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Strategies for Motivating a Multigenerational Workforce

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2018

Abstract

Strategies for Motivating a Multigenerational Workforce

by

Avon D. Cornelius II

MA, Webster University, 2007

BA, Hampton University, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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August 2018

Abstract

The multigenerational workforce creates leadership challenges for business managers, and the members of each generational group have different factors that motivate them. Failure to motivate a multigenerational workforce can lead to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, high turnover rates, and reduced profits. The purpose of this single case study was to explore the strategies that marketing managers in a Maryland-based marketing firm use to motivate a multigenerational workforce using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The study comprised 7 marketing managers who have experience motivating a multigenerational workforce. The data collection process for this study consisted of semistructured interviews, observation, and member checking to explore successful strategies for motivating members of the multigenerational workforce. The data analysis used to examine the research for this study consisted of data coding, organizing, and making conclusions using methodical triangulation. In this study, methodical triangulation was used to confirm findings, increase validity, and enhance understanding. During the analysis, the 4 themes that emerged were communication and connecting, teamwork and collaboration, training and development, and rewards and recognition. By implementing the identified strategies, these marketing managers were able to motivate members of the multigenerational workforce. These findings indicate that there are specific strategies leaders can use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The implications for positive social change include potential to foster better understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the members of the multigenerational workforce as well as improved community relations.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my family who has supported me in all things. To my wife Raven, thank you for supporting me and sharing this experience with me. To my children, Kiara, Javon, Kiana, and Avon III, thank you for motivating me to be better for all of you. I would also like to thank my parents, Avon Sr. and Dr. Judith Cornelius for being the best parents and role models I could have.

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I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to my chair, Dr. Jaime Klein and my second committee member, Dr. Janie Hall. Thank you both for your support during this journey. Thank you for your guidance and motivation throughout this process. I would not have been able to complete this accomplishment without you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The modern business environment has become increasingly complex. There are currently five unique generational cohorts in the workplace. The rapidly changing business environment presents challenges involving multigenerational diversity. The different values, attitudes, and beliefs of these generational cohorts may affect productivity (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016). Opportunities and challenges emerge as generational diversity increases in the multigenerational workforce (Mencl & Lester, 2014). The focus of this study was to explore strategies managers can use to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Background of the Problem

The modern workforce consists of five generations: Traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z (Clark, 2017). Turner (2015) noted that each of these generational groups has different factors that motivate them. Generational cohort contributes to personality and working styles that create challenges for leadership (Eastland & Clark, 2015). Employee motivation affects all aspects of business. Therefore, it is imperative that managers understand how to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Some marketing managers lack strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The primary role of business leaders is to motivate employees and manage conflict (Sonnentag, Unger, & Nagel, 2013). Lack of employee motivation can lead to increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, high turnover, and reduced profits (Mikkelsen, Jacobsen, & Andersen, 2017). Motivating across generational boundaries creates challenges for leadership.

The focus of this study was to examine strategies that marketing managers in a Maryland-based firm use to improve productivity among members of a multigenerational workforce. The implications for social change included identifying strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Understanding what motivates the multigenerational workforce could foster increased acceptance and appreciation for the different generations in the workforce.

Problem Statement

Five generations of workers share the workforce for the first time in history, and each of these generational groups has different factors that motivate them (Turner, 2015). Millennials recently surpassed Generation X as 34% of employees (Clark, 2017). The general business problem is that motivating across generational boundaries creates leadership challenges. The specific business problem is some marketing managers lack strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The target population for this study included seven managers at a Maryland-based marketing agency who have successfully motivated multiple generations of employees. The implications for social change include identifying strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The findings could improve business practices and increase employee productivity. This increased productivity could ensure organizational sustainability and enable organizations to increase financial support to the local community. Additional

implications for social change include fostering better understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the members of the multigenerational workforce.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative methodology for this study to explore the strategies marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The qualitative research method was the most appropriate for this study, as qualitative researchers seek to understand lived experiences in real-world situations (Leppink, 2017). Quantitative and mixed methodologies were not appropriate for this study. I did not use a quantitative methodology because I explored strategies rather than examined the variables' relationships. A mixed method researcher uses a blend of qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Leppink, 2017). Therefore, a mixed method approach was not appropriate for this study because I did not use the quantitative component.

I used a qualitative single case study design for my study. Other qualitative designs including descriptive, ethnographic, grounded, narrative, and phenomenological were not appropriate for this study. A researcher using a descriptive design produces a representation of people, events, or situations (Franklin, 2012). Researchers using an ethnographic design study cultures over an extended period, which was not the goal of my study. Grounded theory researchers construct theories through data analysis (Franklin, 2012; Wise & Paulus, 2016). I did not generate theory; therefore, I did not use grounded theory. The goal of the narrative design is to reconstruct participants' experiences into narratives (Franklin, 2012). Therefore, I did not utilize the narrative design. Researchers using a phenomenological design focus on the meanings of

participants' lived experiences (Franklin, 2012). I did not use a phenomenological design since I did not seek to explore the meanings of participants' perceptions with experiencing a specific, definable phenomenon.

Research Question

What strategies do marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to motivate a multigenerational workforce?
2. How has your organization assessed the effectiveness of the strategies for motivating members of the different generational groups?
3. What strategies are most effective motivating members of the different generational groups?
4. What strategies are least effective motivating members of the different generational groups?
5. What else would you like to add regarding strategies used to motivate a multigenerational workforce?

Conceptual Framework

Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs theory to better understand employee motivation in 1943 (Maslow, 1943). Maslow indicated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs, and that some needs take precedence over others (Maslow, 1943). Maslow described a five-stage model that includes physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). The phases of

the five-stage model are related; higher needs emerge as individuals achieve lower needs. As applied to this study, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory indicates individuals are motivated by the same general needs. Once their basic needs are met, individuals can produce work or services that are of benefit to other community citizens.

Operational Definitions

Baby Boomers: Baby boomers are members of a generational cohort born between 1946 and 1964 (Clark, 2017). Baby boomers are the largest generational group, accounting for more than 45 percent of the workforce (Andert, 2011).

Generational Cohort: Generational cohort refers to a group of individuals with a shared set of experiences that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors (Clark, 2017).

Generation X: Generation X, also referred to as the *Latchkey Generation* or the *Lost Generation*, is a generational cohort whose members were born between 1965 and 1980 (Clark, 2017). This group comprises approximately 34 percent of the current workforce (Andert, 201).

Gen Z: Gen Z is the generational cohort whose members were born on or after the year 2000. They are also known as *Linsters* or the *iGeneration* (Clark, 2017). Members of the Gen Z cohort are the newest segment of the workforce (Andert, 2011).

Millennials: Millennials, also called *Generation Y* or *Nexters*, are members of a generational cohort born between 1980 and 2000 (Clark, 2017). This cohort comprises approximately 20 percent of the workforce (Andert, 2011).

Traditionalists: Traditionalists are members of the generational cohort born

before 1945. They are also known as *Veterans* or the *Silent Generation* (Clark, 2017). This cohort is the smallest and oldest segment of the workforce (Andert, 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions are conditions accepted as true, despite absent or limited evidence of this truth (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). I have identified three assumptions for this research. The first assumption was that the participant pool would have the requisite knowledge and skills necessary for the research. The second assumption was that the participants would be willing and able to share their experiences and perceptions of the multigenerational workforce. The third assumption was that the participants would answer truthfully.

Limitations are weaknesses that potentially limit the validity of research (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). I have identified three limitations for this research: researcher bias, participant bias, and participant recall. Researcher bias is a conscious or subconscious attempt by the researcher to introduce bias during the conduct of the research (Helmich, Boerebach, Arah, & Lingard, 2015). Participant bias occurs when participants attempt to construct an account that hides some data or presents the participant in a positive role or situation (Helmich et al., 2015). Participants may also not recall or accurately articulate events as they occurred (Helmich et al., 2015).

Delimitations are boundaries to which research is deliberately confined (Pyrczak & Bruce, 2017). The delimitations for this research were location and population. Choosing Maryland as a location narrowed the scope of the research. Additionally, the participants were limited to seven marketing managers with experience leading a

multigenerational workforce.

Significance of the Study

This qualitative study is significant because employee motivation affects all aspects of business. The goal of this study was to explore successful employee motivation strategies used by effective managers to contribute to increased knowledge in the marketing industry and benefit social change for the wider business community. The below subheadings describe contributions to business practice and implications for social change which were two vital components of this study.

Contributions to Business Practice

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Lack of employee motivation can lead to increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, high turnover, and reduced profits (Mikkelsen et al., 2017). The findings identified in this study have the potential to help similar organizational leaders mitigate profit loss by recruiting and retaining trained individuals from the five generations currently occupying the workforce. Similar corporate leaders, training professionals, human resource officials, and managers can use these strategies to increase motivation and decrease conflict among employees.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for social change include providing business leaders with increased knowledge of strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. These findings could foster increased acceptance, appreciation, employment, and promotion opportunities for different generations of applicants. Additionally, these findings have

potential to enhance community relations through the identification of generational differences and to create a better understanding of these differences to foster lasting relationships among the generations.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Organizations are encountering an increasingly more diverse set of employees (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). Thus, the study of generational differences has become a prevalent research topic. In this study, I built on existing research on the topic of employee motivation and demonstrated the need for further research.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was the conceptual framework for this study. Supporting theories included McClelland's needs theory and Erikson's theory of psychological development. Contrasting theories included equity theory and expectancy theory. The work values of different generations create misunderstandings and negatively impact productivity. The multigenerational workforce requires a change in leadership styles.

The purpose of this literature review was to analyze literature featuring strategies to motivate across generational boundaries. I provided published research and documentation on generational differences in areas that impact motivation. Through this literature review, I informed the content and the choice to study. The resources that I used for this literature review included online databases such as Academic Search, EBSCO, Google Scholar, and ProQuest obtained through the Walden University Library. An

initial search garnered several resources on the research topic. All literature used for this literature review was qualitative or quantitative in nature and current within 5 years. The key terms used for the literature search included *generation, generational, multigenerational, motivation, motivate,* and *motivational*. The scope of literature ranged from 1943-2017 and covered 10 different industries and three continents.

Defining the Current Workforce

The workplace is becoming increasingly diverse, with many companies making efforts to employ workers from different backgrounds. For the first time, the United States has five generations of people working alongside one another (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). The five generations in the workplace are Traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z. As work-life expectancy is expanding, many employees find themselves still employed at 75, extending the overlap between generations (Clark, 2017). Researchers have determined that each generation shares values, goals, and beliefs that define and differentiate them from other generational groups (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014; Clark, 2017; Gay, Lynxwiler, & Smith, 2015; Hernaus & Vokic, 2014).

Generational workplace diversity changes may pose challenges for employers. Badley, Canizares, Perruccio, Hogg-Johnson and Gignac (2015) described how the mix of generations in the workforce presents challenges for managers. These challenges also create opportunities. Employees create psychological contracts with their employers that reflect their values and attitudes toward work (Vasantha, 2016). These contracts are

informal agreements between employees and employers. Thus, it is imperative for leaders to understand each of these groups.

To understand these groups, it is important to classify them by generational cohort. Once aligned by cohort, these groups can be classified based on shared goals, values, and beliefs that differentiate them from other groups. While there is continued debate on naming conventions and birth years of these groups, in this literature review, I will use the generations as defined by Al-Asfour and Lettau (2014), Clark (2017), Gay et al. (2015), and Hernaus and Vokic (2014).

Traditionalists. Traditionalists were born between 1922 and 1945 (Clark, 2017). They are the smallest and oldest sector of the workforce, accounting for four percent of the total work population (Clark, 2017). Traditionalists' core values include dedication, hard work, and respect for authority (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). Traditionalists' lives are defined by moments such as The Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, and the rise of labor unions (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014; Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). Thus, this generational cohort respects duty to their nation and their family and is cautious of new and unfamiliar things (Gay et al., 2015).

Baby Boomers. Baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 (Clark, 2017). Many of the members of this cohort continue to work into their late 60s and early 70s (Badley et al., 2015; Hogg-Johnson & Gignac, 2015). They are the largest generational group, accounting for more than 45%of the workforce (Clark, 2017). Thus, they have had a significant impact on society and the modern workplace. Their core values include optimism, personal gratification, and growth (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). They grew up

during a period of prosperity in the United States. Money, titles, and recognition motivate

them (Holian, 2015; Vasantha, 2016). Their lives are defined by the Civil Rights

movement, women's liberation, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, Woodstock,

and the rise of television (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014).

Generation X. Generation X was born between 1965 and 1980 (Clark, 2017).

Generation X represents approximately 34% of the current workforce (Clark, 2017).

They are the children of compulsive workers from the previous generational cohort,

which shapes their views about work, money, titles, and recognition (Becton, Walker, &

Farmer-Jones, 2014). Their core values include diversity, being technologically savvy,

and informality (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). Their lives are defined by the AIDS

epidemic and oil embargo (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014).

Millennials. Millennials were born between 1981 and 1995 (Clark, 2017). This

group comprises about 20% of the workforce (Clark, 2017). They are the largest

generational cohort to enter the workforce since the baby boomers (Erlam, Smythe, and

Wright, 2016; Vasantha, 2016). Their core values include optimism, civic duty, and

confidence (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). Their lives are defined by times of major

transition: the Oklahoma City bombing and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001

(Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014).

Gen Z. Gen Z was born on or after the year 1996. They are the most racially and

ethnically diverse generational group (Clark, 2017). Their core values include

fearlessness, boldness, and achievement (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). They have shown

signs of being comfortable pursuing opportunities outside of the traditional workplace,

including entrepreneurial ventures, and they are willing to take a personal risk if they believe they have more to gain (Loveland, 2017). Their lives are defined by rapid technological advances (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014).

Issues with Cohorts

To better understand the concept of generational cohort, it is imperative to look at the history of the phrase. As described by Fernández-Durán (2016), the concept of cohorts seeks to respond to a common problem identified in research: how to define generations of people across multiple families? Thus, *cohort* was developed as a term used to describe groups of individuals who are born during the same time period and experience life together (Fernández-Durán, 2016; Krahn & Galambos, 2014). Mannheim (1929) created the central constructs of generations widely considered in the field of sociology. These terms are essential to the study of generations. As described by Mannhiem (1929), generations are individuals sharing common events and experiences when they are born in the same historical period and same sociocultural context. Thus, generational cohorts are groups of people born around the same time and who share common life events, which leads to similar attitudes, motivations, values, and views. These similarities are the basis for future attitudes and behaviors (Fernández-Durán, 2016; Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Individuals enter into cohort groups based on members encountering similar events and trends at similar ages. Thus, cohort members develop a sense of collective ideas that are part of a cohort persona. For example, baby boomers witnessed the Vietnam War, which leads to feelings of cynicism about war and distrust in government (Clark, 2017).

Knowledge about generational cohorts is mostly theoretical, as boundaries between generations are not clear (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). Additionally, there is no conclusive empirical data regarding generational cohorts (Fernández-Durán, 2016; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Therefore, the concept of cohorts has received criticism for being too broad and too general in a rapidly changing environment. Mannheim (1929) described cohorts based on historical generations rather than succession over time. This conceptualization of time has created significant debate in the field of research. Influential life events include culture, media, press, peers, and war. However, the concept of time is complex, and the time factor leads to analytical imprecision. Thus, extant literature defines several different generations. Despite slight variance in birth date, members of each generation have their own attitudes, characteristics, and values. Therefore, a birth date, lineage, or cultural movement cannot seemingly define a cohort as a cohort represents a wide range of meaning and angles for analysis (Krahn & Galambos, 2014). However, research on sociological approaches to generations concludes that generations are found in social life as definitive groups of people (Hernaus & Vokic, 2014). Therefore, despite criticisms, framing generations as groups remains a leading approach in social science and a useful technique for researchers seeking to understand generational norms and differences.

Generational Differences: Views

Information gathered contributed to identifying generational differences among the five cohorts of employees currently occupying the workforce: Traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z (Haeger & Lingham, 2014; Hernaus, &

Vokic, 2014). Managing this diverse workforce of cohorts is essential to organizational sustainability. A cohort is a group of individuals who are born during the same time period and journey through life together (Clark, 2017). The cohort approach is effective when comparing the same age groups or over a certain time span. Generational cohort theory indicates that generational differences impact the values, morals, and work ethic of employees (Mannheim, 1929). Experiences related to dates of birth and shared experiences shape a generation (Ferri-Reed, 2014). Managers must understand these generational differences to develop strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. This information will also be used to identify gaps in research and explain the need for additional research.

The two older generational cohorts in the workforce are the Traditionalists and the baby boomers. Traditionalists respect authority and follow the rules (Clark, 2017). They were raised in an environment with traditional, clear-cut norms and values (Eastland & Clark, 2015). They appreciate structured work practices and conduct, which may place them at odds with younger generational cohorts who value flexibility. Baby boomers are the generational cohort following the Traditionalists. This cohort is hierarchical, job-focused, and highly motivated to climb the corporate ladder (Clark, 2017). They live to work and experience tension between the younger generations because they expect others to have the same work ethic (Gursoy, Geng-Qing Chi, & Kardag, 2013).

The next three groups represent the younger members of the workforce. However, the members of these cohorts all have different opinions, beliefs, and values that differentiate them from one another. Members of the Generation X cohort are

independent, entrepreneurial, cynical, and antihierarchy (Krahn & Galambos, 2014).

They work to live and view the world with cynicism and distrust (Gursoy et al., 2013).

The Millennial cohort strives for work/life balance, rapid career advancement, and

international travel **(**Krahn & Galambos, 2014). Having grown up with the Internet,

Millennials more technologically savvy than previous generational cohorts (Clark, 2017).

They demonstrate negative attitudes toward older adults (Krahn & Galambos, 2014). Gen

Z was born into the world of technology and cannot remember a time without it. Thus

they feel safe in that world, and it is principally important for them to be surrounded by it

at all times (Andrea, Gabriella, & Tímea, 2016). They also grew up in a time of constant

war after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Turner, 2015). Limited research

exists on this particular cohort, marking an area where additional research is required.

Generational Differences: Education

A major factor in workplace learning preference is generational cohort.

Generational differences influence how people learn. Managers must understand these

educational differences to effectively address the needs of the multigenerational

workforce, including learning preferences and technology use (Clark, 2017; Eastland &

Clark, 2015).

Education Level. Members of the five generational cohorts occupying the

workplace have vastly different experiences with regards to education. Traditionalists are

the least educated cohort with limited educational opportunities due to global conflicts

and economic depression (Wiedmer, 2015). Baby boomers experienced increased

educational opportunities, many being the first in their families to earn college degrees

(Clark, 2017; Eastland & Clark, 2015). They learned by lecture in classrooms. This learning style places them in a unique situation, at odds with the less educated Traditionalists, while not as educated or technologically advanced as Generation X, Millennial, and Gen Z cohorts. Due to rapid technological advances during their lifetime, Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z had access to a wealth of information and education opportunities at an early age, shaping their educational experiences unlike their predecessors (Clark, 2017). Generation X learned in classrooms and small group activities. They had access to computers and calculators at a young age. Millennials and Gen Z are digital natives. They learned predominately by computer, and their learning environments were flexible. Thus, these three generational cohorts bond over technology and share similar educational paths. However, Eastland and Clark (2015) noted these cohorts' short attention spans lead them to experience difficulties in traditional learning environments.

Traditional Learning vs. Online Learning. Online learning has emerged as a viable option to traditional learning. However, significant differences in educational preference exist among generational cohort groups. Traditionalists tend to train more slowly than other cohorts and can be resistant to new technology; thus this group prefers traditional face-to-face in classroom learning environments (Eastland & Clark, 2015). Baby boomers completed the majority of their learning traditionally, at "brick and mortar" institutions where they gained teamwork and relationship building skills that began to decrease with the rise of online learning that affected following generations (Clark, 2017). Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z have grown up with online learning

environments and are comfortable in these environments (Wiedmer, 2015). These cohorts

are technology savvy and expect and embrace change (Clark, 2017). However, the Gen Z

cohort struggles with social interaction in traditional classroom settings (Johnson &

Johnson, 2016). This change is due primarily to a shift in learning from the classroom to

online.

Digital Divide. The digital divide affects generations in the workforce in unique

ways. There is a clear digital divide between older and younger cohorts in the workplace

(Clark, 2017; Eastland & Clark, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2016; Wiedmer, 2015).

Having not grown up in a time of rapid technological advancements, members of the

Traditionalist and Baby Boomer cohorts have vastly different experiences with

technology compared to members of Generation X, Millennial, and Gen Z cohorts

(Johnson & Johnson, 2016). This experience places them at odds with younger cohorts in

the workplace. Volkom, Stapley, and Amaturo (2014) noted that older generations

expressed less interest in technology. Due to the rise of the Internet and cellular

communications that occurred during their formative years, members of Generation X are

comfortable with technology and are often early adopters of new technology (Wiedmer,

2015). Millennials grew up using computers, mobile phones, and tablets; they are

comfortable with technology and constantly connected to it (Eastland & Clark, 2015).

The Gen Z cohort is the most technology savvy and can easily grasp and adapt to new

technology (Clark, 2017). While technological advances are the most common reason for

change, there are social factors that bring about significant change as well.

Generational Differences: Workplace Behavior

Generational differences in the workplace can create challenges, as well as opportunities, for managers. Research provides empirical data that can be used by managers to understand how generational cohort affects workplace behaviors. This data is imperative to help organizational leaders build productive teams of members from the multigenerational workforce. Chen and Lian (2015) noted differences in the work values of the different generations in the workforce impact employee productivity. This research has implications for recruiting and retention, work ethic, expectations, and perceptions of other generations. Managers can utilize this information to manage a multigenerational workforce.

Recruiting and Retention. Becton et al. (2014) noted that older generations, including Traditionalists and baby boomers, display less job mobility, compared to the younger cohorts of Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Traditionalists and baby boomers also exhibited higher levels of compliance with organizational rules and regulations (Becton et al., 2014). However, Traditionalists have the highest levels of retention, based on loyalty to their organizations and actively seek jobs where promotion is based on job tenure and seniority (Clark, 2017). Baby boomers exhibit similar levels of retention to Traditionalists. However, this is based on their professional goals, not loyalty to their employers (Clark, 2017). On average, younger cohorts demonstrated higher turnover intentions compared to older cohorts (Clark, 2017). Generation X and Millennials value work life balance and do not display loyalty to a specific employer (Jobe, 2014). These two groups exhibited moderate levels retention (Becton et al., 2014;

Clark, 2017). While Gen Z displayed high levels of retention, this data is constrained by the fact that this cohort has only been in the workforce for a short period (Becton et al., 2014). Therefore, additional research is required to develop any significant trends for this cohort.

Work Ethic. Jobe (2014) noted similarities in work ethics of all the generational cohorts. However, generations view work ethic differently. Traditionalists measure work ethic regarding punctuality and productivity (Clark, 2017). Additionally, they desire uniformity and consistency in the workplace. Baby boomers are driven and dedicated, credited with creating the terms "workaholic" and "living to work" (Clark, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2016). They work longer workweeks than the other cohorts (Clark, 2017). Generation X and Millennials place more emphasis on balancing leisure activities and hard work than Traditionalists and baby boomers, coining the phrase "work hard, play hard" (Jobe, 2014). Furthermore, these two groups also focused more on establishing their careers, while delaying marriage and starting a family. Gen Z seemingly shares a work ethic more inline with baby boomers, based on a desire to excel rapidly in the workplace (Clark, 2017). However, this data is constrained by the fact that this cohort has only been in the workforce for a short period (Becton et al., 2014). Therefore, additional research is required to develop any significant trends for this cohort.

Expectations. Expectations shape how employees interact in the workplace. These expectations can present challenges for leaders trying to manage an increasingly diverse workforce. As described by Clark (2017) Traditionalists are loyal to their employers and expect the same in return. When their loyalty is not reciprocated,

Traditionalists may lash out, but will rarely seek employment elsewhere (Eastland &

Clark, 2015). Traditionalists and baby boomers expect and value face-to-face

communication from employers and fellow employees (Clark, 2017). These two cohorts

also expect to encounter ageism in the workplace. As noted by Fisher, Truxillo,

Finkelstein, and Wallace (2017) two-thirds of employees between the ages of 45 and 74

have encountered age discrimination or age bias in the workplace. However, baby

boomers expect their employer to honor their long hours in the workplace with

promotions and tenure (Clark, 2017). This cohort struggles to find a balance between

work and home life (Eastland & Clark, 2015).

Unlike the baby boomers, Generation X seeks to maintain a balance between

work and family life and refuse to work long hours for money or titles (Wiedmer, 2015).

Members of the Generation X cohort expect the freedom to balance work and

professional endeavors (Clark, 2017). Generation X is also comfortable working in

autonomous environments, without structure and guidance, and with flexible work

schedules, unlike members of the Millennial cohort (Eastland & Clark, 2015). Millennials

expect more supervision and mentorship than other cohorts, and they expect their

employers to provide clear goals and structure. Additionally, they expect praise for their

accomplishments (Clark, 2017). Members of Generation X, Millennial, and Gen Z

cohorts expect and embrace change (Eastland & Clark, 2015). These three cohorts also

prefer electronic communications to face-to-face interactions (Krahn & Galambos, 2014).

Gen Z employees require less direct supervision than the other cohorts, in part due to

having access to digital tools to accomplish many of the tasks they encounter (Wiedmer, 2015).

  Perceptions of Other Generations. Stereotypes exist among the members of each generational cohort reference how they view themselves and how they view the other generational cohorts in the workplace. As described by Stanton (2017) Traditionalists have positive views about the other cohorts in the workforce. However, they value employee loyalty, which can put them in conflict with the younger generational cohorts who do not share the same value system (Smither, 2015; Wiedmer, 2015). This generation is also concerned about real or perceived generation-based discrimination more than other generational cohorts (Stanton, 2017).

  Gursoy et al., (2013) noted that baby boomers express low opinions of younger generations. The workaholic generation views Generation X, Millennials, and Gen Z employees as slackers with no work ethic (Gursoy et al., 2013). They also feel these generational cohorts lack experience and rely too heavily on technology (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Gordon, 2017). However, they have a positive view of the Traditionalist cohort and view them as valuable members of the workforce with experience that they can learn from and use to gain a competitive advantage in the workplace (Stanton, 2017).

  The Generation X cohort believes that Millennial and Gen Z cohorts lack sufficient work ethic. However, they acknowledge their ability to quickly grasp new concepts and skills (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Gordon, 2017). Generation X has a high opinion of Traditionalists, who they consider team players and role models (Gursoy et al., 2013). They can have an adversarial relationship with baby boomers, who they feel are

too rigid and lack appropriate work-life balance (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Gordon, 2017). Furthermore, they view both Traditionalists and baby boomers as slow learners who struggle to adapt to new technology (Stanton, 2017).

Millennials view the Traditionalists positively, seeing them as disciplined and hard working (Smither, 2015). This generational cohort relates to baby boomers as both cohorts also ambitious, and career focused (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Gordon 2017). This ambition causes conflict with the Generation X cohort who are more focused on achieving a work/life balance (Wiedmer, 2015). Millennials view Gen Z positively and admire their Traditionalist-like civic-minded approach to the world and their Generation X/Millennial-like ability to quickly grasp new concepts (Smither, 2015).

As described by Stanton (2017) Gen Z shares a similar civic-mindedness with the Traditionalist cohort as both generations grew up in a time of war and economic uncertainty. They come in conflict with baby boomers because Gen Z prefers to interact electronically more than personally while baby boomers prefer face-to-face interaction (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Gordon 2017). They share a technological link with members of Generation X and Millennial cohorts but are by far the most technologically savvy, connected cohort (Stanton, 2017).

Employee perceptions can lead to disharmony and chaos among the members of the workforce. However, understanding these perceptions can narrow the gap between the members of the multigenerational workforce. Managers can utilize this information to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Workplace Diversity

Workplace diversity is a global phenomenon that affects many organizations. Both firms and employees benefit from a diverse workplace. Workplace diversity has a significant impact on many organizational outcomes including succession planning, skill transfer and knowledge sharing (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014; Clark, 2017; Lindsay, Schachter, Porter, & Sorge, 2014). Managers must understand workplace diversity and the associated challenges and opportunities.

Succession Planning. Succession planning is a proactive process where successors are identified for key positions or development activities are planned for identified successors (Patidar, Gupta, Azbik, & Weech-Maldonado, 2016). Succession planning ensures organization sustainability and talent retention. Additionally, succession planning helps organizations establish a culture that is inclusive of diversity. Diversity management supports succession planning. As experienced employees age out of the workforce, it has become increasingly imperative that organizations meet the demand for competent employees to succeed them (Jones, 2017; Patidar et al., 2016). Succession planning is vital in a diverse workforce as it allows organizations to build and retain intellectual capital (Patidar et al., 2016). The succession process must be formalized to identify, educate, mentor, and coach employees who demonstrate qualities, skills and attributes necessary to take on positions of increased responsibility (Jones, 2017; Patidar et al., 2016). Succession planning helps ensure qualified employees are prepared for their eventual transition into leadership roles as experienced employees exit the workforce. These programs must be aligned with recruitment and retention, as well as training and

development to be effective.

Skill Transfer. Skill transfer refers to how employees share skills with other employees. Jackson (2016) outlined three types of skills transfer: learning transfer, near transfer, and far transfer. Learning transfer is the transfer of acquired skills across different contexts (Jackson, 2016). Near transfer refers to the context in which newly acquired skills are similar to that which they will be applied (Jones, 2017). Far transfer is the transition of skills and knowledge across different contexts that are not similar to one another (Jones, 2017). Clark (2017) described skills transfer as an advantage of a multigenerational workforce as each employee brings skills relative to their generational cohort that can be used to improve employee satisfaction and facilitate constructive working relationships between the cohorts, increasing morale and motivation. Thus, skills transfer is increasingly important in the multigenerational workforce as different employee cohorts have different skills that can be transferred to increase productivity.

Knowledge Sharing. The ability to transfer knowledge from senior employees to younger employees is an advantage of a diverse workplace. This knowledge sharing helps maintain institutional knowledge as employees enter and the exit the organization. Knowledge employees receive from each other affects performance (Ozer & Vogel, 2015). Informal and formal knowledge sharing affects the performance of employees who participate in the process (Ozer & Vogel, 2015). This knowledge sharing is further enhanced when the employee has high-quality social exchanges with their supervisors (Clark, 2017; Ozer & Vogel, 2015). Additionally, this relationship is stronger among employees from cohorts with high task autonomy, such as Generation X (Al-Asfour &

Lettau, 2014; Clark, 2017; Ozer & Vogel, 2015). Employees from cohorts exhibiting less autonomy can still benefit from knowledge sharing. However, in these instances it requires a more formal, leader lead, process to be effective (Ozer & Vogel, 2015). Organizations can increase performance by emphasizing the task, social, and institutional dimensions of the knowledge sharing process (Ozer & Vogel, 2015).

Productivity. Research indicates that motivation and productivity are linked. The most important resource for any organization is human capital. Age Diversity may decrease organizational productivity (Garnero, Kampelmann, & Rycx, 2014). However, some employees find it pleasurable to work in heterogeneous environments with a mix of age, gender, and ethnicity. Thus, differences in ambition and work styles may adversely impact productivity and generate conflict among employees. Kang, Yu, & Lee (2016) noted that motivated employees are loyal employees. Therefore, managers must ensure employees are motivated to ensure productivity and retention.

Conflict. Workplace diversity can be linked to employee conflict (Lindsay et al., 2014). Thus, greater workplace diversity increases conflict among employees. Employee conflict is detrimental to organizations. Generational differences may create challenges to promoting a positive work environment (Kleinhans, Chakradhar, Muller, & Waddill, 2015). This conflict is attributed to the digital divide, poor communication, and work-life balance issues (Hillman, 2014). Managers must quickly learn how to manage an increasingly diverse workforce (Yi, Ribbens, Fu, & Cheng, 2015). Leaders at all levels must adjust their leadership style to improve effectiveness within blended workgroups (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). If not, the organization will not be able to gain and maintain

a competitive advantage and may cease operations (Yi et al., 2015). Creating and maintaining a motivated workforce starts at the recruiting phase and requires training, resources, and programs to develop the potential of each group. Organizations must develop recruiting plans to hire employees who will prove to be productive employees who fit their corporate culture. Furthermore, resources and programs must be established to support an inclusive workforce. Thus, leadership behaviors are critical to the successful resolution of conflict and motivating a multigenerational workforce.

Digital Divide. Technological advancements play a substantial role in employee conflict and conflict resolution (Haeger & Lingham, 2014; Lindsay et al., 2014). Leaders must understand and effectively manage the digital divide to avoid potential conflict among the members of the multigenerational workforce. Many leaders in the workplace are under the age of forty (Haeger & Lingham, 2014). Thus, managers must be aware of what communication works best for each generational cohort. Furthermore, managers should use multiple communication channels to communicate with employees including meetings, emails, and teleconferencing (Ferri-Reed, 2014).

Poor Communication. Employee exchanges are complex and dynamic interactive processes and this interaction affects employee performance. As described by Sonnentag, Unger, and Nagel, (2013) poor communication can lead to two types of conflicts: tasks conflicts and relationship conflicts. Task conflicts include disagreements related to a difference in ideas or opinions (Sonnentag et al., 2013). Relationship conflicts are created by interpersonal differences. Open, timely, communication is key to dealing with both types of conflicts.

Haeger and Lingham (2014) noted an increase in managers 20 years younger than their employees. Two-way communication and soliciting feedback from employees helps prevent conflict (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). These leaders must be mindful of the generation gap and develop leadership behaviors that are effective in conflict resolution. Coaching older cohorts and mentoring younger members of the workforce are effective leadership practices. Gibson and Sodeman (2014) recommend reciprocal mentoring programs for cross-training. These programs are cost-effective ways to benefit the organization and increase flexibility and adaptability.

Work-life Balance Issues. Different generational cohorts have unique personal and professional needs (Clark, 2017; Haeger & Lingham, 2014). These needs manifest in how employees prioritize between work and lifestyle. Every employee is in pursuit of work-life balance that suits his or her personal and professional needs. baby boomers work longer weeks than other generations, thinking this will lead to success (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Gordon 2017). Generation X employees are unwilling to work long hours for money or titles (Clark, 2017). Balanced workers are more productive and have higher retention rates. Thus, managers should be open to flexible work schedules to help employees manage stress and prevent conflict (Ferri-Reed, 2014).

Strategies to Motivate a Multigenerational Workforce

Motivated employees are the driving force behind successful organizations. Less motivated employees create low performing organizations, negatively affect co-workers, and lead to employee burnout (Khan, Khan, & Zakir, 2016). Managers are responsible for developing employees and building effective teams while maximizing each employee's

strengths for the good of the organization. Thus, managers need to understand the different generations they manage and use each group's unique characteristics to their advantage (Eastland & Clark, 2015). Effective managers use generational differences to enhance teamwork and improve productivity. Managers must be aware of these differences and cultivate an environment conducive to the successful inclusion of a multigenerational workforce.

Managers can pair Traditionalists with Millennial or Gen Z employees to increase knowledge sharing (Clark, 2017; Eastland & Clark, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2016). Traditionalists have institutional knowledge, and younger employees can benefit from learning from these experienced employees. Gen Z employees can also help Traditionalists learn new equipment and software (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). Like Traditionalists, baby boomers also have valuable information that managers can use to improve the organization (Ahmad & Ibrahim, 2015; Gordon, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2016). These employees should also be paired with younger employees to facilitate knowledge sharing. Managers from younger generations should lead baby boomers by respecting their experiences (Gordon 2017). Both Traditionalists and baby boomers should be recognized and applauded for their contributions by management (Clark, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2016).

Generation X has different views on work and life compared to that of Traditionalists and baby boomers. Generation X values work-life balance and managers should attempt to provide a flexible work schedule or offer these employees the ability to telework (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). Millennials have different work requirements and

expectations than other cohorts (Gordon, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2016). Millennials require daily supervision and constant feedback and prefer structured work environments (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). Managers should often communicate with their Millennial employees and communicate specific work expectations (Johnson & Johnson, 2016). Managers should insist their Millennial employees follow the rules, complete their tasks, and meet assigned deadlines. When these goals are met, these employees should be applauded for their contributions to the organization (Clark, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 2016).

Gen Z employees prefer minimal face-to-face supervision (Gordon, 2017). Managers of these employees can expect to interact with them more electronically (via email or text message) than personally (Clark, 2017). These employees want to feel that their work is value added, and managers will need to cater to this desire (Clark, 2017; Eastland & Clark, 2015). Organizations that understand the needs of this cohort will have a significant advantage recruiting and retaining the newest members of the workforce.

Opportunities

Generational challenges and advantages abound, creating positive opportunities for organizational leaders (Eastland & Clark, 2015). Multigenerational teams are assets to an organization as each member brings unique strengths, viewpoints, and skills that enhance productivity, creativity, and collaboration (Clark, 2017). These teams can be incubators for the types of innovation that helps ensure organizational sustainability. By understanding generational differences, managers and employees can create an inclusive, productive workforce.

Advantages. Employees and employers are beginning to acknowledge the advantages of an increasingly diverse workforce (Hillman, 2014). Organizations that capitalize on workplace diversity have increased economic stability (Hernaus & Mikulic, 2014). Employees from different age groups can learn from one another, creating a better-trained workforce. New employees bring newly acquired skills to the workplace while older employees have relational experiences that, when combined, create powerful teams.

Mentorship. Mentoring is a vital component of a new employee's successful transition and professional development (Clark, 2017; Eastland & Clark, 2015). Experienced employees can provide mentorship to new employees. However, understanding generational differences are essential in effective mentoring. Baby boomers are well positioned to act as mentors, especially to Millennial employees (Gordon, 2017). Millennials require lengthy orientation and continual feedback (Clark, 2017; Gordon, 2017). Managers can facilitate the mentoring process by offering one-on-one group sessions, group programs, discussion panels, and roundtable discussions (Eastland & Clark, 2015).

Workplace Opportunities. Organizations are experimenting with unique approaches in tailoring policies to attract younger candidates and retain experienced employees (Lawson, 2017). Some of these measures include: leveraging social media in recruiting and hiring practices to attract young talent, incorporating flexibility to benefits packages to facilitate work/life balance for younger employees, developing messaging that will appeal to the occupational and personal interests of prospective employees,

discovering new ways to leverage employee innovation, proposing leadership development opportunities geared toward younger employees, and supporting the next generation workforce with workspaces that facilitate social connections (Lawson, 2017). Companies must create workplaces geared to the needs and wants of next generation to ensure organizational sustainability (Lawson, 2017). However, organizations must be conscious not to alienate older employees while trying to attract younger employees. Organizations rely on driven, creative employees from all generations and departments to be successful (Lawson, 2017).

Leadership Theory and Generational Cohorts

Motivation consists of internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy within people to make them interested and committed to accomplishing an objective (Khan et al., 2016). Motivation is a significant challenge for organizations, both large and small, with many leaders lacking effective strategies to motivate employees. Thus, managers need to understand the factors that affect employee motivation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory indicates that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Güss, Burger, & Dörner, 2017; Maslow, 1943). Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory can help inform managers of strategies they can use to motivate a multigenerational force. Maslow's theory states five universal needs that motivate people (Maslow, 1943). The five-stage model includes *physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization* (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Güss et al., 2017;

Maslow, 1943). The phases are related, and higher needs emerge as individuals achieve lower needs.

Physiological needs are survival needs such as food and water (Maslow, 1943). Once these physiological needs are met, individuals focus on attaining safety needs such as safety and security (Maslow, 1943). The next focus is love needs, which include relationships with family and friends (Maslow, 1943). Individuals then seek esteem needs like prestige and accomplishment at work, in sports, or social settings (Maslow, 1943). Individuals then strive for self-actualization, feelings of personal growth, self-fulfillment, and achievement (Maslow, 1943). A key component of this theory is that individuals cannot move from one need to another until the lower need is met (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Güss et al., 2017; Maslow, 1943). Maslow's hierarchy of needs has both practical and scholarly applications. Figure 1 represents Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Physiological Needs. Physiological needs include basic human needs such as food, water, warmth, and rest (Maslow, 1943). Physiological needs are the physical requirements for human survival. Maslow (1943) described these needs as the most potent of all needs. If all the needs are unsatisfied, an individual will be dominated by the desire to achieve the physiological needs, ignoring all other needs, until this need is met. As described by Maslow (1943) a man who is extremely hungry is consumed by hunger and until this hunger is satisfied no other interests exist. Therefore, a person lacking in all of the needs would prioritize physiological needs over any other needs.

Safety needs. Safety needs are based on the individual desire for security, and like physiological needs, can wholly dominate an individual (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016;

Güss et al., 2017; Maslow, 1943). These needs include physical safety, such as natural disaster; and economic safety, such as economic depression. In a modern society, safety needs stem from perceived factors such as gender, age, and employment (Maslow, 1943). Additionally, unfamiliar settings may trigger safety needs in individuals.

Belongingness and Love Needs. After physiological and safety needs are met, a new need will arise from the desire for affection and relationships with other people. This desire stems from a basic animal instinct to herd, flock, join and belong to a social group (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Güss, Burger, & Dörner, 2017; Maslow, 1943). These groups can range from small social connections like colleagues and mentors to large groups like clubs and teams. Furthermore, humans strive to feel love, affection, and belongingness attempt to avoid feelings of ostracism, rejection, and friendlessness (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Güss et al., 2017; Maslow, 1943).

Esteem Needs. Esteem needs are based on the desire of people to have a stable, firmly based, high evaluation of themselves (Maslow, 1943). This category of need leads to feelings of self-confidence and worth (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Güss, Burger, & Dörner, 2017; Maslow, 1943). These needs can be broken down into two subsets: the desire for achievement and the desire for prestige (Maslow, 1943). The achievement need is met by accomplishing tasks and overcoming challenges that lead to the development confidence and worth (Maslow, 1943). The prestige need is met when people acknowledge our accomplishments and manifest itself in the form of recognition, attention, and appreciation (Maslow, 1943). Low self-esteem and inferiority complexes result from an imbalance in this level of the hierarchy. However, when these four needs

are met discontent and restlessness develops, and a final need emerges.

Self-actualization. Self-actualization refers to the need for self-fulfillment and the desire for individuals to actualize their potential (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Maslow, 1943). Before the emergence of this need, the other physiological, safety, love, and esteem needs must be satisfied. The self-actualization need varies from person to person (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Maslow, 1943). Some individuals express self-actualization through sport, while others express this need through writing or painting. According to Maslow (1943) few people in modern society will reach a state of self-actualization.

Hierarchy of Needs in the Workplace

Multiple studies indicate the workplace has changed significantly since 1943 (Van der Walt, Jonck, & Sobayeni, 2016). Thus, the hierarchy of needs was modified in 2000 to address the needs of employees in the modern workplace. In this model, physiological needs are met through wages, which provide the means for food, water, and shelter (Maslow, 2000). Once these physiological needs are met, job safety needs emerge. These needs include physical and mental safety (Maslow, 2000). Additionally, safety can manifest itself in the form of job security and adequate benefits (Maslow, 2000). Employees then seek belongingness and acceptance in the workplace. Employees strive to establish and maintain pleasant working relationships with peers, subordinates, and supervisors (Maslow, 2000). Self-esteem needs are realized in the workplace through performance appraisals, incentives, rewards, and recognition (Maslow, 2000). The realization of self-esteem need builds employees confidence, and increases as the employee obtains more rewards, recognition, and positive performance appraisals

(Maslow, 2000). Finally, self-actualization needs are met when employees are given opportunities to learn and develop (Maslow, 2000).

As applied to this study, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory indicates that all individuals are motivated by the same general needs. Once their basic needs are met, individuals can produce work or services that benefit others in the community. Therefore, managers must address employees' most basic needs in the workplace before they can increase their productivity.

Supporting and Contrasting Theories

McClelland's Needs Theory. McClelland's need theory describes motivation as a compelling desire to succeed (Güss, Burger, & Dörner, 2017; McClelland, 1961; Pindek, Kessler, & Spector, 2017). Thus, motivation and performance are related to an individual's need for achievement. This theory focuses on three needs: achievement, power, and affiliation (Güss, Burger, & Dörner, 2017; McClelland, 1961; Pindek, Kessler, & Spector, 2017). Achievement is the drive to excel (McClelland, 1961). Power is the need to make others behave in a manner that they would not have done otherwise (McClelland, 1961). Affiliation is the desire to have close interpersonal relationships (McClelland, 1961). Motivation is derived from a response to a change in the status of one of the three needs. Furthermore, motivation intensity varies among employees based on their perception of the stimulus and their adaptive abilities (Güss, Burger, & Dörner, 2017). Individuals have a dominant need based on their personality and will have different characteristics based on their dominant motivator.

Erickson's Theory of Psychological Development. Erikson's theory of psychological development describes the lifecycle of an individual (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). There are eight stages in this lifecycle: hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom (Erikson & Erikson, 1998; D'Souza & Gurin, 2016). Individuals pass through these stages from infancy to adulthood. The first six stages occur during the early stages of an individual's life and are geared toward self-interest and gratification (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Erikson & Erikson, 1998). The last two stages occur during the later years of an individual's life and are focused on society and altruism (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Entering new stages builds on the previous stages. In each stage, individuals face with new challenges.

Equity Theory. As an employer expects his personnel to perform, employees also expect something in return (Khan, Khan, & Zakir, 2016). Employees want to know that their employer is fair and equitable. Adam's equity theory examines how employees experience fairness (Adams, 1965; Khan et al., 2016; Nik, Franco, & Magnus, 2017). Equity theory examines the importance of rewards people receive for their efforts and the relationship of this amount to the amount of rewards others receive (Adams, 1965). Thus, employees strive to maintain a balance between their input and the inputs of other employees as well as the outputs of their employers. As described by Adams (1965) inputs such as effort, experience, and education should generate outcomes such as pay raises, recognition, and tenure. Tension is created when people perceive an imbalance in their input-to-outcome ratio. When the ratio is perceived as unfair, employees experience stress. This stress motivates them to seek fairness. Equity theory relies on three

assumptions: (a) employees develop beliefs about what is a fair return on their contributions to their employer, (b) employees compare the perceived exchanges between themselves, their employers, and other employees, and (c) when people believe their treatment is not fair, they will take actions they deem appropriate (Adams, 1965). How employees seek to re-establish fairness depends on the employer, type of work and the employee (Nik et al., 2017).

Expectancy Theory. To understand employee motivation, employers must understand how employees perceive their work and compensation. Expectancy theory seeks to explain this phenomenon. Expectancy theory is the belief that employees are motivated to behave in ways that achieved desired outcomes (Vroom, 1964; Nimri, Bdair, & Al Bitar, 2015). In any employer/employee relationship outcomes may be either positive or negative. According to Vroom (1964) three mental components direct behavior: valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. Valence refers to the relationship employees have with outcomes (Vroom, 1964). Instrumentality links the outcomes (Vroom, 1964). Expectancy is the strength of an employee's belief that the outcome is possible (Vroom, 1964). The more positive the outcome, the more likely the employee will be highly motivated. Negative outcomes decrease employee motivation. Nimri, et al. (2015) applied this theory to explain the motivation of employees in Jordan. They found that intrinsic instrumentality and valence factors have a significant and positive relation to work motivation. However, this theory is plagued by a lack of empirical evidence. Thus, numerous researchers, including Nimri et al. (2015), have resorted to implementing other elements into the equation.

Transition

Section 1 of this doctoral study included an introduction to this study, problem statement, purpose statement, and nature of study that justified using a qualitative single case study design. Also included are key elements including research questions, interview questions, conceptual framework, the significance of study, and a review of professional and academic literature. The focus of this study concerned exploring strategies managers could implement to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Generational differences create challenges for leadership. As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, it is imperative that managers understand how to motivate a diverse workforce. Findings from previous research indicated the need for researchers to continue to explore the impact of employee motivation on organizational success. A thorough review of historical and current literature supports this subject.

The focus of section 2 was the project and qualitative method research approach, including populations and sampling, data collection, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Section 3 includes study findings and analysis of interview responses to include application to professional practice and implications for social change. Additionally, section 3 includes areas for further research along with a summary, conclusion, and reflections.

Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to examine strategies managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Section 2 includes the (a) study's purpose, (b) method and design (c) population (d) data collection and analysis process. Section 2 also contains the issues of ethical research and reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The target population for this study included seven managers at a Maryland-based marketing agency that have successfully motivated multiple generations of employees. The implications for social change included identifying strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The findings could improve business practices and increase employee productivity. This increased productivity could increase profits, ensuring organizational sustainability and enabling organizations to increase financial support to the local community. Additional implications for social change included fostering better understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the members of the multigenerational workforce.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is collecting, organizing, and interpreting data and results (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Sho-ghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). Researchers are instruments in the qualitative research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As such, researchers observe and collect data to provide practical solutions to organizational problems (Kornhaber, de Jong, & McLean, 2015). I was responsive and adaptive when

conducting data collection. My role in this study was to collect data and analyze it with minimal bias. My goal was to understand my research topic and subjects and eliminate pre-existing prejudices or biases that may adversely impact my research. To be effective, I paid attention to all verbal and nonverbal cues that participants display. My relationship with this research area was two-fold. I work in an organization that has a multigenerational workforce. Additionally, my current occupation requires an understanding of generational cohorts and their needs, desires, and motivations to be effective.

I obtained approval from Walden University and the Internal Review Board to conduct this research. I interviewed seven participants who are managers in a marketing firm in Maryland who had experience managing a multigenerational workforce (Draper & Swift, 2011). All participants signed consent forms, authorizing their participation in the project. The authors of the Belmont Report focused on ensuring the well-being of participants (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015). I followed the protocols of the Belmont report to maintain ethical standards involving human subjects during this research. Thus, my participants did not face any harm or danger.

I used a qualitative single case study method to conduct semistructured interviews with participants using open-ended questions. This methodology provided me the opportunity to focus on the participants' conversation (Torronen, 2014). Using open-ended questions gave participants the ability to express their knowledge and experience concerning the research topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I used semistructured interviews, observation, and member checking to mitigate bias and avoid viewing the

data from a personal perspective. The semistructured interview format encouraged two-way communication, allowing for a more comprehensive discussion of the research topic (Ponterotto, 2014). Member checking refers to a technique used by researchers to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study (Morse, 2015). I used these three techniques to ensure the authenticity of the research and mitigate bias.

Participants

This qualitative single case study was conducted in the marketing industry in the Maryland region of the United States. The marketing industry was suitable for this study for three reasons: (a) experience, (b) location, and (c) accessibility. Marketing professionals are uniquely suited to participate in this study as they have knowledge of generational differences and how to appeal to consumers from different age groups. The marketing industry is also a very diverse industry in terms of age, gender, and nationality. The location of Waldorf, Maryland is unique as a large southern metropolitan city along the eastern shore of the United States with close access to Washington, D.C. and Virginia.

An adequate number of participants are necessary to obtain sufficient data for research to be successful (Applebaum, 2012). All participants must be accessible and available for interviews and follow-on questions. Criteria for selecting participants included (a) at least 21 years of age, (b) 5 years of supervisory experience, and (c) available for interviews. I used a qualitative research methodology to ask open-ended questions about their experiences motivating a multigenerational workforce. Participants had various backgrounds and job functions. Purposeful sampling is a sampling technique

in which researcher relies on their own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study (Elo et al., 2014). I used purposeful sampling to choose participants based on the criteria of the study.

After I obtained Walden University IRB approval, I selected participants from a marketing firm in Maryland. I emailed letters of invitation to prospective participants. This letter explained the intent of the study. This letter also explained that their participation is voluntary and confidential (Ketefian, 2015). Participants who respond to the letter were selected. I conducted additional correspondence to determine an appropriate time and place for interviews. These interviews lasted no longer than 30 minutes each. Upon completion of the interview, I sent all participants a final email thanking them for their participation in this research. The relationship between the participants and myself remained professional at all times.

Research Method and Design

There are three types of research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Earley, 2014). Only the qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study. Qualitative designs include case study, descriptive, ethnographic, grounded, narrative, and phenomenological (Franklin, 2012). Based on the nature of this study, I chose a single case study design. A qualitative single case study facilitated my understanding of strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. This research can assist business leaders implement strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Research Method

I used a qualitative methodology for this study to explore the strategies marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The qualitative research method was the most appropriate for this study, as qualitative researchers seek to understand lived experiences in real-world situations (Leppink, 2017). The qualitative method allowed me to examine the experience of managers of workers from a multigenerational workforce through interviews and gain an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon.

Quantitative and mixed methodologies were not appropriate for this study. Quantitative researchers collect data to test relationships between variables (Barnham, 2015). I did not use a quantitative methodology because I explored strategies rather than examine the variables' relationships. Mixed method researchers use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Leppink, 2017). Since the quantitative portion of the mixed methodology was not appropriate for this study, a mixed method approach was not used.

Research Design

Case study design is useful when a researcher seeks to examine more than isolated variables (Yin, 2014). I used a qualitative single case study design for my study. Using the single case study design met the need for this study based on the nature of study and the research questions.

Other qualitative designs, including descriptive, ethnographic, grounded, narrative, and phenomenological were not appropriate for this study. Researchers using a descriptive design produce a representation of persons, events, or situations (Franklin,

2012). I did not produce a representation of persons, events, or situations. Thus, I did not use descriptive design. Ethnographic design researchers study cultures over an extended period, which was not the goal of my study. Grounded theory researchers construct a theory through data analysis (Wise & Paulus, 2016). I did not intend to generate theory; therefore, I did not use grounded theory. The goal of the narrative design is to reconstruct participants' experiences into narratives (Franklin, 2012). I did not intend to reconstruct praticpants' experinces. Therefore, I did not use the narrative design. Researchers using a phenomenological design focus on the meanings of participants' lived experiences (Franklin, 2012). I did not use a phenomenological design because I did not seek to explore the meanings of participants' perceptions with experiencing a specific, definable phenomenon.

Data saturation occurs when the collection process no longer yields any new data (Dworkin, 2012). Data saturation is a critical factor when making qualitative sample size decisions. Collecting data from multiple sources helped me compare findings and different perspectives. I conducted interviews until I achieved data saturation.

Population and Sampling

The population for this qualitative study consisted of marketing managers who work in Maryland. For this research, I collected data through answers obtained in interviews of participants. Purposeful sampling facilitates the selection of participants who are experts in the field of research (Becton, Walker, & Farmer-Jones, 2014). Furthermore, all participants must satisfy a specific purpose (Kisely & Kendall, 2011). I

used purposeful sampling to solicit participants with information about strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Qualitative researchers focus on meaning and depth (Yin, 2014). Thus, qualitative researchers do not require a fixed number of participants (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). I selected seven participants to obtain in-depth interviews. The participants met the following criteria for the study: (a) experience, (b) location, and (c) accessibility. I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to understand the perspective of the participant. Saturation occurs when the data does not generate new information (Oberoi, Jiwa, McManus, & Hodder, 2015). After interviews with seven participants, I reached data saturation.

Ethical Research

Ethical conduct is vital to ensure the integrity of research. As described by Damianakis and Woodford (2012), researchers have two priorities when conducting a study: producing knowledge of the research and upholding ethical principles and standards. Furthermore, researchers must adhere to ethical principles of protection of vulnerable populations, respect for persons, autonomy, and justice (Wester, 2011). Ethical conduct includes the approval of the IRB before conducting research.

The Belmont Report outlines the protocols to maintain ethical standards in research (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015). After I received approval from the Walden University IRB, I collected data from human participants. First, I contacted a community research partner to secure their permission to conduct the study (Appendix A). Then, I sent letters of invitation (Appendix B) to potential participants via email. This

letter of invitation explained the intent of the study. Additionally, the letter of invitation explained that participants would not receive incentives to take part in this study. Participants who respond to the email were contacted via telephone to schedule an interview date and time. Participants received a consent form further detailing the purpose and requirements of the study. Participants were also informed of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time and their confidentiality. If a participant chose to withdraw, I deleted all their electronic interview notes and recordings and shredded any printed information on the study. I continued to foster a relationship with participants through follow-up phone calls and emails. As described by Ketefian (2015) researchers must take measures to assure that ethical protection of participants is adequate. I coded all participants numerically to ensure confidentiality. Additionally, the company name was coded to protect the organization. All collected data was stored in a locked filing cabinet that only I could access for 5 years to protect confidentiality of participants. After 5 years all data will be destroyed.

Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative researchers are the primary instruments for collecting data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I served as the primary data collection instrument in this study. The qualitative interview is a human interaction that produces scientific knowledge (Franklin, 2012). Additionally, interviews are the most common way of collecting data in qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I used semistructured interviews as my secondary data collection instrument. The interview instrument (Appendix D) consisted

of five open-ended questions developed to examine strategies marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

As described by Tembo, Parker, and Higgins (2013), qualitative researchers gather detailed information to understand participants' lived experiences. As the primary data collection instrument, my objective was to extract as much information as possible related to the study. The selected participants represented the five generations of workers currently occupying the workforce. I used a voice memos app on my cellular phone to record interview questions and responses of participants. I also took detailed notes during the interview process. I allocated 30 minutes for each interview. Then I transcribed responses on my computer using TranscribeMe transcription software. The transcription software company signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix F). Qualitative researchers use member checking to ensure validity and reliability by confirming data obtained by participants (Myburgh, 2014). I used member checking to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments.

Data Collection Technique

Upon receiving IRB approval, I began data collection. The three most commonly used data collection methods in qualitative research are observation, interviewing and member checking (Couper, 2011; Covell, Sidani, & Ritchie, 2012; Draper & Swift, 2011). Each of these data collection methods has advantages and disadvantages. The primary data collection technique for this study was semistructured interviews. Interviews enable participants to share their knowledge and understanding (Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014). However, participants' responses to interview questions may

not accurately reflect the organization's actual practices (Yin, 2014). During the interviews, participants responded to five semistructured, open-ended interview questions. I recorded responses on a cellular phone using a recording app, and took detailed notes. Then I transcribed responses on my computer using transcription software.

The validity of qualitative research is in the participants' reports of life experience (Anyan, 2013; Knight, 2012). An existing relationship with the founder and CEO facilitated gaining access to participants. I used Purposeful sampling to select potential participants. All participants received an introductory email explaining the purpose of the study and consent forms were sent in a follow-on email. Interviews took place in a setting of the participant's choice. Upon completion of the interview, I observed the participants and utilized member checking to ensure proper representation of responses to interview questions.

Data Organization Technique

Researchers use research logs and reflective journals to keep track of data. Advances in technology have aided researchers in organizing data. Data analysis software enhances the trustworthiness of research through increased organization (Josselson, 2014; Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Additionally, data analysis software helps researchers manage and document more effectively (Castleberry, 2014; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). I utilized an electronic filing system to organize data. Data and supporting documents included interview transcripts and interview notes.

I stored electronic files on a password-protected laptop. I stored paper files in a locked filing cabinet in accordance with IRB and Walden University requirements. I am

the only person with access to this data. All documentation will be stored for five years. After five years, I will destroy all documents. I will delete all electronic files, and shred all paper files.

Data Analysis

Researchers use data analysis to analyze the interview notes for themes (Nassaji, 2015). The data analysis process for this qualitative single case study is methodical triangulation. Researchers use methodical triangulation to confirm findings, increase validity, and enhance understanding (Cope, 2014). I used semistructured interviews, observations, and member checking to demonstrate methodical triangulation in this study. As described by St. Pierre and Jackson (2014), interviews are the primary method of data collection in qualitative research. I utilized an audio recording app on my cellular phone to record each interview.

Researchers use coding to categorize data and identify common themes and differences (James, 2012). I used NVivo 11 software to code the data. After data collection and member checking, I triangulated the interview notes, observations, and member checking. I did not disclose demographic details or worksite locations. Furthermore, I did not disclose names of organizations of participants. I assigned codes to each participant that were used to help preserve the identity of the participants. Additionally, I used these codes to organize and classify data.

Reliability and Validity

Researchers evaluate the adequacy and meaning of collected data for reliability and validity (Yin, 2014). There are four criteria to develop trustworthiness in qualitative

research: reliability, validity, confirmability, and transferability (Cope, 2014). In

qualitative research, the concepts of reliability and validity are made clear through a

concise framework. Confirmability and transferability rely on the researchers using

proper standards of evidence (Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013; Street & Ward, 2012)

Reliability

Reliability is to the extent to which results are repeatable and confirm or reject the

findings (Cope, 2014; Grossoehme, 2014; Yin, 2014). Data should be presented in a

logical and clear manner. The research should create an audit trail for other researchers to

follow. Another researcher should be able to understand the research design and

concepts. I mitigated personal bias by asking all participants the same open-ended

interview questions. I ensured dependability by utilizing member checking and transcript

review.

Validity

Validity is the process of determining whether the research product correctly

represents the intended emphasis (Cope, 2014; Grossoehme, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Researchers must ensure the research is clear and free from objections. I established

credibility and trustworthiness by adhering to Walden University IRB research

guidelines. I ensured that adequate and quality data is collected. I used triangulation,

member checking, and data saturation to ensure the credibility of this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree of impartiality in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985;

Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013; Yin, 2014). I ensured confirmability and reduce potential

bias through member checking. Participants reviewed their responses to verify that I captured the intended meanings of their responses. I also maintained detailed notes throughout the interview process to establish confirmability. A recording app on my cellular phone was also used to establish confirmability of data.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability of the research to be transferred to another qualitative study (Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013; Yilmaz, 2013; Yin, 2014). The actions and events of the research must be transferable. I assured transferability by carefully documenting and describing the holistic research process. I also ensured transferability by using a repeatable/replicable process in my research. My presentation of the findings was useful in establishing transferability.

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Transition and Summary

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The purpose of Section 2 was to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection technique, data organization technique, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Section 2 reaffirmed the purpose of the study. Section 2 also included a list of interview questions.

The final section of the study, section 3 includes interview data and interpretation, analysis, and presentation of key themes and patterns. Data from participants' interviews will become the findings of the study. I used NVivo 11 software to collect and analyze information, create codes, and identify themes. Section 3 also includes implications for

social change, applications for professional practice, recommendations for further

research, and reflections.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Employee motivation is essential to organizational sustainability, and some marketing managers lack strategies to motivate an increasingly diverse set of employees. The population for the research study included 7 managers from a marketing firm in Maryland.

I collected data from manager interviews and observations. I used member checking to strengthen the study's reliability and validity. I used the conceptual framework to guide the research and aid in the identification of overarching themes. The findings showed strategies that the managers used to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Section 3 includes the findings of the research study. I present the findings of the study by main themes. In this section, I also describe my detailed analysis of the research topic, implications for social change, recommendations for actions recommendations for further study, reflections, and summary and study conclusion.

Presentation of the Findings

The research question for this study was as follows: What strategies do marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce? I selected 7 managers from a Maryland-based marketing firm based on their experience implementing multigenerational management strategies. I observed participants before and after conducting the interviews. All participants reviewed the questions before the interview.

Consent forms were completed before conducting the interview. Participants responded to the five semistructured, open-ended interview questions, providing detailed responses regarding strategies some marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The interviews lasted less than 30 minutes. I invited each participant to complete member checking by reviewing their transcribed interviews to confirm their responses once the interview was complete.

I conducted interviews, observation, and member checking before coding and developing themes. I used methodical triangulation to ensure the reliability and validity of the collected data until I achieved data saturation. I used TranscribeMe software to transcribe the interview notes and NVivo software to code the data and develop themes. Four themes emerged from the data analysis. The themes were: (a) communication and connecting, (b) teamwork and collaboration, (c) training and development, and (d) rewards and recognition. The themes that emerged from the data addressed the research question: What strategies do marketing managers use to motivate multigenerational workforce? Table 1 displays the themes discussed during the participant interviews.

Table 1

Strategies for Motivating a Multigenerational Workforce

Themes	*N*	*% of frequency occurrence*
Communication and Connection	7	30.43
Teamwork and Collaboration	7	30.43
Training and Development	13	56.52
Rewards and Recognition	5	21.73

Note. *N* =1.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory supported the conceptual framework for this research. Maslow indicated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others (Maslow, 1943). Maslow described a five-stage model that includes physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1943). The phases of this five-stage model are related, and higher needs emerge as individuals achieve lower needs. I used this theory to gain a better understanding of the strategies marketing managers can use to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Theme 1: Communication and Connection

Increasing diversity in the workforce creates challenges for managers. Participant 4 described managing people as "the hardest thing to do" in the workplace. However, increasing diversity in the workplace also creates opportunities for increased performance as the blending of innovation and tradition can increase organizational sustainability. As noted by Clark (2017), multigenerational teams are assets to an organization as each

member brings unique strengths, viewpoints, and skills that enhance productivity, creativity, and collaboration. Managers must understand generational differences to develop strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. As described by Ferri-Reed (2014), managers can blend groups from different generations into high-performing teams. Opportunities emerge as generational diversity increases in the multigenerational workforce (Mencl & Lester, 2014). Managers emphasized the importance of motivating across generational boundaries to improve organizational productivity. Participant 2 noted, "That it is not one strategy fits all. Consider the age groups of the generations. It is not a one size fits all solution." There were seven mentions of the communication and connection theme in the participant interviews.

Communication. Among all the participants, communication was noted an effective managerial strategy for all generational cohorts. Participant 1 stated that they used open communication to keep people informed, which increased morale and motivation among employees. Participant 5 added,

One strategy that's worked on all groups is active listening. All people have a desire to be heard, and we all want to be heard. Beyond just heard. Not just am I looking at you, but also I hear what you're saying. We want someone to completely pay attention to understand us. That's something I try to provide to everyone. That's in and of itself is a way of motivating.

However, the way different groups communicate is an issue that managers must understand to be effective. Participant 3 described the multiple ways that different

generations receive information and how effective managers use all the tools at their disposal to communicate essential information to their subordinates.

You can get transcripts, you can get video, you can get it on the Google Drive. You can get it different ways. You can get it on your phone. Because people use phones, people use tablets. A lot of the younger people like the tablets, more flexibility. A lot of older people have desktops. Having devices that fit different peoples work preferences helps.

Wiedmer (2015) posited that members of Generation X are comfortable with technology and are often early adopters of new technology due to the rise of the Internet and cellular communications that occurred during their formative years. Eastland and Clark (2015) added that Millennials were exposed to computers, mobile phones, and tablets at an early age; therefore, Millennials are comfortable and connected with technology. Managers must be aware of what communication works best for each generational cohort.

Connection. Another prominent subtheme among all participants was connection. As noted by Ghalandari and Paykani (2016), managers must maintain a focus on the people within the organization. Participants agreed that employees are a leading factor in the success or failure of an organization. Participant 2 and 4 described the process of getting to know their employees and finding commonalities with them as effective motivational tools. Participant 5 added that to motivate someone you must know them first. Managers use different techniques to establish connections with employees from different generation groups. Younger employees may feel more comfortable connecting

via text message or email (Gordon, 2017). Older employees value face-to-face

communication and may feel that trying to connect over email is insensitive (Clark,

2017). Managers should use multiple communication channels to connect with

employees including meetings, emails, and teleconferencing (Ferri-Reed, 2014).

Theme 2: Teamwork and Collaboration

Employee motivation is a significant challenge for organizations. Modern

managers are tasked with motivating an increasingly diverse workforce. However, some

managers lack strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. As described by Al-

Asfour and Lettau (2014), leaders at all levels must adjust their leadership style to

improve teamwork and collaboration. Teamwork and collaboration skills are essential to

gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage in business (Yi et al., 2015). There were

seven mentions of the teamwork and collaboration theme in the participant interviews.

Teamwork. Maslow (1943) indicated that all individuals are motivated by the

same general needs. However, people born around the same time have shared common

life events that serve as a basis for attitudes and behaviors (Fernández-Durán, 2016;

Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Lyons & Kuron, 2014). The cohort approach is effective when

comparing the same age groups or over a certain time span. Different generations work

side by side in an increasingly diverse workplace. Thus, managers must identify

strategies to increase teamwork among generational groups with different workplace

values. Hernaus and Vokic (2014) indicated that teamwork is a job characteristic valued

by all employees, regardless of generational cohorts. Participant 6 described how team

building could be used to help employees understand each other's generational work

ethics. Participant 7 noted that it is important to ensure that each employee feels important and included when building effective teams.

There are several tools to assist managers to build effective teams. Participant 2 uses the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to help understand the different characteristics of employees. This tool allows the participant to build different approaches for different types of employees. Participant 6 recalled a team-building activity called "four corners," which helped employees understand different the personality traits that shape how the different generations interact with one another in the workplace. Effective managers use generational differences to enhance teamwork and increase collaboration.

Collaboration. Clark (2017) described how multigenerational teams are assets to an organization as each member brings unique strengths, viewpoints, and skills that enhance productivity, creativity, and collaboration. Managers must be aware of generational differences and cultivate an environment conducive to the successful collaboration of employees from a multigenerational workforce. Kilber, Barclay, and Ohmer (2014), stated that collaborating with employees on new policies and procedures before implementation could help with acceptance across the workforce. Participant 7 added to this idea, describing the importance of including employees in the decision-making whenever possible. Participant 7 added that it is important to include employees so that they do not begin to feel excluded, which poses significant threats to motivation and collaboration. Participant 5 added that it is important to make everyone feel included while paying attention to their unique attributes and skills.

Theme 3: Training and Development

Creating and maintaining a motivated workforce requires training and development programs to cultivate the potential of each group. Organizational leaders can use training and development programs to mitigate the loss of knowledge as older generations retire and promote younger generations to gain and maintain a competitive advantage. These programs must be formalized to train and develop employees who demonstrate qualities, skills, and attributes necessary to take on positions of increased responsibility (Jones, 2017; Patidar et al., 2016). There were 13 mentions of the training and development theme in the participant interviews.

Training. Employee training plays a vital role in creating and maintaining organizational capacity. Additionally, training programs can be used as a motivational tool for members of the multigenerational workforce. Effective employee training programs meet the achievement need, which builds confidence and worth in employees (Maslow, 1943). Participant 6 stated that their organization conducts multigenerational management training and stressed the importance of ensuring managers make time to attend the training to ensure they are armed with the skills to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Participant 4 added that their company gives managers access to a variety of different training programs on how to motivate people, how to build trust relationships with customers, and how to deal with conflict. Training programs increase productivity, which leads to increased profits. Additionally, effective employee training programs help employees grow professionally within the organization, so they can maximize their potential.

Development. Maslow (2000) noted that providing employees the opportunity to learn and develop meets the self-actualization need. Participant 2 stressed the importance of individual development plans (IDPs) for employees of all ages. The participant added that managers should ensure all employees have an IDP to help them grow personally and professionally. Participant 7 added that they have found that no matter how long an employee has been in the workforce, they appreciate developmental opportunities. Some of these opportunities include developmental assignments, professional certifications, and educational assistance. The participant added that the benefits are twofold: both the employee and the organization benefit. Managers must work to afford employees developmental opportunities to reach their personal and professional goals.

Theme 4: Rewards and Recognition

Self-esteem needs are realized in the workplace through performance appraisals, incentives, rewards, and recognition (Maslow, 2000). The realization of self-esteem needs builds employee confidence, and increases as the employee obtains more rewards, recognition, and positive performance appraisals (Maslow, 2000). Managers can use rewards and recognition to motivate employees to achieve organizational objectives. There were five mentions of the rewards and recognition theme in the participant interviews.

Rewards. Managers can use rewards to encourage positive attitudes and behaviors that increase organizational performance. Participant 6 stated that it is important to show employee appreciation. The concept of employee appreciation is supported by equity theory, which illustrates this concept through the depiction of inputs

and outputs. Employee inputs such as effort, experience, and education should generate

organizational outputs such as pay raises and tenure (Adams, 1965). Employees strive to

maintain a balance between their input and the inputs of other employees as well as the

outputs of their employers. However, participant 6 added that organizations that provide

incentives must tailor the incentive to the individual needs of the employee. Baby

boomers may be motivated by monetary rewards, while Generation X may prefer time off

awards (Clark, 2017; Holian, 2015; Vasantha, 2016).

Recognition. As described by Becton et al., (2014), leaders who implement

programs to recognize employees may also improve productivity. Participant 4 stated that

everyone has the same basic common needs to feel recognized, seen, and feel respected

in the workplace. Participant 7 added the importance of recognizing your employees for

their work that they do. The participant described several examples of ways to recognize

employees based on their generational cohort including time-off awards and gift cards.

The participant added that younger generations of employees value praise and small

tokens of appreciation. Participant 2 noted that while older generations may not

appreciate a lot of positive reinforcement, younger generations thrive off positive

reinforcement. Managers should be mindful of generational differences when recognizing

employees.

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Applications to Professional Practice

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The purpose of the qualitative single case study was to explore strategies

marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The objective of this

study was to increase the awareness of strategies to motivate across generational

boundaries. The findings from this study were significant to the professional practice of business in several ways. Increased diversity in the workforce creates challenges for business leaders (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012). As described by Mahdi and Almsafir (2014) managers seek to understand and utilize strategies that improve productivity in their organizations. The findings from this study demonstrate how management can implement policies to gain and retain a multigenerational workforce. Findings from this study may improve business practice by providing business leaders the ability to assess whether their business practices increase productivity in their organizations. The actions of business leaders have a significant influence on recruiting and retention efforts (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016; Umamaheshwari & Krishnan, 2015).

The participants were marketing managers based in Maryland who identified strategies they used to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Managers and organizations can benefit from the use these tools to motivate an increasingly diverse workforce.

The growing diversity in the workplace has created challenges that affect organizational sustainability and employee productivity. Each generation possesses unique and distinguishable characteristics (Kultalahti & Viitala, 2014). As described by Gursoy et al., (2013) managers must understand generational differences to improve employee motivation. Managers who understand and embrace generational differences can help their organizations gain and maintain a competitive advantage in an increasingly complex business environment.

The results of this study support Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The results

of this study indicate that while all employees have the same needs, it is important to understand how generational cohort affect those needs. The participants indicated that effective motivational methods are essential to creating sustainable organizations. The research findings revealed four principal themes: (a) communication and connecting, (b) teamwork and collaboration, (c) training and development, and (d) rewards and recognition. Based on the research outcomes, marketing managers need to apply these themes to their daily interactions with their employees. Business leaders may gain insight into the motivations of a multigenerational workforce, enabling them to review their policies and identify strategies to improve business practices.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this single case study have several implications for social change. The multigenerational workforce is an essential part of the modern workplace. The multigenerational workforce creates challenges and opportunities (Coulter & Faulkner, 2014). This study's findings may serve as the basis for positive social change for individuals and organizations as the findings could beneficially affect behaviors. Improving employee motivation leads to higher productivity and increased profits. The motivational strategies identified in this study may increase awareness of generational differences in the workplace. Generational differences create challenges for managers and employees (Haeger & Lingham, 2014). Leaders are responsible for directing individuals toward business objectives and inspiring people to achieve organizational success (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016). Leaders may use the results of this study to increase their understanding of strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. The results of

this study may improve operations and address gaps in organizational performance (Umamaheshwari & Krishnan, 2015). This study provides additional knowledge to the body of research about the strategies managers may use to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Recommendations for Action

Leaders of large and small organizations experience challenges motivating a workforce comprised of five generations. As described by Ismail and Lu (2014) Millennial workers will be 50% of the workforce by 2020. Thus, these challenges require managers seek new ideas for motivating a multigenerational workforce. Young et al. (2013) noted that similarities exist between the members of the generations. Managers must understand the differences and similarities between the generational cohorts (Clark, 2017).

Management can use the strategies that maximize these similarities while minimizing differences. Three recommended strategies for leaders from this study are: (a) adaptive work schedules, (b) increased knowledge sharing, and (c) innovative management styles. Managers should provide options like telework for employees to improve the productivity of the multigenerational workforce. Knowledge sharing among older and younger employees fosters teamwork and maximizes the performance of the workforce. Technology should be used as a tool to enhance knowledge sharing (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016). Leaders must adjust their leadership styles to adapt to the ways the members of the different generational cohorts think, learn, and respond. Older employees

value compliance and stability while younger employees value frequent feedback and cooperative learning (Twenge et al., 2012).

Findings from this study may be beneficial to individuals and organizations. This study will be published and available on the ProQuest database. The community research partner and all participants will receive a copy of this study. I will also seek to share these findings with additional business leaders, community stakeholders, and academic professionals through scholarly journals and business publications. When possible, I will share the findings through seminars and training courses.

Recommendations for Further Research

During this study, I focused on how managers can motivate the five generations of employees who are occupying the workplace for the first time in history. The findings from this study may prompt additional research on motivational strategies for managers of multiple generations of employees. Researchers may choose to conduct further studies to explore problems not covered in this study. I limited my research to managers in Waldorf, Maryland. Thus, one recommendation would be to expand this research to a different geographical area. Conducting further research in a different region of the country would add to depth and breadth of research on this topic. I would also recommend a different methodology or design such as quantitative or mixed methods. Further quantitative research could be conducted to determine the relationship between employee motivation and factors such as communication, training, and rewards (Yin, 2014). Mixed methods research could involve the collection and analysis of quantitative data such as surveys and qualitative data such as interviews (Franklin, 2012). Conducting

similar research in a different location with a different methodology or design may further corroborate the validity of these findings. A different research methodology or design could also provide different results.

I would also recommend expanding this research to another industry or organization. Procedures and practices may vary among different industries and organizations (Kisely & Kendall, 2011). Marketing managers provided unique insights. However, expanding this research to a different industry such as retail or healthcare may provide further insight into this phenomenon.

I recommend the exploration of multigenerational management strategies within the scope of a larger organization. Conducting similar research with a larger organization may further corroborate the validity of these findings. The findings from this study warrant further research to examine strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

Reflections

The Walden University Doctoral Study process has been challenging and rewarding. The faculty, staff, and students have been exceptional. This study has provided me with new knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a researcher and organizational leader. I feel personally enlightened by the results of this process.

The multigenerational workforce is a topic of personal and professional interest. However, it is a topic I had not explored thoroughly until the beginning of this program. Thus, I had minimal personal biases or preconceived ideas and values. I approached this research with an unbiased approach and relied on data to answer the research question. Through research, I gained significant insight into this phenomenon. The findings have

influenced how I view the topic of employee motivation and the members of the multigenerational workforce.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Employee motivation is a critical component of organizational sustainability. Leaders are tasked with creating and maintaining a productive workforce. However, some managers lack strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. Organizational leaders must understand the goals, values, and beliefs of the multigenerational workforce to effectively motivate them (Coulter & Faulkner, 2014; Solaja & Ogunola, 2016).

Seven marketing managers from a Maryland-based marketing firm participated in semistructured interviews, as well as member checking and observation. After collecting and analyzing data, four principal themes emerged: (a) communication and connecting, (b) teamwork and collaboration, (c) training and development, and (d) rewards and recognition. These findings indicate that there are specific strategies leaders can utilize to motivate a multigenerational workforce. By implementing the identified strategies, these marketing managers were able to motivate members of the multigenerational workforce. It is imperative that leaders understand which strategies are most effective to maximize talent and affect change in their organization. Additionally, these strategies must be reviewed regularly and revised as needed to ensure successful implementation. Only then will managers be able to affect positive social change for their employees and

organizations through changing the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of the

multigenerational workforce.

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Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation

Insert name of Community Research Partner and Contact Information here]

[*Insert date here*]

Dear Avon Cornelius,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Strategies to Motivate a Multigenerational Workforce within the [*Insert Name of Community Partner here*]. As part of this study, I authorize you to contact marketing managers to obtain informed consent, observe daily operations, conduct and record interviews, conduct subsequent validation of interview responses (member checking), and share the results of this study. Based on the eligibility criteria you indicated in your letter of invitation, you may recruit participants from among the following persons: *[Insert the names of eligible persons]*. Participation of each individual will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include authorizing marketing managers to participate as well as provide access to company documents relevant to this study. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

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

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

Sincerely,
[*Signature of Community Research Partner and Contact Information*]

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

[Date]

Re: Letter of Invitation for Participation in a Doctoral Study

Dear [Name]

My name is Avon D. Cornelius II, and I am a student at Walden University pursuing a doctoral degree in Business Administration with a Human Resource Management specialization. I am researching strategies to motivate a multigenerational workforce. I am interested in exploring how differences among the generational cohorts require managers to consider innovative approaches to effectively motivate employees. I am seeking to interview managers who fit the following criteria:

- At least 21 years of age

- Five years of supervisory experience

- Available for interviews, observation, and member checking

The participant's study criteria have been determined to provide the researcher with unique perspectives to this research. All responses will be categorized, and no names will be attached in any form to the results. Individuals who met the above criteria and are interested in participating in the study are asked to contact me. Participation in this study is voluntary. Please feel free to email me if you have any questions or would like additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Avon D. Cornelius II

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Date: Location:

Interviewee:

Participant Consent form _____ date_____

Introductions:

1. Thank the interviewee for their time and cooperation.

2. Provide purpose of the study is to explore strategies marketing managers use to motivate a multigenerational workforce.

3. Provide a copy of their consent form and go over each section.

4. Remind the interviewee they can withdraw from the study at any time.

5. Advise the interview will be recorded and will take only 30 minutes.

6. Begin the interview with the same question order below.

Questions

1. What strategies do you use to motivate a multigenerational workforce?

2. How has your organization assessed the effectiveness of the strategies for motivating members of the different generational groups?

3. What strategies are most effective motivating members of the different generational groups?

4. What strategies are least effective motivating members of the different generational groups?

5. What else would you like to add regarding strategies used to motivate a multigenerational workforce?

Interview Conclusion:

1. Member checking: I will transcribe the recording and provide a copy for you to review and validate to ensure there are no errors which may take about 30 minutes of your time.

    Interviewee competed member checking _____ Date

2. Thank the interviewee for their participation.

Appendix D: Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol

Location: Date:

Participant _(enter letter that coincides with interview coding)

Motivation strategies used while observing:

Notes:

Did the marketing manager provide documentation to validate the success of

motivational strategies?

Notes:

Appendix E: Confidentiality Agreement

Name of Signer:

During the course of my activity as professional transcriber for this research: Strategies to Motivate a Multigenerational Workforce. I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.

2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.

3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.

4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.

5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.

6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.

7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: **Date:**