplace. The responses from the interview questions the managers were asked illustrated their views of leading a multigenerational workforce in the public sector. The focus group showed a shared perception of how public sector managers lead a multigenerational workforce. Through this study, I found that there are intergenerational conflicts and how they are resolved in this particular workplace.

In the data analysis approach, I identified the major themes and common phrases from the data that I collected to address the following research questions: RQ1. How do the generational differences manifest themselves in the workplace? RQ2. What managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce and how are they handled? The responses obtained from the interviews and focus group showed similarities or differentness in the patterns and views across the different generational characteristics in the workplace. The data collected from public sector managers were from an interview that addressed the presence of observable generational differences among their workers. The responses from the interviews and focus group indicated if

there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Within the field of qualitative research, the corollary to internal validity is credibility (Denzin, 2011). I used member checking, data triangulation, and audit trail, to ensure credibility. Member checking also may be referred to as respondent validation, which occurs when the researcher solicits feedback on the findings from some of the people who offered responses to the interview questions (Merriam, 2009). Koelsch (2013) added member checking is the process of reviewing the information provided by the participants to determine if the researcher has accurately reported his or her responses correctly. The process involved in member checks includes taking the preliminary analysis back to some of the participants and asking whether the interpretation is correct (Merriam, 2009). Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested using member checking allows the participants to review the responses for accuracy.

As described by Yin (2009), case study researchers use data triangulation via the collection of information from multiple sources to corroborate the same phenomenon and to ensure overall study quality. Merriam (2009) indicated that an audit trail in a qualitative study includes detail on how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. An audit trail provided details on the study, the data collection, and how the data were analyzed (Baškarada,

2014). Qualitative researchers have an obligation to their participants to allow easy access to data collected, initial, and final categories for analysis (Janesick, 2011). After I had organized the data collected by the common themes, I asked participates from the interviews, and focus group to review the data collected. After the participants had reviewed the data collected, I asked if the information was correct and accurate.

Checking the Data for Errors

One of the methods to provide credibility was maintained by member checking. Member checking involves allowing participants to read the transcription of their interviews to ensure that they were accurately recorded and therefore credible (Stake, 2006). Even after member-checking participants may (a) struggle with the abstract of the study, (b) may disagree with researcher's interpretations, (c) the responses may have an impact on their original assessment, and new experiences (since the time of contact) may have intervened (Angen, 2000). If a participant does not understand the abstract of the study, I intended to provide the participants with a clearer summary of the study. The strategy used to address a participant disagreeing with my interpretation was to ask additional questions to ensure I have captured what the participant shared with me during the interview. Reilly (2013) found that participants may forget what they said or the manner in which they responded. I did not have to make any changes to the responses from the participants, each participant agreed with what I collected from them.

Transferability

Kemparaj and Chavan (2013) stated that transferability refers to the extent to which the findings from the data can be transferred to other settings or groups. Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) argued that case study researchers enhance the transferability of case studies by providing rich descriptions of the rationale for the selection of case study populations and describing the details of case study contexts. Such details allow the consumer of the research to determine the relevance and transferability of the findings to their own experiences. Dubois and Gibbert (2010) asserted qualitative researchers conducting qualitative case studies demonstrate the transferability of studies by providing clear descriptions of the rationale for study population selections and the study contexts. This qualitative descriptive case study contains elements of transferability. I provided detailed descriptions of the sample population. The addition of rich descriptions of the study population and the context for the collected data and study findings enabled readers to judge the transferability of study findings and conclusions.

There were 40 participants selected by purposeful sampling. The first group consisted of 20 employees each selected from the four generational cohorts. The second group consisted of 10 employees from the different cohorts who were a part of the focus group. The third group consisted of 10 managers who manage a multigenerational workforce, with questions focusing on their experience managing a multigenerational workforce. Bernard (2013) noted that small sample sizes are typical of qualitative studies involving the use of purposeful sampling. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) observed the nature

of the study and the sufficiency of sample size for enabling adequate exploration of study research questions to determine sample size.

From the data collection process, the participants shared their knowledge and experience of the differences and similarities of each of the generational cohorts in the workplace; the participants also shared what managerial issues arise due to a multigenerational workforce and discuss how they are handled. The data collected may be useful for future researchers who will be able to use the data in state, federal, or nonprofit organizations research. Managers in state, federal, and nonprofit organizations may be experiencing the same changes in the workforce as in Charlotte, North Carolina; the findings may be used to address the challenges public sector managers have in leading four different generations in the workplace. Even though the participants are from the public sector, the findings may be valuable to the private sector managers.

Dependability

The use of multiple sources of data supported study construct credibility through member checking, data triangulation, and audit trail (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Pan & Tan, 2011). During the interviews and focus group, I probed further to ensure the responses are clear from the participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) noted that member checking could be done within an interview as topics are rephrased and probed to obtain broad and subtle meanings. I also provided the participants with a copy of their transcriptions of our discussion for accuracy.

As described by Yin (2009), case study researchers use data triangulation via the collection of information from multiple sources to corroborate the same phenomenon and to ensure overall study quality. Triangulation of qualitative methods will also improve the dependability of the findings (Mabuza, Govender, Ogunbanjo, & Mash, 2014). The four types and definitions of triangulation include (a) data: time, space, and persons; (b) investigator: multiple researchers; (c) theoretical: using more than one theoretical theme to interpret the phenomenon; and (d) methodological, more than one method to gather data such as interviews, observations, and documents (Denzin, 2011). I conducted triangulation via three data collection sources, interviews from the members of the generational cohorts, a mixed generational cohort focus group, and managers of the generational cohorts.

The data collected from the interviews and focus groups addressed the challenges public sector managers have in leading four different generations in the workplace. First, I reviewed the responses from members of each generational cohort to identify similar phases and experiences to see if members of each generational cohort agree that managers should adopt diversity practices to bring together the generational cohorts in the workplace. Secondly, I reviewed the theories of this study, generational difference, and diversity management to determine if they aligned with the responses from the participants. The data collected from the interviews, and focus group from the employees, from Charlotte, North Carolina, may contribute to positive social change by providing

managers with information to address generational characteristics that may created conflicts and problems in the workplace.

An audit trail provided details on the study, the data collection, and how the data were analyzed. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) indicated that an audit trail is achieved by (a) describing the purpose of the study, (b) discussing how and why the participants were selected for the study, (c) describing how the data were collected and how long the data collection lasted, (d) explaining how the data were reduced or transformed for analysis, (e) discussing the interpretation and presentation of the research findings, and (f) communicating the techniques used to determine the credibility of the data. To ensure an audit trail for this investigation meets the requirements, I applied the description of an audit trail based on Thomas and Magilvy. For each of the participants in the study, I informed them verbally and in writing on the consent form, and the purpose of the study. I also informed them of how and why they were selected to be a part of the study, how the data were collected, how long the data collected will be stored. I make the participants aware of the method I used to interpret and present the research findings.

Confirmability

The integrity of the qualitative researcher is sometimes labeled a researcher's position or reflexivity (Merriam, 2009). Reflexivity is designed to be a self-critical method for determining the impact of previous experiences and knowledge (LaBanca, 2011). If the researcher shared previous experiences, knowledge, and bias, the reader has an understanding of the interpretation of the researcher's findings. Gough and Madill

(2012) noted that the notion of reflexivity could be deconstructed to show how it can be used strategically to enhance the status of research.

Error Handling

In collecting data for this study, errors may arise because of the instruments used or human factors. The data collected for this study was by interviews and the focus group session. All data collected were reviewed to ensure there were no errors in the data collected from the participants. I collected data from a focus group that shared their views based on the questions I asked the focus group participants. In a focus group, researchers often find it difficult to facilitate and take notes at the same time (Glesne, 2011). Therefore, I used a digital recorder, and an iPad to record the focus group discussion to ensure I did not miss any of the important points made by the participants of the focus group.

Ethical Procedures

The Continuous Improvement Officer made access to the participants possible. There were no ethical concerns because these concerns were managed by proving each participant with an informed consent form, a brief description of the study, and the questions that will be asked. Before the start of the interviews and focus group session, I reviewed the informed consent and addressed any questions the participants had before I started. The participants were made aware that they were volunteering, and there were no ramifications or consequences. If at any time the participants wanted to end the interview

or leave the focus group, I ensured them that the participants were not treated any differently.

Informed Consent

Salkind (2012) stated that informed consent is the most important requirement for a research study. The ethical researcher informs participants of all aspects of the research to ensure that all participants read and sign an informed consent form granting participation in the study (Elmes, Kantowitz, Roediger, 2011; Salkind, 2012). Seidman (2013) stated one precaution researchers could take to minimize the risk to participants is to identify the rights that the participant has when taking part in research. The rights that are shared are voluntary participation, right to withdraw, right to review and withhold any material, and the right to privacy.

I e-mailed the participants the informed consent form to review prior to the interview and focus group session. The e-mail included the informed consent form, an overview of the topic, voluntary participation, possible benefits, and risk of the study. The participants were asked to state, "Yes I consent or No, I do not consent" in the subject line within three business days. I contacted each participant by phone to confirm his or her participation.

Confidentiality

In the informed consent, there was a section that addressed confidentiality. Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011) noted that maintaining confidentiality is an important component of the research procedures. Confidentiality means that the researcher may

attach names to information, but he or she holds the information in confidence or keeps the data collected secret from the public. Researchers never release the information in a way that permits linking specific to individuals (Neuman, 2011).

I created a coding system for each of the participants to ensure anonymity. The participants whom I interviewed were labeled according to the generational cohort (members of the veterans cohort will be labeled as V1, baby boomers were labeled as BB1, and so on). Salkind (2012) suggested anonymity, which means that records cannot be linked with names; confidentiality is maintained when anything that is learned about the participant was held in the strictest of confidence. I provided the participants with a transcript of their interview or the focus group session for their personal record. The informed consent forms and data collected will be stored in a locked file for five years. After the five years, the documents will be destroyed.

Protection of Human Participants

The participants were protected from any harm. I shared with the participants that there is a slim chance of experiencing stress or anxiety. Before the interviews and focus group session, I reviewed the informed consent with each participant. In the informed consent, the participants were made aware that at any time they wanted to end their participation in the study, the participants would not be penalized.

Summary

Chapter 3 included a discussion of the methodology for the current study, inclusive of the appropriateness of the research methodology, target population, sampling

strategy, instrumentation, data collection analysis, the role of the researcher, issues of integrity, and protection of participants. The qualitative descriptive case study research methodology was the best fit because I focused on the experiences of each of the individuals in this study. The qualitative research methodology was used as a means of exploration and understanding of individuals or groups assigned to a social or human phenomenon (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014). Qualitative research methodology was used to provide answers to questions by examining how individuals arrange themselves and their settings, and how individuals make sense of their surroundings through rituals, social structures, and social roles (Berg, 2009; Hazzan & Nutov, 2014).

The participants consisted of 40 public sector employees selected by purposeful sampling: 30 of these are public sector employees in a non-leadership role, and 10 are public sector employees in a leadership role. Dworkin (2012) shared that sample size used in qualitative research methodologies is often smaller than that used in quantitative research methods. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and a focus group session held in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. The participants for the interviews and focus group were provided the informed consent form, along with the questions. The responses were recorded with a digital recorder, iPad, and my handwritten notes. This study included summative content analysis and the use of NVivo 10, a software program, to analyzing the data collected from the participants.

This research was built on a conceptual framework on generational differences and diversity management. The foundation of the generational theory is that since each

generational cohort was born during a different period of time, the views and beliefs of each generational cohort has some similarities and differences. The responses from the data collected may show that each of the generational cohorts has similar and different perceptions of a multigenerational workforce that created conflict in the workplace. The purpose of my research is to determine how managers identified and resolved conflicts that may arise due to these differences. Chapter 4 consisted of the findings of this research study. Chapter 4 focuses the study setting, demographics, data collection, and analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I used the data collected from one-on-one interviews, with 30 people, and from one focus group session, with 10 participants, to answer the general research question: To what extent does a multigenerational workforce create conflict? Additionally, the following research questions were explored:

RQ1: How do generational differences manifest in the workplace?

RQ2: What managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce and how are they handled?

Chapter 4 includes a description of the study setting, participant demographics, data collection and analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results.

Setting

The setting of this study remained the same throughout the data collection process. This study included 40 public sector employees located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The first group comprised 20 employees, each of whom was interviewed individually and in person in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. The second group comprised 10 public sector employees who participated in a focus group discussion in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. The third group comprised 10 managers who supervise a multigenerational workforce. Like the first group, these participants were interviewed

individually in person. Members of each of the three groups were selected from each of the four generational cohorts (veterans, baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and millenials).

I conducted all in-person interviews and facilitated the focus group session using the same interview questions. No interviewees or focus group participants encountered any personnel or job-status changes, budgetary cuts, or changes to the organization that may have influenced the data collected in this study.

Sample Demographics

The study included 40 participants, who worked in the public sector in North Carolina and represented the four generational cohorts. There were three separate groups of participants.

Group 1 Composition and Characteristics

The first group of 20 employees were interviewed individually and selected from the four generational cohorts. All were in Entry level roles. Table 1shows their demographic characteristics, including birth year, gender, occupation, and years of service.

Table 1

Demographics of Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Birth Year	Gender	Occupation	Current	Years of Service
V1	1940	Male	Construction	Entry level	13
V2	1940	Male	Budget Analyst	Entry level	33
V3	1945	Male	Admin II	Entry level	28
V4	1945	Male	Plant Officer	Entry level	16
V5	1945	Male	Construction	Entry level	23
BB1	1960	Female	Drainage Spec	Entry level	27
BB2	1962	Female	LIMS Vendor	Entry level	13
BB3	1961	Female	Plant Operator	Team leader	15
BB4	1962	Female	Contract Tech	Entry level	12
BB5	1960	Male	Safety Officer	Entry level	16
GX1	1977	Male	Construction	Team leader	10
GX2	1977	Male	Construction	Team leader	16
GX3	1979	Female	Project Manager	Team leader	8.5
GX4	1978	Male	Project Manager	Entry level	8
GX5	1979	Male	Construction	Entry level	5.4
M1	1988	Male	GIS Analyst	Entry level	6
M2	1992	Male	Construction	Entry level	6
M3	1985	Female	Training Spec	Entry level	9
M4	1982	Female	Customer Service	Entry level	6
M5	1996	Female	Mail Room	Entry level	7

Table 1 illustrates a broad range of ages, years of service (5 to 33 years), occupations and job classifications. There were 12 men and eight women. From this diverse group of participants, I was able to collect a variety of views of public sector employees working in a multigenerational workforce.

Group 2 Composition and Characteristics

The second group comprised 10 employees who participated in a focus group discussion and were selected from the four generational cohorts. Table 2 shows their demographic characteristics including birth year, gender, occupation, leadership status, and years of service.

Table 2

Demographics of Focus Group Participants

Pseudonym	Birth Year	Gender	Occupation	Current	Years of Service
FV1	1943	Male	Survey party Chief	Mid-level manager	15
FV2	1945	Female	Budget Analyst	Manager	24
FBB1	1962	Male	Plant Operator	Entry level	17
FBB2	1962	Male	Plant Officer	Entry level	19.5
FGX1	1975	Female	Drafting Tech	Entry level	13
FGX2	1976	Male	Training Officer	Entry level	15
FM1	1988	Female	Project Manager	Mid-level manager	7
FM2	1990	Male	Safety Coordinator	Entry level	5
FM3	1984	Male	Instrument Tech	Entry level	8

Table 2 also illustrates a broad range of ages, years of service (5 to 24 years), occupations, and job classifications. The group consisted of seven men and three women. This diverse group of participants openly shared their experience working in a multigenerational workforce.

Group 3 Composition and Characteristics

The third group of participants consisted of 10 managers who supervise a multigenerational workforce in the public sector. They were interviewed individually and, like the other two groups, were selected from the four generational cohorts currently in the workplace. Table 3 shows their demographics including birth year, gender, occupation, years in leadership, and years of service.

Table 3

Demographics of Public Sector Managers

Pseudonym	Birth Year	Gender	Occupation	Current	Years in Leadership Role	Years of Service
VM1	1946	Male	Sr. Software Developer	Manager	6	36
VM2	1943	Male	Admin Officer IV	Manager	26	33
VM3	1948	Male	Sr. Software Developer	Manager	28	43
BBM1	1963	Male	Division Manager	Manager	10	24
BBM2	1964	Male	Plant Manager	Manager	23	28
BBM3	1968	Female	Budget Analysis	Manager	6	6
BBM4	1962	Female	Environmental Compliance Manager	Manager	22	27
GXM1	1799	Female	Budget Manager	Manager	6	6
GXM2	1974	Male	Survey Manager	Manager	18	18

All managers were currently in a leadership role but had a broad range of years of service. There were six men and four women in this group.

Data Collection

Data were collected from individual interviews and a focus group discussion. I collected data using a digital recorder, iPad, and handwritten notes. I was able to observe participants' nonverbal body language, changes in tone of voice, pauses, and laughter. I documented this information in handwritten notes during the interviews and focus group. I transcribed the interviews and focus group session, and I e-mailed the transcript to each of the participants for them to review. I did not receive any requests to make changes. None of the participants requested to withdraw from the interview or focus group session,

and none had any issues with the interview or focus group session. There were no unusual circumstances encountered during data collection.

Participants in the first group, which consisted of 20 public-sector employees in a non-management role, were interviewed individually in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. The shortest interview was 1 hour and 3 minutes, and the longest interview was 1 hour and 58 minutes. I allowed 2 hours for each interview to ensure there would be adequate time for participants to review the informed consent form and answer all of the questions. The room was private, and each participant was comfortable sharing his or her personal opinions and experiences in response to the open-ended questions. The participants I interviewed were labeled according to their generational cohort. Members of the veterans cohort were labeled as V1, baby boomers were labeled as BB1, members of Gen-Xers cohort were labeled GX1 and members of the millennial cohort were labeled M1. Each participant provided information he or she believed was relevant to his or her experience regarding the extent to which a multigenerational workforce creates conflict and issues for managers.

The second group of participants took part in a focus group. There were 10 people selected representing each of the cohorts, and they were all employed in the public sector. This focus group session was held in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. Because this focus group took place after business hours, participants were provided dinner and snacks during the session. Participants were labeled according to their generational cohort. Members of the veterans cohort were

labeled FV1, members of the baby boomer cohort were labeled FBB1, members of Gen-Xers cohort were labeled FGX1 and members of the millennial cohort were labeled FM1. All of the participants responded to the same questions presented to the participants in the individual interview group.

The third group of participants consisted of 10 public sector managers, six of whom were interviewed in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. Four managers insisted on a lunch meeting at a public restaurant for their interview; this was the only variation from the data collection plan presented in Chapter 3. The shortest interview was 1 hour and 48 minutes, and the longest interview was 2 hours and 15 minutes. The setting was private so that each of the participants was comfortable sharing his or her personal opinions and experiences in response to all of the open-ended questions. Participants were labeled according to the generational cohort. Members of the veterans cohort were labeled VM1, members of the baby boomer cohort were labeled BBM1, members of the Gen-Xers cohort were labeled GXM1, and members of the millennial cohort were labeled MM1. Each participant provided information that was relevant to his or her experience regarding the extent to which a multigenerational workforce creates conflict and how manages deal with a multigenerational workforce.

Data Analysis

The data for this study were collected from interviews and a focus group. There were no discrepancies identified during data analysis. During the interview process, all participants provided responses to the interview questions. At no time did a respondent

ask that I omit an interview question or indicate that he or she did not want to respond to an interview question.

The transcripts of the interviews and focus group were between two and 12 pages, or between 1,059 and 5,511 words using 11-point Calibri font, single spaced. I e-mailed the participants their respective transcript for review and comment to ensure all of the data collected were correct. All participants responded with positive feedback about their experiences of working in a multigenerational workforce, and there was no request to make any changes.

I used summative content analysis with the purpose of understanding use of content or words. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) noted that researchers use this approach to study manuscripts, journals, and content in textbooks. My study involved inductive and deductive reasoning in two phases of coding (open coding and selective coding). Figure 1 depicts the stages of data analysis.

Stage 1	
Initial Review of Interview Data.	Interview Transcription.
Stage 2	
Manual Coding of Participants' Transcripts.	
Stage 3	
Managing and Organizing Data in NVivo 10.	Identifying Emergent Themes.
Stage 4	
Combining Terms and Phrases.	Defining Thematic Associations.

Figure 1. Data analysis stages

Patton (2015) indicated that inductive reasoning begins with observing parts of the whole or units and ends with generalizations from the bottom up. Deductive reasoning begins with generalizations, and ends with parts of the whole or units from the top down (Patton, 2015, p.115). After reviewing the transcripts, I was able to define major themes and common phrases shared by the participants.

The first phase of the coding process was open coding, or line-by-line coding of the data, to develop descriptive themes and assign category titles (Maxwell, 2013). I used NVivo 10, a qualitative research software program, to manage and organize the major themes and common phrases into specific categories. NVivo 10 identified common themes among the study participants' responses and categorized, arranged, and managed information to identify common themes more simplistically (Davidson & Jacobs, 2012).

The second phase of the coding process involved uploading 30 transcribed interviews and a focus group transcription into the NVivo 10 software for coding. I renamed the files to take advantage of the sorting feature offered by NVivo 10. NVivo 10 merged and labeled the data collected into separate tables by major themes and common phrases into codes and nodes. After completing these two phases of coding, I was able to address the general question and research questions to identify common themes.

Study Results

I explored the following general research question: To what extent a multigenerational workforce create conflict? Data was collected from face-to-face

interviews and a focus group discussion intended to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do generational differences manifest themselves in the workplace?

RQ2: What managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce, and how are they handled?

I conducted 20 individual, in-person interviews with members of each of the generational cohorts. The focus group consisted of 10 participants from the four generational cohorts (veterans, baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and millennials). There were 10 individual in-person interviews with managers from the four generational cohorts. All participants who took part of this study were employed in the public sector.

The results map in Table 4 illustrates the demographic results of responses from the 40 and demonstrates how the participants answered the interview questions. Analysis of the data collected from the one-on-one interviews and focus groups reveal dominant themes that were described from the units or codes. The map provides the overarching question, research question, interview questions, themes and subthemes, and quotes and vignettes that illustrate the themes that emerged from the analysis of the transcripts.

Table 4

Results Map of the Study

Overarching Question	Research Question	Interview Questions	Theme and Subthemes	Quotes and Vignettes
The general research question for this study is to what extent a multigenerational workforce create conflict.	RQ1. How do the generational differences manifest themselves in the workplace?	Q5, Q6, Q7, Q9, Q10	• Work Values and Conflicts • Methods of Communication • Productivity • Work-Life Balance	Provided
	RQ2. What managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce and how are they handled?	Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q9, Q10, Q11	• Leadership Styles • Organizational Changes • The future of Public Sector	Provided

Table 4 shows how the interview questions were intended to address the research questions and the creation of the emergent themes of this study.

Triangulation enhanced the validity of the data collected to address the general question and the two research questions. NVivo 10 was used to analyze the data collected and to build tables. The following sections describe the themes identified from the transcriptions, along with examples from the participant in this study.

Study Results From the Individual Generational Cohorts

Members of the first group consisted of 20 public sector employees in non-management role. The participants were interviewed individually in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. The participants were labeled according his or her cohort. Members of the veterans cohort were labeled as V1,

members of the Baby Boomer cohort were labeled as BB1, members of the Gen-Xers cohort were labeled as GX1, and members of the millennial cohort were labeled as M1. Each participant provided information he or she believed was relevant to their experience regarding to what extent a multigenerational workforce created conflict and issues that managers face leading a multigenerational workforce.

Table 5 demonstrates the codes and number of times the words and phrases were mentioned to identify these emerging themes from each of the generational cohorts. Table 5 also shows the revealed four different subthemes: (1) work values and conflicts, (2) communication, (3) productivity, and (4) work-life balance.

Table 5

Codes/Nodes, From Individual Interviews With Four Generational Cohorts

Codes/Nodes	Number of times word, similar words, or phrases were in responses from the participants of the individual interviews
Collaboration	V2,V3,V4,V5, BB1, M1, M2, M3, M5
Computer-Generated Leading	BB1,M3, M4, M5
Conflicts	V4, BB2, M1, M2, M4, M5
Dependability	V1, V3, V5, BB1, BB3, BB4, BB5
Entitlement	V1, V3, V5,GX5
Flexible	BB2, GX1,M1, M4, M5
Knowledge Sharing	M1, M3, M4, M5
Incentive	BB2, GX1, GX4 MM3, MM5
Interpersonal Skills	GX3, GX5, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5
Loyal	V1, V4, V5, BB2, BB3, BB5
Mentoring Programs	M2, M4, M5
Methods of Communication	M2, M3, M4, M5
Opportunities for Advancement	GX3, GX5,M1, M2, M3, M4, M5
Productivity	V3, V5, BB1, BB2
Respect	V1, V2, V4, M1, M3, M5
Team Building	V2, V3, M1, M2, M3, M4
Technology devices	V1,V3, BB1, BB2, M1, M4, M5
Telework	V1, V3, BB2, BB3, BB5, M1,M2,M4,M5
Training	BB1, GX1, GX3, M1, M2, M3, M5

Codes/Nodes	Number of times word, similar words, or phrases were in responses from the participants of the individual interviews
Work-Life Balance	V1, BB1, BB2, GX2, GX4, GX5, M2, M4, M5

Table 5 shows how the participants responded to the questions and the categories of the responses.

Generational Differences Emergent Theme 1: Work Values and Conflicts

The first emergent theme for generational differences was the working values of the different generational cohorts in the workplace and some of the conflicts these differences generate. Work values is defined by several researchers as the importance an individual places on his or her work, including work settings and outcomes (Campbell, et al., 2015; Gursoy, et al., 2013; Jin & Rounds, 2012; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Papavasileiou & Lyons, 2015). Some of the responses to support research findings are as follows:

- V1: "What I have found with these young people is they are not loyal. Back in my day, when I was young, I was happy to have a job because times were hard when I was coming up, and these young people are just lazy and I call them on it. Sometimes they get mad at me, but it is the truth. And another thing [is] they do not respect anybody. You should hear how they talk in front of me -- cussing and carrying on."
- BB2: "Well, I really don't have conflicts, but I do have issues with the younger generation not doing what it takes to get ahead. I feel like the people in their 30s are waiting for me to retire so that they can get my job,

and the people out of college think they can just move up just for showing up. So it is not a conflict but something that I have an issue with, with those employees younger than me."

- GX5: "Sometimes the people that are from the younger generation want their request answered in an instant. It takes time to get the answer and to make sure it is right. They think they are so smart."

Generational Differences Emergent Theme 2: Communication

Participants' response for Theme 2 for generational differences was on communication. The responses suggested that perceptions of communication barriers are prevalent. The data supported the findings from Salahuddin (2010) that organizations experience communication challenges between the generational cohorts. Some of the participant responses to support the data are as follows:

- V3: "I think in the next five years, people are going to be working more and more on computers and not talking to each other anymore."
- BB1: "Since I have been working here, I have seen a lot of changes -- not just in my work area, but citywide. Today we tend to work more in a collaborative work environment. Now we work with different departments to make sure we are on the same page when we are doing a project. We make sure each department works at the same location at the same time to keep the homeowner and business owner happy."

- GX3: “In our group we are really busy. The only time I interact with anyone on my team is during meetings, and we have a lot of meetings. Outside of those meetings I am trying to get my work done. For the most part I am pretty easy-going and try to stay out of the line of fire. And boy, have I seen some fire between the older employees and the young college grads. They just cannot see eye-to-eye.”
- M1: “With me working in the field, the few times that I have to come into the office, it seems like the older people only want to stay in their office and work. They do not want to socialize or talk or anything. I wish they would not just stare at their computers or just work nonstop. You got to have fun at work, right?”
- M2: “Like in their 60s or 70s, these people really need to move on so that I can get their job [laughter]. You know, older people do not like sharing what they know. They don’t like being a part of the meetings or doing anything with us. Like we have a department picnic, and we have to beg them to come for a free meal. I don’t get it. The people that I work with that are my parents’ age do not take their jobs as seriously. And the people near my age but in their 30s get the millennials, and they don’t take their job as seriously as the older people I work with.”

Generational Differences Emergent Theme 3: Productivity

The third emerging theme for generational differences was productivity. Responses to Theme 3 originated from Interview Question 10. The data supported the findings from several researchers that age diversity can be a considerable factor in productivity growth for companies (Backes-Gellner & Veen, 2013; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Some of the participant responses to support the data were as follows:

- V2: "Managers today need to be smart about how they manage their employees. Managers should build a solid team and everyone will be willing to work together."
- V3: "Well … the managers should … try to bring their staff together as a strong team and this would help them work together as a team."
- BB1: "The best way to improve productivity in a multigenerational workplace would be to [long pause]. I think the manager should use their employees where their best skills sets are. For example, for the younger generation, they are good at computer skills, and maybe they can help or train us on how to use different software. The generation below me are good at getting the job done fast, and of course [in] my group, we will work extra hours to get the job done. And the older group, they have all of the past history of the jobs we are sent on to do, and they can make sure we understand what was done before we got here. I think if we can get a manager to do this we will be able to get our work done faster and better."

- BB2: “There are several ways managers can increase productivity.” One of them is to provide incentives that work for each of the age groups. Another way would be to look at the strengths of each of the employees and play on those strengths.”
- GX1: “I think managers should allow the employees to take more ownership of their projects and offer more opportunities for training to improve our skills.”
- M2: “Managers should create opportunities for us to work together as a team. And not one person or one-on-one, but a team with people from each of the age groups working together.”
- M3: “I think our managers need to be more open with us and share the vision of our organization with all of us. I have heard people say that they do not trust our management because we have no idea of what the future looks like for our organization, and our managers do not give us enough feedback. The only feedback we get is during our performance review. I think we should get a review or have a discussion on our work more than once a year. It is like they are afraid to give use feedback.”
- M4: “In our group, I think we need to meet more and create a team feel to this group because we all need each other to get our job done.”

Generational Differences Emergent Theme 4 Work-Life Balance

The fourth emergent theme for generational differences was work-life balance. Responses to Theme 4 originated from Interview Question 3. The data supported the benefits of work-life balance from Berg, Kossek, Misra, and Belman (2014), as flextime, compressed workweeks, childcare benefits, telecommuting, and eldercare. Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- V1: "Some of these people want to work from home. What can they get done working at home? I could go on and on."
- BB2: "I am working full time and taking care of my Mom, along with my wife and my eight-year-old daughter."
- GX1: "Since I have been here, more and more employees have a relaxed or flexible work schedule, and we seem to still be able to get the job done."
- M4: "I think a manager should be flexible in the working schedules."

Generational Differences Emergent Theme 5: Leadership Style in the Public Sector

The fifth emergent theme for generational differences was on the leadership style of managers in the public sector. Responses to this theme originated from Interview Question 9. The data collected supported the findings of Sloane-Seale and Kops (2013) that because the age range is wide, managers in the public sector may need to identify how to lead a multigenerational workforce. Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- V5: “The key to working together is building a strong team, and to build a strong team. A manager needs to know the strengths and weakness of the employees, and they can pair these people together in order to make sure everybody knows what they are doing.”
- BB1: “Managers need to focus more so on what the workforce has in common in order for us to work together. They may want to consider making generational differences training mandatory.”
- GX3: “I think it would help our managers if they would be willing to take additional training on managing people of different ages and personalities.”
- M2: “I have only been with the City for five years, but we did start a mentoring program that is Citywide call Shared Leadership, where we pair experienced leaders with up-and-coming leaders, and it is working very well so far. Some of the up-and-coming leaders have been promoted into leadership roles.”

Generational Differences Emergent Theme 6: Organizational Changes in the Public Sector

The sixth emergent theme for generational differences was on organizational change in the public sector. Responses originated from Interview Question 11. The data collected supported the findings from Chekwa, Chukwuanu, and Richardson (2013) that major demographic changes occurring in the workplace were the presence of four

different generations working together. Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- V4: "[Managers] need to go to training, and after the training, they need to see if what they have learned from the training is true."
- BB4: "Our managers need to take advantage of the training the City has to offer. They offer a generational differences class. I took the class and it was really good."
- GX2: "Understanding the strengths and weakness of each of the generations. That way the manager can place people where they can be their best in the workplace."
- M5: "Well, I think managers really need to look at their staff regardless of their age, to make sure they place the right person into the right job based on their skill sets. This would count down on a lot of wasted time when we are given projects to do."

Generational Differences Emergent Theme 7: Future of Public Sector

The seventh emergent theme for generational differences was the future of public sector. Responses originated from Interview Question 11. The data supported the findings from Smith and Nichols (2015) that workforce diversity is going to change the workplace of the future. Some of the responses to support research findings are as follows:

- V3: "I think in the next five years, people are going to be working more and more on computers and not talking to each other anymore."

- BB4: “In the next five years the older employees might be gone, and we will not have the history we need if there is a question about something we are working on. And the young people will want to work from home and not in the office where they are needed.”
- GX2: “Understand the strengths and weakness of each of the generations. That way the manager can place people where they can be their best in the workplace.”
- M1: “In the next few years the older people will be leaving the city.”

Study Results From the Focus Group Sessions

The second group of participants was part of a focus group. The focus group consisted of 10 people employed within the public sector: two members of the Veteran cohort, two members of the Baby Boomer cohort, three members of Gen-Xers cohort, and two members of the Millennial cohort. The focus group session was held in a private conference room at a public library in Charlotte, North Carolina. The identity of each of the participants was not shared with anyone who took part in the focus group. Participants were given a name tag that had their cohort and number to identify them. Members of the veterans cohort were labeled FV1, members of the Baby Boomer cohort were labeled FBB1, members of Gen-Xers cohort were labeled FGX1 and members of the Millennial cohort were labeled FM1.

Each of the participants was able to provide information that they believed was relevant to his or her experience regarding to what extent a multigenerational workforce

created conflict and issues that managers face leading a multigenerational workforce. Table 6 demonstrates the data collected from the participants. The questions for the focus group participants was provided with the consent form. During the focus group, I was able to use an overhead projector, which had the questions on a screen. I read each question to the group, and the participants were able to see the questions which allowed them time to think of a response during the conversation. The data from the focus group was collected with a digital recorder, handwritten notes, and an iPad Pro. The iPad Pro was used to record the session and nonverbal actions from the participants. The results showed four different themes: (1) work values and conflicts, (2) communication, (3) productivity, and (4) work-life balance. Table 6 showed the three different themes related to management: (1) leadership style, (2) organizational change, and (3) the future of the public sector. Table 6 also lists the codes, number of times the words and phrases were mentioned to identify these emerging themes from each of the generational cohorts.

Table 6

Codes/Nodes, From Individual Interviews With Focus Group Participants

Codes/Nodes	Number of times word, similar words, or phrases were in responses from the participants of the individual interviews
Conflicts	FV1
Dependability	FV1
Entitlement	FV1,FV2,FBB1
Flexible	FBB2,FGX2
Knowledge Sharing	FM2,FM3
Incentive	FGX2
Loyal	FBB2
Mentoring Programs	FV1,FV2, FBB1,FBB2,FGX3,FM1,FM2

Codes/Nodes	Number of times word, similar words, or phrases were in responses from the participants of the individual interviews
Productivity	FM3
Respect	FV1,FM3
Team Building	FM3
Training	FBB2,FGX1,FM3
Work-Life Balance	FBB1,FGX2,FGX3
Work skills	FV1,FBB2,FM2

Table 6 showed how the participants responded to the questions and which category the responses were a part of from the responses.

Focus Group Generational Differences Emergent Theme 1: Work Values and Conflicts

The first emergent theme on generational differences for this study is of the work values of the different generational cohorts in the workplace and some of the conflicts these differences cause. The themes addressed the research question of how generational differences manifest themselves in the workplace. Stark and Farmer (2015) proposed that the epicenter of conflict appear to involve values accompanying the entry of the Millennial generation into the workplace. Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- FG V1: “Me and V2, and I think I can speak for him. [V2 nods head] We grew up in a time where you respected people that were above you and you gave 100 percent when you came to work. Work was serious and we all worked together and took care of each other when I worked at my first few jobs, and that has stayed with me. I think the talent we bring into the

workplace is stability, and the generation that came in after us, they believe, in my opinion, that work is their life. They will work 24 hours if they could, which is a good and bad thing. They get the job done, but they risk burnout and lost relationships. And the Gen X, they don't get mad. They do the work fast and they want to leave to see their kids play little league baseball, which is not bad. They get the job done, but if you are looking for them around three o'clock, they are nowhere to be found. And I get it because their parents, which include the baby boomers, worked all the time, and now we have these young people coming into the mix. Well, they are so needy, but they are good with computers, so we need them to help us get our job done. But they want you to acknowledge everything they do [pause]. I think I covered everybody [nervous laugh]."

- FGBB1: "Well I will start us off. I really don't have any conflict with anyone I work with, but [mumbling from Millennial group] let me finish first. This is a safe place, remember? [Millennial group all nod their heads up and down] I just want to be totally honest here. Sometimes your group [pointing at the millennials] think that you should come in the office making more than me while I put in the time and continue to put in the time, and you just waltz in and want your cake and eat it too."
- FGGX2: "[Clears throat] Well, I think they all make a good point. For me, I get sick of the Baby boomer group trying to be the parents at work, as if I

am not an adult, and keep it real and keep moving. And this group over here [pointing at the millennials] think everything is supposed to be handed to them, and they love the baby boomers because they are looking for their work-mom or –dad."

- FGM2: "[Looks up and clears throat] I … think that what they both say is true, but basically everybody brings something good and it should not matter how old or young a person is, or like how they look or how they get the job done. I guess what I am saying basically is that we should not judge people. Just basically accept them where they are and learn from each other. I'm just sayin'."

Focus Group Generational Differences Emergent Theme 2: Communication

Participants' response to Theme 2 is about generational differences and communication was based on the data collected from the focus group session. These participants were asked the same questions as the participants in the individual interviews. The responses suggested that perceptions of communication barriers are prevalent. The data supported the findings from Logan (2016) that clear communication may well enhance collaboration within the team in the workplace between the generational cohorts. Only one of the participants shared their views on communication and collaboration. The participant responses to support the data were as follows:

- FV1: "Me and V2, and I think I can speak for him, [V2 nods head] We grew up in a time where you respected people that were above you and you gave 100

percent when you came to work. Work was serious and we all worked together and took care of each other when I worked at my first few jobs, and that has stayed with me. We have these young people coming into the mix. Well, they are so needy, but they are good with computers so we need them to help us get our job done. But they want you to acknowledge everything they do [pause]. I think I covered everybody [nervous laugh]**."**

- FGM3: "I think the best way to increase productivity is to build a strong team and create more collaboration within our organization."

Focus Group Generational Differences Emergent Theme 3: Productivity

The third emerging theme identified in this study was productivity. Responses to Theme 3 originated from Interview Question 10 for the focus group session. The data supported the findings that educating employees on generational issues boosts understanding, respect, and productivity (Sutton Bell, et al., 2014). Some of the participants of the focus group shared the responses to support the findings were as follows:

- FGV1: "So I honestly think each and every one of us bring our own unique talents to the workplace, and we should all capitalize on those talents. Me and V2, and I think I can speak for him, [V2 nods head] we grew up in a time where you respected people that were above you and you gave 100 percent when you came to work. Work was serious and we all worked together and took care of each other when I worked at my first

few jobs, and that has stayed with me. I think the talent we bring into the workplace is stability."

- FGGX1: "Well, one way they can increase their understanding is by attending training classes. The City offers a training class on generational differences. I took it and it was really pretty good."
- FGM3: "I think the best way to increase productivity is to build a strong team and create more collaboration within our organization."

Focus Group Generational Differences Emergent Theme 4: Work-Life Balance

The last theme that emerged from the focus group was generational differences and work-life balance. This theme addressed the research question of how generational differences manifest themselves in the workplace. Responses to Theme 4 originated from Interview Question 3 for the focus group session. The data supported the importance for employees to be equipped with resources and positive experiences in their work and family roles, but that the beliefs that employees have in their own capabilities also play a critical role in helping them to achieve work–life balance and job and family satisfaction benefits of work-life balance (Chan, et al., 2015). Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- FGBB1: "I have to agree with FGGX2. Whereas the workplace has become more relaxed with our work schedule and working at home -- which was different at first -- but I am starting to like it, and we are more like the people that work in the private sector."

- FGGX2: “Well I think the City sees the value of their employees and they are not as strict as they used to be. They are more flexible and they are embracing the idea of working from home more than they have in the past.”

Focus Group Management Emergent Theme 1: Leadership Style

The first emergent theme on managing multigenerational workforce was leadership style. This theme addressed the research question what managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce. The participants from the focus group shared their views on how managers lead in the workplace. Responses to this theme originated from Interview Question 9 from the participants of the focus group session. The data collected supports the findings of Vokic, and Vidovic (2015) that managers in the public sector may need to develop generational intelligence to lead a multigenerational workforce. Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- FGBB2: “Well, I think a mentoring program is important to prepare our future leaders to take our place once we leave, and I think a structured mentoring program would be beneficial to all of the parties involved.”
- FGM1: “I know I have not said much, but I think we covered everything. But one thing I do agree with is that we need a chance to learn from you guys, and one way we can do that is to have a mentoring program. A mentoring program would basically help us with our job ‘cause I’m sure

you guys want us to do a good job. But I can see where you might be scared that we might take your job."

Focus Group Management Emergent Theme 2: Organizational Changes

Participants' responses for Theme 2 on organizational changes were based on the data collected from the focus group session for Question 11. Researchers found that all generations are not fully pleased with changes in the workplace, but training and education may provide a solution to the changes in the workplace (Dwyer, Dwyer, Azevedo, & Azevedo, 2016; Vasconcelos, 2015). Some of the participant responses to support the data were as follows:

- FGV2: "[Nervous giggle] Well, the organization has changed when we started hiring these young people. They or the organization seems to cater to these young people now, and it seems like they bend over backward to make sure they are happy."
- FGBB1: "The workplace has become more relaxed with our work schedule and working at home -- which was different at first -- but I am starting to like it, and we are more like the people that work in the private sector."
- FGGX2: "Well, I think the City sees the value of their employees and they are not as strict as they used to be. They are more flexible and they are embracing the idea of working from home more than they have in the past."

Focus Group Management Emergent Theme 3: Future of Public Sector

Responses to the last management emergent theme originated from Interview Question 11 for participants of the focus group session. The data supported the findings from Smith and Nichols (2015) that workforce diversity is going to change the workplace of the future. Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, and Pemberton-Jones (2015) found that managers realized that choosing diversity as part of their workforce is no longer optional, but absolutely instrumental in any organization's success. Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- FGGX2: "Well, I think the City sees the value of their employees and they are not as strict as they used to be. They are more flexible and they are embracing the idea of working from home more than they have in the past."
- FGM3: "I agree with you FGGX2. It's like since my generation entered the picture, we both in new technology ideas to the City and we are able to use what we learned in school here, because we are the most recent graduates in the workplace."

Study Results from Public Sector Managers

The third group of participants in this study consisted of 10 managers from the public sector. This group consisted of three members from the Veteran cohort, four members from the Baby Boomer cohort, two members from Gen-Xers cohort, and one member from the millennial cohort. Each of the participants was able to provide

information that was relevant to their experience regarding to what extent a multigenerational workforce created conflict, and how to manage a multigenerational workforce. Table 7 demonstrates the data collected from the participants in this group. The results showed four different themes that were (1) work values and conflicts, (2) communication, (3) productivity, and (4) work-life balance. This table (Table 7) shows the three different themes related to management: (1) leadership style, (2) organizational change, and (3) the future of the public sector. Table 7 lists the codes, number of times the words and phrases were mentioned in order to identify these emerging themes from the participants of this group of managers.

Table 7

Codes/Nodes, From Public Sector Managers

Codes/Nodes	Number of times word, similar words, or phrases were in responses from the participants of the individual interviews
Computer-Generated Leading	VM2
Conflicts	BBM3, MM1
Dependability	BBM3, GXM2
Entitlement	VM1, VM3
Flexible	BBM1, GXM1
FMLA	BBM1
Knowledge of Generational Differences	VM1, BBM1, GXM2, MM1
Leadership Styles	BBM4, GXM1, GXM2
Mentoring Programs	VM2
Methods of Communication	GXM2
Micro Manager	BB4, GXM1
Productivity	VM1, BBM4

Codes/Nodes	Number of times word, similar words, or phrases were in responses from the participants of the individual interviews
Respect	GXM2
Team Building	VM1, BBM1, BBM3, GXM1
Trust Employees	MM1
Work-Life Balance	VM1, BBM1, GXM1, MM1

Table 5 showed how the participants responded to the questions and which category the responses were a part of from the responses.

Public Sector Managers Generational Differences Emergent Theme 1: Work Values and Conflicts

The first emergent theme on managing multigenerational workforce collected from Interview Questions 1 and 2 on the differences the managerial issues arise regarding managing a multigenerational workforce. These two questions centered on the generational differences and possible conflicts managing employees in each of the different cohorts. The data supported the findings from Ertas (2015) that younger workers do not seem to differ drastically from older workers in terms of their work motivations and evaluations. Some of the responses to support research findings were as follows:

- VM1: “This is an easy question [starts laughing]. Let me give you the short and sweet answer to this. The baby boomers don’t know how to go home, the 30-somethings don’t want to work with others, and the 20-somethings want to everything given to them. Got it?”

- BBM1: “Let’s see. The above-60 group are a very hard-working and loyal group of people. If you ask one of them to do a task, you can bet it would be done. The baby boomers like working in a team environment. My Gen X employees like to work independently and are not as trusting of anyone as the other cohorts. And the millennials -- we have a saying about them in the office when they leave us is ‘bless their hearts,’ because they do not have a clue as to what the real world is all about. But the millennials in my group are very tech–savvy, and we really need what they bring into the workplace to help to get our job done efficiently.”
- GXM2: “OK, well, we do not have a veteran in our workgroup but we do have four baby boomers, and I can really depend on them to get the job done. And they do not mind working overtime to get the job done. I have six other Gen X and I have to stay on top of them because when they finish their work, they will go MIA. And we just hired four summer interns, and I guess they are the millennials, and they are fresh off the boat. One of them told me he was late because his mom did not wake him up. Can you believe that?”
- MM1: “Since everyone I manage are older than me, I can see the different ways people approach work. The people in their 30s -- I am guessing that would be Gen X -- they like to work alone for the most part. But what is weird about them is that they like to leave as soon as they finish their jobs,

and the people that are the age of my parents work all the time. I have one employee that comes in on the weekend. I keep telling her to stop but she does not listen."

Public Sector Managers Generational Differences Emergent Theme 2: Communication

The third group of participants consisted of managers who worked in the public sector. The managers shared their responses from Interview Question 4, which asked which method of communicating information to the staff do they use and if they found that the one they used is the most effective method for a multigenerational workforce. Hawrysz and Hys (2015) found that trust plays a crucial role in the communication process, and the higher the trust, the higher the communication efficiency and it seems that in the public sector the level of trust is low. From this, the method of communication may not matter if there is not trust in the workplace. Some of the managers' responses to support the data were as follows:

- VM2: "I like talking to people one-on-one or having a meeting so that everyone gets the same message at the same time. But the way we do work has changed since we all use computers and tablets. I can use a computer and I send out emails, but I don't type as fast as some of the others here. The HR lady says I use the two-finger method [laughs]."

- BBM2: “You know, Cynthia, since we all have laptops, tablets and cell phones, my group communicates by email and phone, and sometimes by text.”
- BBM4: “I would like to think I have mastered Outlook. This is what we use to send emails, and my nieces have taught me all about texting [laughs] but seriously. I use email to share information as needed, but I have a standing meeting the first Tuesday of each month. I think it is important to touch base with all of my folks to see what’s going on and to share information with them as a group.”
- GXM2: “I have a monthly meeting with them, and if I need to have to talk to an individual employee, I just pull them to the side.”
- MM1: “[laughs] Well, I use all of the tools to communicate with my staff: text, email, IM is the bomb and short meetings too. It took a while before people starting using IM, but once they got the hang of it, some of them like it.”

Public Sector Managers Generational Differences Emergent Theme 3: Productivity

The managers that were interviewed responded to Interview Question 5, which asked participants to describe their approach to ensure productivity. Paul, Olumuyiwa, and Esther (2015) found that if employees were properly motivated with the necessary and adequate training, innovation would increase rapidly on the job and this will thereby lead to competitive positioning, and that a promotion increases their satisfaction and level

of productivity in the organization. Some of the managers' responses to supported the data were as follows:

- VM1: "Yeah, yeah. I feel that the best way to make sure the job is getting done is to be clear on the expectations, and it does not matter if I have a mixed age group staff or everyone is the same age. It is up to the managers to make sure the employees know what they need to do."
- BBM4: "You know, I really don't like to micromanage my staff, but I make my expectations clear to each and every one of them. With the work that we do we have to check sites and submit reports to the local and state level and if anyone is short, there is hell to pay because what they do is a reflection on me and they are not going to make me look bad. I have noticed that I have to stay on top of my one Millennial because I have caught her not doing any work, but texting and talking to her friends on the phone making plans for after work and stuff like that."
- GXM1: "Managing people is tough, and I do not like to micromanage, but I do expect for my staff to do their work, and I understand that there are more than one way to skin a cat. So if you can get your reports and entries done, get it done. I am not going to stand over any of my staff because I make sure they understand what the expectations are. My siblings are slowly getting this and learning that they do not need to check in with me after they finish a task."

- MM1: “That’s a tough one. First off, you have to trust that your staff is doing their work and if they need anything to get their jobs done. I am here for them, believe it or not. I want my staff to do a good job, and I am here to help them all any way that I can.”

Public Sector Managers Generational Differences Emergent Theme 4: Work-Life Balance

The participants’ responses from this theme were generated from Question 3 on work-life balance in a multigenerational workforce. Some examples of work-life balance are generally understood as a subset of flexible working arrangements, including flextime, reduced hours, job sharing and home-based work, which may provide autonomy over where and when work takes place (Earl, & Taylor, 2015; Lewis, Anderson, Lyonette, Payne, & Wood, 2016 ; Mastracci, & Arreola, 2016). The responses from managers’ supported the data were as follows:

- VM1: “This work-life balance is a bunch of bologna. Back in my day, we worked our hours and took care of our home after we got off work. But nowadays employees are soft and needy. But I have to follow the federal medical leave act that I think Clinton or Bush put into place a few years ago I don’t remember who made that law.”
- BBM1: “Yes, and those are always tough and have to be handled case-by-case. If an employee needs to be off due to FMLA reasons, we try to accommodate the employee all that we can. We do offer the employee a

chance to work from home or adjust the work hours if that would help an employee with a sick parent or child."

- GXM1: "Being a mom, I understand the need to have work-life balance, and I try to work with my team the best I can to accommodate them. I will allow them to work from home and adjust their schedules as needed."
- MM1: "I believe in work-life balance. We are not made to work 24/7. Sometimes I work from home on Fridays so that I can do other things at home too, and I encourage all of my staff to work from home. In fact, I just sent out a calendar to let my staff pick a day to work from home. You can get so much done outside of the office, and you can do other things you need to do at home."

Public Sector Managers Management Emergent Theme 1: Leadership Strategies

The first management emergent theme on managing multigenerational workforce was leadership strategies. This theme addressed the research question what managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce from Question 9. A manager of a multigenerational team should be able to understand the different ways to manage each of the generation cohorts by encouraging an environment of tolerance to generational cohorts (Sibarani, Tjakraatmadja, Putro, & Munir, 2015). The managers shared their views on leading a multigenerational workforce in the public sector below:

- VM2: "Cindy, I am not trying to sound like a broken record, but I like to lay all of my cards on the table and I tell my staff what I expect and they

better well do it. All of this talk about mentoring and grooming employees for their next career is a waste of my time. If my employees want to take training classes, I am all for it, but I am too old to be doing all of that extra stuff."

- BBM1: "When we talked on the phone about this interview, I did some reading on leadership styles. Because I was not sure of what my leadership style was, I was surprised to see that I am a transformational leader, one that follows a teamwork framework and I lead by example, and I really try to be there for my staff."
- GXM2: "You know I really don't think I have a strategy to come to think about it. I just treat my workgroup with respect. That's the thing with working with people that work in the field and not in the office. You don't have to worry so much about how they feel and what they want. You just give them their worksheet for the day and they do the work."
- MM1: "Wow, this is a great question. I think the city is about to see more and more people my age entering the workforce, and they are going to want to be in leadership roles. We bring a new energy and fresh ideas to work, and you know we … can share with the people working here what we have learned from school, because most of us have college degrees so that makes us much smarter than the people working here already."

Public Sector Managers Management Emergent Theme 2: Organizational Changes

The responses from the managers in this group for Theme 2 on organizational changes were based on the data collected from the interviews for Question 11. Lines, Sullivan, Smithwick, and Mischung (2015) stated that it is important for any organization to identify the proper change agent to avoid any resistance by the workforce that is impacted by the change. In a multigenerational workforce, the leadership should have a change agent that understands the different needs of the workforce. Some of the responses to this question were as follows:

- VM3: "I think our organization -- the city -- has gotten soft. We always want to work it out with the employees instead of telling them what to do and expecting them to do their job."
- BBM1: "I think the most visible change in the way we do our work is the way we communicate with each other. Gone are the days of sitting in a meeting with the staff. We are much more isolated in our work and I miss that. Also, we are more technology-driven with the way we do our work. Gone are the days of writing things down and reading plans. Everything is online now."
- MM1: "Well, I haven't really been here that long. The few changes I have seen is flexible work schedules and telecommuting are offered more to employees since I have been here, which is a great for employees that have family issues that they need to take care of."

Public Sector Managers Management Emergent Theme 3: Future of the Public Sector

The responses from the managers in this group for Theme 3 on the future of the public sector were based on the data collected from the interviews for Question 7, which asked participants how they felt the generational differences in the workplace would change the way the public sector will look in the future. Fernandez, Resh, Moldogaziev, and Oberfield (2015) shared that dealing with the needs and demands of the younger workers, as well as a more rapidly changing workforce, may mean increased recruitment efforts, additional training, reengineered initiatives, workplace arrangements, and alternative management strategies. Some of the managers' responses were as follows:

- VM1: "[Long pause}] Since I have been working -- and I have been working for a long time since I was a young teenager -- here at the city they seem to have changed to a flexible workplace where they put the needs of the employees first. The city needs to find that fine balance where the work gets done and the employees are happy too, and I know that it is not easy. But you can't let the people doing the work run your business too."
- VM3: "I think the City is changing from employer-employee focus to an employee-employer focus organization. This means the employees are telling us what they want, what they are going to do. It's a disgrace."

- BB1: “In the next five years, more and more employees will be working from home since we are quickly becoming more tech-driven with laptops and iPads to get our work done. With this, I do not know how the leaders of the future are going to lead the workforce. How are you going to keep an employee that is working on their couch motivated to complete a task if they cannot see you are work? We need to look at how the private sector leads their employees now so that when we get to that point we will be better equipped to lead our employees.”
- BBM2: “You know, Cynthia, I think more and more people will be working outside of the office, like at home. We are slowly moving towards that direction with the use of laptops and tablets.”
- GXM2: “I don’t know the changes that may come, but based on what I see from these interns, if they do not change the way they approach work, a manger is going to have a lot on their hands [shakes head].”
- MM1: “Wow, this is a great question. I think the city is about to see more and more people my age entering the workforce, and they are going to want to be in leadership roles. We bring a new energy and fresh ideas to work, and you know we … can share with the people working here what we have learned from school, because most of us have college degrees so that makes us much smarter than the people working here already.”

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Thomas and Magilvy (2011) found that validity by researchers supported and provided credibility to qualitative research. To ensure credibility for this study, I used member checking, data triangulation, and audit trail, as outlined in Chapter 3. The data collected were the personal recollections of the participants based on their experience of working in a multigenerational workforce. I expected some variation in their responses to the questions asked. However, the responses all tied together to illustrate the common themes between the participants.

The data collected from the three different groups of participants in this study were used to triangulate the outcome of the responses. The responses from the interviews and focus group session illustrated that the participants experienced the same phenomenon, and to ensure the overall quality of this study. I utilized NVivo 10 to analyze the data. NVivo 10 strengthened the consistency of the data and provided me with tables demonstrating the themes and codes from the data collected.

Transferability

Transferability allowed the reader to transfer the findings of the data collected to other settings or groups (Kemparaj & Chavan, 2013). Criterion sampling was used to determine who would be a part of this study. Borrego, Douglas, and Amelink (2011) stated that criterion sampling is used in a case study design because the participants must all align with the predetermined criteria and have experience within the area of inquiry. I

also included quotes and vignettes of the participants to provide a rich description of the responses to the interview and research questions.

Dependability

Proof of dependability is simultaneous with the conversion of the steps taken to collect, study, and report participant data (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). I provided an audit trail from the data transcriptions to the emergent themes so that the findings would be seen as dependable and confirmable. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) an audit trail is achieved by (a) describing the purpose of the study, (b) discussing how and why the participants were selected for the study, (c) describing how the data were collected and how long the data collection lasted, (d) explaining how the data were reduced or transformed for analysis, (e) discussing the interpretation and presentation of the research findings, and (f) communicating the techniques used to determine the credibility of the data. To ensure an audit trail for this investigation meets the requirements of Thomas and Magilvy, I informed the participants verbally and in writing with the contents of the consent form, which included the purpose of the study, and the questions they would be asked. I informed each of the participants of how and why they were selected to be a part of the study, how the data would be collected, and with how long the data collected would be stored. I also made each of the participants aware of the method I will be using to interpret and present the research findings.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research is the degree to which the findings are free of the effects of researcher's bias and align with other studies (Farrelly, 2013). I used several methods to ensure conformability. The first method I used was to provide each of the participants with a copy of the consent form, and I used member checking to ensure the data collected from each of the participants was correct to avoid any errors or mistakes in the transcriptions. NVivo 10 was used to illustrate how the codes were generated and merged into categories of the codes, to create the themes. The informed consent forms and data collected have been stored in a locked file, and after five years, all of the documents will be destroyed.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore whether or not the macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. This study consisted of 40 participants employed in the public sector. In this study, there were 20 participants interviewed individually, 10 participants were a part of a focus group, and the last 10 participants were employees who held a position in management who were interviewed individually.

The findings from the data collected addressed the general research question of to what extent a multigenerational workforce created conflict. In addition, the data gathered for this study addressed the two research questions, which focused on how generational characteristics manifest themselves in the workplace, and how managers perceive a

multigenerational workforce and how they are handled. There were four emergent themes related to generational differences in the workplace. These themes were work values and conflicts, communication differences, productivity, and work-life balance. There were also four emergent themes centered on management. These themes found were leadership style, organizational changes, and the future of the public sector. Chapter 5 consists of the findings of this research study. Chapter 5 focus on the interpretation of the findings by the research questions, limitations, recommendations for future research, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I also examined the challenges managers face leading a multigenerational workforce in the public sector. In the workplace, it is not uncommon to see four generational cohorts working together in the public and private sector (Ewoh, 2013; Herring, & Henderson, 2015). Results may help managers bring the different generations together to work as a cohesive team. I identified the major themes from the data to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. How do generational differences manifest in the workplace?

RQ2. What managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce and how are they handled?

Interpretation of the Findings by Group and Research Question

The data obtained from the individual interviews, focus group, and manager interviews showed similarities and a few differences. The themes were work values and conflicts, communication differences, productivity, work-life balance, leadership styles, organizational changes, and the future of the public sector.

I categorized the findings based on themes derived from participants' responses. The emergent themes were centered on generational differences and management. Regarding generational differences, the participants reported work values and conflicts, methods of communication, productivity, and work-life balance. Regarding management,

participants focused on leadership styles, organizational changes, and the future of the public sector.

Group 1: Individual Interviews and Research Question 1

The first research question for this qualitative descriptive case study focused on how generational characteristics manifested in the workplace. The themes for this research question were work values and conflicts, methods of communication, productivity, and work-life balance. The responses to Interview Questions 5, 6, and 7 provided common themes from the participants in this group. The veteran cohort all agreed that the millennials entering the workplace do not respect authority. The responses suggest that communication barriers are prevalent among the different generational cohorts. The responses from the participants regarding productivity were similar, with each person agreeing that teamwork was very important for a productive workplace. Regarding the theme of work-life balance, the veteran cohort was the only cohort that did not agree with this new concept in the workplace.

Group 1: Individual Interviews and Research Question 2

The second research question for this qualitative descriptive case study focused on the managerial issues that arise from a multigenerational workforce and how they are handled. The themes for this research question were leadership styles, organizational changes, and the future of the public sector. The responses to Interview Questions 9, 10, and 11 provided common themes from the participants in this group. The responses on the theme of leadership style were mixed. The baby boomers felt managers need to focus

on teambuilding. Gen-Xers felt that managers need additional training, and the millennials wanted to be mentored by leaders in the organization. The themes of organizational change and the future of the public sector were blended, because the responses could have been for either question. Most of the members of the veteran cohort felt the current and future changes were too relaxed compared to their approach to work, whereas the baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and especially the millennials were looking forward to changes and the future of the public sector.

Group 2: Focus Group and Research Question 1

The first research question for this qualitative descriptive case study focused on how generational characteristics manifest in the workplace. The themes for this research question were work values and conflicts, methods of communication, productivity, and work-life balance. The focus group was asked the same questions as the first group. The responses from Questions 5, 6, and 7 included a lively discussion from the participants. The veterans from the focus group were very vocal with their opinion on work values, while the Gen-Xers felt as if the baby boomers played the role of a parent in the workplace. On the topic of communication, the veterans felt the millennials were needy and too dependent on technological devices. For the theme of work-life balance, the baby boomers and Gen-Xers saw the importance of this more so than the veterans did.

Group 2: Focus Group and Research Question 2

The second research question for this qualitative descriptive case study focused on the managerial issues that arise due to a multigenerational workforce and how these

issues are handled. The themes for this research question were leadership styles, organizational changes, and the future of the public sector. The responses from the focus group session were very similar to the responses from the individual interviews. Questions 9, 10, and 11 provided common responses from the participants in the focus group. The leadership style was not addressed by anyone in the focus group session. The baby boomers and millennials agreed that a mentoring program would be a good idea to prepare future leaders. The responses from the focus group on the themes of organizational change and the future of the public sector were blended, or could have been for either question. Baby boomers and Gen-Xers agreed that the workplace has become more relaxed and flexible.

Group 3: Public Sector Managers and Research Question 1

The first research question for this qualitative descriptive case study focused on how generational characteristics manifest in the workplace. The themes for this research question were work values and conflicts, methods of communication, productivity, and work-life balance. The responses to Interview Questions 1,2,3,4, and 5 were similar for participants in this group. The responses from the individual managers showed that each of the managers understood the work values of each of the generational cohorts. On the theme of communication methods, all the managers recognized the value of the technological devices they use to share information with their staff. There were some very important points made on productivity from the managers. The veterans felt that it was important to present clear expectations for employees. The baby boomers, Gen-Xers,

and millennials agreed that they do not like to micromanage their employees. For the theme of work-life balance, the veteran manager did not agree with catering to the needs of employees, whereas the baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and millennials saw the importance of work-life balance.

Group 3: Public Sector Managers and Research Question 2

The second research question for this qualitative descriptive case study focused on the managerial issues that arise due to a multigenerational workforce and how they are handled. The themes for this research questions were leadership strategies, organizational changes, and the future of the public sector. Manager's responses to Interview Questions 7, 9, and 11, were similar. However, the responses on leadership strategies were not the same. The veterans and baby boomer managers agreed on providing clear direction and expectations. The Gen-Xers and millennials did not provide a clear response to the question on leadership strategies. When asked about organizational changes, the veteran manager felt the public sector has gotten soft, whereas, the baby boomer and millennials welcomed changes in the workplace. The managers in this study agreed the future of the public sector is going to change. The veterans felt the public sector had become more focused on the needs of employees and not the employer. The responses on the future of the public sector were very vague from Gen-Xers and millennials.

Interpretation of the Findings by Researcher

The data was collected from participants that were a part of three different groups. The groups consisted of individual interviews with non-managers, focus group session,

and individual interviews with managers. The data collected were honest and provided insight to their experiences working in a multigenerational workforce. Reviewing the transcripts provided me with a picture of the how members of the generational cohorts attempted to work together as a team and how open to the difference and similar approaches work.

The data collected was aligned with the literature research of the generational cohorts' approach to work based on their core values and backgrounds. I was surprised how the data collected from the three different groups were similar in nature. The first group was individual interviews, the second group was a focus group discussion, and the third group was individual interviews with managers. I was surprised to see the data collected was similar between group one and two because these two groups were asked the same questions but in a different setting. In the focus group, the participants appeared to be at ease and were open to response to the questions asked. During the focus group discussion, I was surprised to see how respectful and open the participants were to each other, as they shared their experiences. From the experience of working with the focus group, I see the value in collecting data using this method.

Limitations of the Study

The three limitations identified in Chapter 1 were worldviews of the participants of each of the generational cohorts, researcher bias, and honesty of participants' responses. Chavez (2015) shared that worldview has set the generational cohorts apart from each other. I avoided sharing my experiences and views to ensure that I remained

unbiased during the data collection process (Berger, 2015). Guillemin, et al. (2016) noted that qualitative researchers hope that all participants will provide honest feedback. These limitations did not affect how the data was collected or analyzed.

During data collection, four different managers insisted on a one-on-one lunch meeting for their interview. The lunch meeting was held in a public restaurant, but we were able to sit at a table at the rear of the restaurant to conduct the interview. because we were sitting at the rear of the restaurant during a late lunch, I used the digital recorder to capture their responses to the interview questions. I also recorded their responses with handwritten notes, because there was some noise from the other patrons in the restaurant. After each of the individual interviews at the restaurant with these four managers, I e-mailed each of the managers a transcript of their interview to review. Based on the feedback from each of the interviewees' review of the transcripts, the transcriptions were correct.

As a novice researcher, I may not have been fully equipped with the interview skills of a seasoned researcher to gather data for this study. However, I prepared for each interview by reviewing each of the questions and reviewing the interview process of other researchers on how they collected data from interviewing and facilitating a focus group. I enjoyed the data collection process of this study, and I was surprised by how similar the responses were from the individual interviews and the focus group session. The focus group had a natural flow and ease, and the participants of the focus group were open to the opinions of each other and treated each other with respect during the session.

Because the focus group participants felt at ease to share their opinions, my role as the researcher remained objective during discussion.

Recommendations for Future Study

The research problem in this case study focused on the challenges of leading a multigenerational workforce. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether the macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. The findings from this study warrant additional exploration of strategies managing a multigenerational workforce. The workforce landscape has changed, and managers in the public sector must address the challenges to ensure efficient operations and organizational success (Cordella, & Tempini, 2015). Future researchers should conduct studies to explore problems that were not covered to address the limitations and delimitations in this study.

I have four recommendations for additional research on managing a multigenerational workforce. The first is a study comparing multigenerational management strategies of private- versus public sector organizations. A second recommendation is exploring whether diversity management has any impact on how leaders in the public sector lead a multigenerational workforce and whether this is instrumental in an organization's success (Cloutier, et al. 2015). The third recommendation is a longitudinal study to identify the changes in the leadership style of Gen Xers and millennials as they age. The fourth recommendation is to use technology to gather data. The use of the iPad was instrumental in data collection for my study. The

iPad may provide future researchers with the opportunity to collect verbal and non-verbal cues from participants.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may bring positive social change to a multigenerational workforce. The results of this study provide managers and employees with a deeper understanding of the generational differences in the workplace. The review of the literature revealed limited studies on how to lead and manage a multigenerational workforce in the public sector to optimize employee productivity and team cohesion. A more in-depth understanding of the working values of each of the generational cohorts may be beneficial to managers in the public sector to increase productivity and reduce conflicts in the workplace.

Several researchers indicated that a well-functioning, multigenerational workplace has leaders who recognize that different generations have different work ethics and communication styles (Hernaus, & Pološki Vokic, 2014; Hillman, 2014; Jobe, 2014). By acknowledging and understanding generational diversity, managers may foster a work environment in which all members of the organization are productive and work together as a unified team. Stereotyping and lack of generational understanding yield negative workplace outcomes and dissatisfaction that can lead to decreased productivity and increased employee dissatisfaction and turnover rates (Cadiz, Truxillo, & Fraccaroli, 2015).

Reflection

Working on this research project presented quite a few challenges to me. I never realized the amount of time, effort, and information needed to conduct a study. The doctoral process was complex, intimidating, and demanding. The best advice I would offer a new doctoral candidate would be to have a detailed timeline or action plan for successful completion. I learned from the dissertation process that minimizing bias, using an objective approach, and being thorough are essential elements in creating a credible and knowledgeable study.

There are two important points I would recommend to a doctoral candidate to be successful on this journey. The first thing a doctoral candidate needs to have is a supportive structure consisting of family and friends to provide encouragement. The second thing is to have an open heart and ear to listen to the advice of their committee chair, committee members, and University Research Reviewer. These people are very valuable and play an important role in your development as a doctoral candidate. The findings of this study affected me personally as a human resource representative for the public sector. The human element of the public sector workforce continues to fascinate and inspire further inquiry. By having an opportunity to work with all four generations in the public sector, I continue to be amazed by their dedication and service.

Conclusions

Since the turn of the 21st century, the U.S. workplace has undergone several demographic changes (McCollum & Na'Desh, 2015). One of those changes is the

presence of two or more different generations working together. This demographic change in the U.S. workplace may challenge the way managers in the public sector lead the workforce (Brecton, Walker, & Jones-Farmer, 2014). Managers who lead a multigenerational workforce need to have an understanding of each of the orientation of the cohorts in the workplace to curb conflicts and provide a productive work environment.

I achieved the purpose of this study, which was to explore macro-level descriptions of generations create stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. The findings defined in this study provided the differences between the four cohorts in the workplace and introduced Generation Z. The emergent themes identified in this study were work values, communication differences, productivity, work-life balance, leadership styles, changes in the public sector, organizational changes, and the future of the public sector. These themes had the most significance, relevance, and importance in answering the specific question for this study along with the research questions. New research may provide insight to scholars and public sector leaders on leading a multigenerational workforce in the public sector.

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Appendix A:

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study to explore whether the overall description of the four generational cohorts in the workplace is a true description of their behavior in the workplace. Through this study, I hope determine whether there are intergenerational conflicts in the workplace that can be attributed to the generational differences. The researcher is inviting public sector employees who have experience working in a multigenerational workforce to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Cynthia A. Thompson, who is a Doctor of Management candidate at Walden University. The researcher is conducting this study in her capacity as a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore whether the macro-level descriptions of different generations created stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I hope to find out if there are intergenerational conflicts in the workplace that can be attributed to generational differences.

Definitions:

Diversity management: An extensive managerial approach that depends on a positive climate for all employees (Sezere & Tonus, 2014).

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a single interview requiring no more than 45-60 minutes of your time.
- Agree to have the interview audiotaped for later transcription and analysis by the researcher.
- Review a copy of the initial study findings and conclusions provided to you by the researcher and to provide the researcher with feedback on the accuracy of the findings and conclusions.

The researcher will provide you with a copy of the transcript from your interview and you will have the opportunity to review and concur with the transcript contents prior to the researcher proceeding with analysis of the transcript contents. At the completion of the study, the researcher will provide you with a brief document (no more than two pages in length) that summarizes findings, recommendations, and conclusions from the study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the City of Charlotte will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as emotional stress or physical, social, legal risks, or becoming upset should sensitive topics arise for discussion that are greater than anyone would normally experience in his or her daily routine or during the performance of regular physical or mental test or examination. The risk of such discomforts occurring is, however, considered to be low. Additionally, the researcher will endeavor to ensure that the potential for personal discomfort is kept to a minimum during conduct of the interview. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. Participation in the study will provide you with the opportunity to share your knowledge, thoughts, and experiences on generational differences and diversity management.

Payment:

This study is voluntary. You will not be provided with any thank you gifts, compensation, or reimbursement (for travel costs, etc.) in exchange for your participation in this study. Your decision regarding whether or not to participate in the interview and provide documents will be respected, and you will not be treated differently by the researcher should you elect not to participate. If you decide to participate in the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may end your participation in the study at any time.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the

researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Any hard copies of data (e.g., printed interview transcripts used for notation and analysis) will be stored by the researcher in a lockable container. Electronic data will be kept secure by participant identification and archival on a password protected laptop computer accessible only to the researcher. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Should you have questions later, you may contact Cynthia Thompson via cynthia.thompson@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. Dr. Endicott is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent", in the subject line, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. I will provide you with a copy of the consent form at our meeting.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of Consent

Participant's Written or Electronic*

Signature

Researcher’s Written or Electronic*

Signature

* Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person’s typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix B:

Interview Questions for the Generational Cohorts

Demographical Information:

Please check your birth year range:

- 1925-1945 _____
- 1946-1964 _____
- 1965-1981 _____
- 1982-1999 _____

How many years of service have you had in the public sector:

- 0-5 years _____
- 5-10 years _____
- 10-15 years _____
- 15-20 years _____
- 20-25 years _____
- 25- 30 years _____

Questions for the interview are as follows:

1. What year were you born?
2. How many years of service have you had in the public sector?
3. What is your current occupation?

4. Describe a situation you have had with regard with working what someone that is in a difference generational cohort than the one that you are a part of?
5. Describe some of the conflicts you have experiences working with people from a different generational cohort than yours.
6. What impact do you believe members of each generation have on getting the job completed in your organization?
7. How do you perceive generational differences will impact your organization in the next five years, compared to today?
8. What actions can managers take to increase their understanding of an age diverse workforce?
9. What can managers do to increase employees of a multigenerational work environment work together successfully?
10. What type of organizational changes do you think would increase productivity in a mutigenerational workforce?
11. What types of major organizational changes have you experienced based on generational differences?
12. What would you like to add that I did not ask?

Appendix C:

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study to explore whether the overall description of the four generational cohorts in the workplace is a true description of their behavior in the workplace. Through this study, I hope to determine whether there are intergenerational conflicts in the workplace that can be attributed to the generational differences. The researcher is inviting public sector employees who have experience working in a multigenerational workforce to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Cynthia A. Thompson, who is a Doctor of Management candidate at Walden University. The researcher is conducting this study in her capacity as a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore whether or not the macro-level descriptions of different generations create stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I hope to find out if there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace.

Definitions:

Diversity management: An extensive managerial approach that depends on a positive climate for all employees (Sezerel & Tonus, 2014).

Strategic diversity management: A leadership-driven systems approach in which organizational policies, practices, and the workforce promote inclusion and address the needs of diverse staff and communities through cultural and linguistic competence (Dreachslin, Gilbert, & Malone, 2013).

Workforce diversity: The variety of differences between people in an organization. Diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education background, and more (Sreedhar, 2011).

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a focus group session requiring no more than 120 minutes of your time.
- Agree to have the interview audiotaped for later transcription and analysis by the researcher.
- Review a copy of the initial study findings and conclusions provided to you by the researcher and to provide the researcher with feedback on the accuracy of the findings and conclusions.

The researcher will provide you with a copy of the transcript from your interview and you will have the opportunity to review and concur with the transcript contents prior to the researcher proceeding with analysis of the transcript contents. At the completion of

the study, the researcher will provide you with a brief document (no more than two pages in length) that summarizes findings, recommendations, and conclusions from the study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the City of Charlotte will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as emotional stress or physical, social, legal risks, or becoming upset should sensitive topics arise for discussion that are greater than anyone would normally experience in his or her daily routine or during the performance of regular physical or mental test or examination. The risk of such discomforts occurring is, however, considered to be low. Additionally, the researcher will endeavor to ensure that the potential for personal discomfort is kept to a minimum during conduct of the interview. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Participation in the study will provide you with the opportunity to share your knowledge, thoughts, and experiences on generational differences and diversity management.

Payment:

This study is voluntary. You will not be provided with any thank you gifts, compensation, or reimbursement (for travel costs, etc.) in exchange for your participation

in this study. Your decision regarding whether or not to participate in the interview and provide documents will be respected, and you will not be treated differently by the researcher should you elect not to participate. If you decide to participate in the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may end your participation in the study at any time.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Any hard copies of data (e.g., printed interview transcripts used for notation and analysis) will be stored by the researcher in a lockable container. Electronic data will be kept secure by participant identification and archival on a password protected laptop computer accessible only to the researcher. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Should you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone or e-mail. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. Dr. Endicott is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, “I consent”, in the subject line, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. I will provide you with a copy of the consent form at our meeting.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of Consent

Participant’s Written or Electronic*

Signature

Researcher’s Written or Electronic*

Signature

* Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person’s typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Questions

Demographical Information:

Please check your birth year range:

- 1925-1945 _____
- 1946-1964 _____
- 1965-1981 _____
- 1982-1999 _____

How many years of service have you had in the public sector:

- 0-5 years _____
- 5-10 years _____
- 10-15 years _____
- 15-20 years _____
- 20-25 years _____
- 25- 30 years _____

Questions for the interview are as follows:

1. What year were you born?
2. How many years of service have you had in the public sector?
3. What is your current occupation?

4. Describe a situation you have had with regard with working what someone that is in a difference generational cohort than the one that you are a part of?
5. Describe some of the conflicts you have experiences working with people from a different generational cohort than yours.
6. What impact do you believe members of each generation have on getting the job completed in your organization?
7. How do you perceive generational differences will impact your organization in the next five years, compared to today?
8. What actions can managers take to increase their understanding of an age diverse workforce?
9. What can managers do to increase employees of a multigenerational work environment work together successfully?
10. What type of organizational changes do you think would increase productivity in a mutigenerational workforce?
11. What types of major organizational changes have you experienced based on generational differences?
12. What would you like to add that I did not ask?

Appendix E:

Cover Letter

Date

Dear _____:

My name is Cynthia Thompson, and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Management at Walden University. I am conducting my dissertation research to explore whether or not the macro-level descriptions of different generations create stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I hope to find out if there are intergenerational conflicts in the workplace that can be attributed to generational descriptors that are manifested in a particular workplace. My study is intended to explore the following question: How do the generational characteristics manifest themselves in the workplace, and what managerial issues arise regarding a multigenerational workforce and how they are handled? Based on your experiences as a manager in the public sector, I would like to gather information from you in a one-on-one interview about your perceptions on how to lead a multigenerational workforce.

Your participation in my study will be instrumental in ensuring that data from a public sector manager in the state of North Carolina with direct knowledge of leading a multigenerational workforce will be included. If you decide to participate in my study, I will send you an informed consent form via e-mail for your review and signature. This informed consent form provides background information on the study and outlines your

rights of this study. Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

I thank you in advance for your consideration and your support of my study.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Thompson

Appendix F

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study to explore whether the overall description of the four generational cohorts in the workplace is a true description of their behavior in the workplace. Through this study, I hope to discover if there are intergenerational conflicts in the workplace that can be attributed to the generational differences. The researcher is inviting public sector employees who have experience working in a multigenerational workforce to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Cynthia A. Thompson, who is a Doctor of Management candidate at Walden University. The researcher is conducting this study in her capacity as a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore whether macro-level descriptions of different generations create stereotypes or recognizable indicators of behavior in the workplace. I hope to find out if there are intergenerational conflicts and problems in the workplace that can be attributed to the manifestation of generational descriptors in a particular workplace.

Definitions:

Diversity management: An extensive managerial approach that depends on a positive climate for all employees (Sezerel & Tonus, 2014).

Multigenerational leadership: Leaders who adapt their attitudes about rewards, work styles, communication preferences, and motivators to match generational expectations (Ballone, 2009).

Strategic diversity management: A leadership-driven systems approach in which organizational policies, practices, and the workforce promote inclusion and address the needs of diverse staff and communities through cultural and linguistic competence (Dreachslin, Gilbert, & Malone, 2013).

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a single interview requiring no more than 45-60 minutes of your time.
- Agree to have the interview audiotaped for later transcription and analysis by the researcher.
- Review a copy of the initial study findings and conclusions provided to you by the researcher and to provide the researcher with feedback on the accuracy of the findings and conclusions.

At the completion of the study, the researcher will provide you with a brief document (no more than two pages in length) that summarizes findings, recommendations, and conclusions from the study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the City of Charlotte will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as emotional stress or physical, social, legal risks, or becoming upset should sensitive topics arise for discussion that are greater than anyone would normally experience in his or her daily routine or during the performance of regular physical or mental test or examination. The risk of such discomforts occurring is, however, considered to be low. Additionally, the researcher will endeavor to ensure that the potential for personal discomfort is kept to a minimum during conduct of the interview. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. Participation in the study will provide you with the opportunity to share your knowledge, thoughts, and experiences on generational differences and diversity management.

Payment:

This study is voluntary. You will not be provided with any thank you gifts, compensation, or reimbursement (for travel costs, etc.) in exchange for your participation in this study. Your decision regarding whether or not to participate in the interview and provide documents will be respected, and you will not be treated differently by the researcher should you elect not to participate. If you decide to participate in the study

now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may end your participation in the study at any time.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Any hard copies of data (e.g., printed interview transcripts used for notation and analysis) will be stored by the researcher in a lockable container. Electronic data will be kept secure by participant identification and archival on a password protected laptop computer accessible only to the researcher. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Should you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone or e-mail. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. Dr. Endicott is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent", in

the subject line, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. I will provide you with a copy of the consent form at our meeting.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of Consent

Participant's Written or Electronic*

Signature

Researcher's Written or Electronic*

Signature

* Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

Appendix G

Interview Questions for Public Sector Managers

Demographical Information:

Please check your birth year range:

- 1925-1945 _____
- 1946-1964 _____
- 1965-1981 _____
- 1982-1999 _____

How many years of service have you had in the public sector:

- 0-5 years _____
- 5-10 years _____
- 10-15 years _____
- 15-20 years _____
- 20-25 years _____
- 25- 30 years _____

How many years have you been in a leadership role in the public sector?

- 0-5 years _____
- 5-10 years _____
- 10-15 years _____
- 15-20 years _____

- 20-25 years _____
- 25- 30 years _____

1. Have you experienced any conflicts that you consider due to the different values held by someone of a different generation?
2. How would you describe the work values of employees of each of the generational cohorts that you have had a chance to lead?
3. Have you had to address the work-life balance issues, and how did you handle these request?
4. Which method of communicating information to your staff do you use, and have you found that the one you use is the most effective method for a multigenerational workforce?
5. Describe your approach to ensure productivity in a multigenerational workforce, and do you use a different approach based on the generational cohorts you are leading?
6. What challenges do you feel may be hindering acceptance of your generation by others (older/younger/both)
7. What challenges do you feel may be hindering acceptance of your generation by others (older/younger/both)?
8. What do you think will help other generations (older/younger/both) understand and accept your generation better?

9. What leadership strategies have been the most and least effective for you in managing a multigenerational workforce?
10. What types of major organizational changes have you experienced based on generational differences?
11. How do you perceive generational differences will impact your organization in the next five years, compared to today?