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Developing Generation-Based Volunteer Management Practices

Tonya Renee' Howard
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Walden University

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Tonya Renee' Howard

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Developing Generation-Based Volunteer Management Practices

by

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MPA, Troy University, 2000

BA, Spelman College, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

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Abstract

Many nonprofits seek a volunteer base that includes the experience and maturity of the Silent and Baby Boomer Generations as well as the creativity and advanced technological knowledge of Generations X, Y, and Z. Published literature recommends implementing multigenerational volunteer programs to increase the representation of multiple generations. However, there is no literature providing guidance to create volunteer management practices that simultaneously recruit and retain those generations. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of 5 generations of volunteers. The research questions for this phenomenological study addressed perspectives that may contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. The theoretical framework included Mannheim's theory of generations and generational cohort theory, and Strauss-Howe generational theory, which suggest that an individual's generational classification influences his or her experiences of recruitment and retention. Individual interviews were conducted with 20 participants from 5 generations who currently volunteer or have recently volunteered in a nonprofit. Data were coded and categorized for thematic analysis using Moustakas' method. Findings indicated that many of the generational cohorts shared similar experiences in how they prefer to be recruited and retained. However, each cohort expressed a distinct need for generation-specific volunteer management practices. The implications for social change include informing volunteer resource managers of the importance of developing generation-based volunteer management practices, in order to recruit and retain multiple generations of volunteers.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends. I would like to say a special thank you to: my mother, Mrs. Julia Howard; my sister, Ms. Kendra Howard; and my niece, little Miss. Desiree' Hudson. Their words of wisdom and encouragement helped me to press pass when I simply felt like giving up. I am grateful for them understanding the challenges that were posed at times, to simply get through this dissertation journey. I also dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my wonderful father, Mr. Kenneth Howard. I have felt his love and support all the way from heaven.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my extended family, friends, former church family, and current church family, whose support has definitely helped me to get through this process. I will always appreciate all that you have done for me to keep me focused, prayed for, and determination to finish strong.

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Finally, I dedicate this work to all of the selfless Volunteer Directors/Managers who are in continued pursuit of ensuring that volunteer management continues to be relevant among thriving nonprofit organizations' volunteer programs.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Volunteering may be defined as any type of activity where time is given freely to benefit another person, organization, group, or cause, without an expectation of monetary payment (Terry, Harder, & Pracht, 2011). Volunteerism is but one expression of altruism that has been a part of U.S. society for years (Holmes & Smith, 2012). Although it is evident that volunteerism has always been important, the concept of what it means to volunteer continues to evolve. More than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations exist in the United States, which does not include church congregations that engage in some type of charitable service involving volunteers (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2014). Considering the broad range of nonprofit organizations, coupled with the current economy (i.e., - layoffs, shrinking budgets, and service needs), the service that volunteers bring to nonprofit organizations is indispensable to the well-being of society (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2014). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013 report, from September 2012 to September 2013, individuals spent an average of 51 hours volunteering. During the same period, approximately 64.3 million individuals volunteered via an organization, or for an organization (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013), donating almost 8.1 billion hours (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2013). When considering those 8.1 billion hours donated, it is evident of the tremendous value volunteers add to society. The estimated dollar value of a volunteer in 2014 was \$23.07 per hour, saving nonprofit organizations approximately \$212 billion (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2014). Nonprofits must revolutionize their understanding of the

value of unpaid services and embrace the talent of volunteers of all ages; this will be one of the most critical ways to fulfill their organization's mission.

Once volunteers have been properly recruited and placed in a volunteer role that is mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and the nonprofit organization, understanding how to retain those volunteers is crucial (Voida, Harmon, & Al-Ani, 2012). Because no compensation or any type of monetary gain exists in volunteerism, volunteer resource managers must use creative methods to ensure the retention and commitment of volunteers to the organization. One way to warrant sound engagement and retention of volunteers is to ensure that effective and efficient volunteer management practices such as recruitment, recognition, and retention are in place within the nonprofit organization (Binder, 2010). Volunteer resource managers identify this as practicing the three *Rs* of volunteer management: recruitment, recognition, and retention (Bermudez, 2010). The focus of this study was to describe the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Generation-based volunteer management practices are volunteer management practices that are explicitly designed to fit a specific generation of volunteers. Developing generation-based volunteer management practices may play a vital role in determining how to effectively engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in nonprofit organizations.

Most recently, volunteerism and the role that it plays in providing avid support to nonprofit organizations has been gaining attention in the general public (Ward & Mckillop, 2011) and by researchers alike (Omoto, Snyder, & Hackett, 2010). This

increase in attention does not come as a surprise, as volunteerism is and has always been a pursuit of many individuals of all ages (Haupt, 2010), whether done as a requirement, or for altruistic purposes. Given the vast knowledge of volunteerism and the empirically examined motivation of individuals (Twenge, 2010), much is still desired to adequately understand individuals' motivations to volunteer (Haupt, 2010).

The value in which volunteers contribute to society is undeniable, as they are the core individuals behind many community programs. Without volunteers, many community and social programs would cease to exist (Omoto et al., 2010). As community and social programs begin to expand in number and reach, nonprofit organizations are encountering problems with recruiting and retaining an adequate number of volunteers (Scott, 2000). Subsequently, recruiting and retaining volunteers has been a top priority in many nonprofit organizations nationwide (Rochester, Paine, Howlett, & Zimmeck, 2010). Therefore, understanding the motivation behind volunteering appears to be a necessary area of study (Terry et al., 2011).

Understanding what engages, motivates, and eventually retains individuals to continue offering their time and talents is important for volunteer resource managers in nonprofit organizations where volunteers share a significant part in fulfilling the organization's overall mission (Holmes & Smith, 2012). If nonprofit organizations aspire to use volunteers, they must understand why individuals desire to volunteer in the first place. Nonprofit organizations should look toward developing effective and efficient volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention of all ages,

especially capitalizing on the current five living generations (i.e., – the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z).

A considerable amount of talent exists within each generation; organizations would be remiss if they neglect to take full advantage of each individual's talents and skills. Understanding what it takes to engage, motivate, and retain those talents and skills is imperative (Ronalds, 2012). That particular knowledge is essential to not only the U.S. workforce, but the nonprofit sector in particular. Although it is often taught by executive teams in corporate America that multigenerational motivation and retention are important, the nonprofit sector has not yet learned these lessons. This information could potentially help nonprofit organizations in their missions both locally and globally.

Background

The nonprofit sector needs skills that volunteers offer (Worth, 2013). Nonprofits are still under much strain from the economic crisis, older executive leaders retiring, and high turnover of young nonprofit staff (Worth, 2013). Volunteers are an often undervalued and underused resource for handling these specific types of challenges. For example, volunteers save nonprofits money by conducting strategic planning, developing programs, providing technology services, and training staff, all without compensation (Smith, 2010). Volunteers can ease financial stress by providing fundraising help to nonprofits. Because volunteers have a personal commitment to the organization's mission, those same organizations do not have to do much convincing to these potential donors.

The ease of financial stress is only one small challenge that volunteers can provide relief to nonprofit organizations; the sector also faces a major leadership crisis (Ronalds, 2012). Nonprofits can expect to lose approximately 50% of its current leadership in the next few years (Smith, 2010). Nonprofit organizations are experiencing turnover rates in mid-level and entry-level staff. A 2010 study conducted by the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network reported that 45% of individuals who work in the nonprofit sector predict a shift from the nonprofit sector to the corporate sector for their next employment. The top reason for such a decision to leave is staff burnout (Smith, 2010). Although individuals who work in nonprofit organizations may have been hired for on specific, they hold many responsibilities in addition to what they are generally paid to do; hence, burnout ensues. Staff burnout in nonprofit organizations could be eased by including experienced volunteers to help in areas where staff may not have the time to devote.

Experienced volunteers come in many forms. Volunteers can take on leadership roles and serve as skills-based volunteers in professional areas (e.g., – accounting, legal, bookkeeping) where needed. Older, more mature volunteers who have retired can offer mentorship to young nonprofit professionals to improve staff morale and potentially lower turnover rates (Arnold & Place, 2010). Younger volunteers can provide creative insight to strategic planning needed in the organization. Teen volunteers can add value to nonprofit organizations via their vast knowledge of current technology.

Experienced volunteers also come from varying generations. Volunteers from each generation contribute in great ways to sustain nonprofit organizations nationwide

(Wymer, 2011). Beginning with the 20th century, at least five American generations can be examined, including the characteristics that make them differ from another (Williams & Page, 2011). Each generation is considerably different from the one that preceded it, and the one that followed it, because the generations are shaped by distinctly different influences in society (Williams & Page, 2011). The Silent Generation experienced key events such as the Great Depression, the stock market crash, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, and the Pearl Harbor attacks. Therefore, their core values are prone to be dedication, sacrifice, honor, respect for authority, and adhering to the rules (Cusack, Sandra, & Thompson, 2013). Baby Boomers experienced key events such as World War II ending, the Cold War, the legacy of the Vietnam War, humankind walking on the moon, and the Woodstock Festival; subsequently, their core values may include optimism, involvement, personal growth, personal gratification, health, and wellness (Achenbaum, 2012). Generation X experienced key events such as the Watergate scandal, the inauguration of President Ronald Regan, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Rodney King, the personal computer, and Operation Desert Storm; therefore, their core values may include diversification, techno-literacy, self-reliance, thinking globally, and balance (Achenbaum, 2012). Generation Y experienced key events such as the internet, cell phones, DVDs, the President Clinton scandal, the Columbine massacre, and Princess Diana's death; therefore, their core values may include civic duty, stability, street smarts, morality, and sociability (Omoto et al., 2010). Generation Z is experiencing key events such as 9/11, the War in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina, the Obama children in the Whitehouse, and economic instability; subsequently, their core values may include thinking globally, being family

oriented, honor, and even adhering to the rules (Luping, 2011). Every generation's experience influences their core values (Ronalds, 2012), which, in turn, may influence how they are motivated to do certain things.

Understanding the characteristics, personalities, and motivational behaviors of generations will attract attention of both the business and nonprofit sectors (Worth, 2013). Nonprofit organizations must begin to use the talents and skills of all living generations, but, first, each generation must be understood. Studying generational differences is not an accurate science. Few researchers and theorists have studied the phenomena of generational differences (Worth, 2013); the names assigned to each generation, as well as times, dates, and events that separate one from another, all differ (Table 1).

Table 1

Generation Time Periods

Authors	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Strauss and Howe (1991)	1925 – 1942	1943 – 1960	1961 – 1981	1982 – present	-
Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak (2000)	1922 – 1943	1943 – 1960	1960 – 1980	1980 – 2000	-
Marston (2007)	1920 – 1946	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1979	1980 – 2000	2001 – present
Tapscott (2009)	-	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1976	1977 – 1997	-
Espinoza (2010)	-	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1977	1978 – 1996	-
*Used in this study	1925 – 1945	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1980	1981 – 2000	2001 – present

Every generation has unique experiences, lifestyles, values, and generational history (Williams & Page, 2011) that influence their particular behavior. The current study included five living generations and explained how each of them was raised with different lifestyles, technologies, and behaviors that potentially influence how they perceived and experienced a specific phenomenon. The question then becomes: How do these different lifestyles affect engaging and retaining individuals as volunteers in a nonprofit organization? An individual's values and preferences may be influenced by their generational differences (Omoto et al., 2010). Generational theorists believe that individuals who have encountered comparative ecological conditions; for example, political occasions, investment circumstances, and innovative progressions, will have similar outlooks related to one another (Howe & Strauss, 2007). In addition, strong theoretical basis support the concept of generations, and it is intelligent to recommend that generational distinctions might have an effect inside the working environment and on different regions of life (Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Generational examination must be concerned about three general matters to ensure a satisfactory methodology: (a) obtaining sufficiently clear information, (b) illustrating such information, and (c) relating clarification to a general hypothesis of generational contrasts and social change (Day, 2013). At the descriptive level, generational contrasts at a given point may be connected with age, accomplice, or interactional effects. The description of age, associate, and interactional effects requires bringing extra variables and contemplations into the fundamental elucidating model. Day concluded that empirical studies should be couched within a theoretical perspective in

order for research on generational differences and social change to be most useful. A satisfactory understanding of generational contrasts and social change is desperately obliged if advancement is to be made in managing today's brand of generational related social issues and concerns.

In a national study of public charities in the United States, Hager and Brudney (2011) found that some organizations experience only a slight difficulty engaging volunteers, whereas other organizations report substantial difficulties. The study concluded that volunteer resource managers and fellow members of top management still seek understanding on how to engage individuals of various generations in volunteerism, and what strategies must be devised to do so. It may be true that the work done in the voluntary sector is increasing, but the number of individuals who volunteer is not increasing at the same rapid rate (Bussell & Forbes, 2012). Bussell and Forbes argued in the conclusion to their study "that the key to an organization's success in recruiting and retaining its volunteers is to have an understanding of its target group" (p. 255). In my particular study, gaining understanding of an organization's target group includes specifically understanding the characteristics, personalities, and life experiences of five living generations.

In addition to understanding an organization's target group, volunteer management practices that will prove effective in recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers, must be in place. A review of the literature has revealed that most studies regarding effective and efficient practices of the three *Rs* of volunteer management have focused on one specific cohort's experience of the phenomenon. Focus on one cohort

places undue burden on the individual researcher to acquire additional literature on other cohorts relevant to gaining understanding of different target groups (Wymer, 2011). This breeds potential for a researcher to become inundated in the search for separate literature that focuses on those other generational cohorts' experience with the phenomenon.

Because of the gap in literature exploring effective and efficient practices of the three *Rs* of volunteer management among five living generations in a single study, a qualitative phenomenological study devoted to understanding the five generations' lived experiences best lends itself to examining the question: What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers? The current study fills the gap in the literature by providing a single study illuminating the influence of generation theory on all five living generations' experiences of volunteer management practices.

Although several nonprofit organizations heavily rely on the talents of one specific generational cohort to further the mission of their organization, more nonprofit organizations are beginning to create programs that need an array of individuals' talents, not relegated to one generational cohort (Wymer, 2011). My study is needed because, in the area of volunteerism within nonprofit organizations, individuals belong to an array of different generational cohorts where all of their talent is crucial. However, not each cohort is motivated to be engaged and retained in volunteerism the same way; therefore, an understanding of how each generation is motivated is valuable information. My study purposed to describe the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based

volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations.

Problem Statement

Most nonprofit organizations rely heavily on volunteers to fulfill their mission, and have created volunteer management practices that effectively recruit and retain one generation of volunteers. Many nonprofits seek a volunteer base that includes the experience and maturity of the Silent and Baby Boomer Generations as well as the creativity and advanced technological knowledge of Generations X, Y, and Z. Published literature recommends the implementation of multigenerational volunteer programs as a tool to increase the representation of multiple generations. However, there is no literature providing guidance to create generation specific volunteer management practices that simultaneously recruit and retain those generations. To guide in the creation of these generation-based practices, there must first be some level of understanding of each generational cohort's experience of volunteer engagement and retention. To date, a great amount of research exists in studies that focus on one generation, or the comparison of two generations, attempting to understand the influences that contribute to their motivation to be engaged and retained in volunteerism. The gap that remains is research conducted in a single study including all five living generations, and the influences that contribute to their motivation to be engaged and retained simultaneously within a volunteer workforce. This study purposed to fill that gap by exploring the recruitment, recognition, and retention experiences of each living generation, that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. It illuminates the influence

of generation theory on all five living generations' experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention, thus providing effective generation-based volunteer management practices to be used as a valuable resource for volunteer resource managers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Interviews were held with individuals who currently or recently experienced volunteerism in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations in order to gather data relevant to fulfill the purpose of the study.

Research Question

The central phenomenon of this study is the experience of the general practice of the three Rs of volunteer management among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations.

The central question and sub questions for this study are as follows: What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers?

- Sub question 1: How has an individual's specific generational cohort classification influenced his or her desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained?
- Sub question 2: How has each generation of volunteers experienced recruitment, recognition, and retention?

- Sub question 3: What are important considerations when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers?
- Sub question 4: How can the development of generation-based volunteer management practices potentially increase engagement and retention of five living generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Theoretical Foundation

The major concern of this study is the struggle among nonprofit organizations to engage and retain all five living generations, simultaneously, within their organization's volunteer workforce. Three main concepts exist in my specific research. First, the concept of individuals categorized in one of five current generational cohorts (i.e., – Silent Generation, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z). Secondly, the concept of the lived experiences of the individuals from each generation who experience or have recently experienced the phenomenon of inquiry. Thirdly, the concept of the three general volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention.

There have been studies in the field of volunteer management that have examined engaging and retaining one generation, or comparing two to three generations, and that literature has revealed that an individual's generational cohort classification has heavy influence on their experiences, characteristics, personality, and decisions (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Using generation theory can predict how each specific generation will tackle the next life stage that they will face (e.g., – Millennials in the workplace,

Generation X as parents and mortgage owners, retiring Baby Boomers, or how each generation chooses to use their talents in their free time) (Strauss and Howe, 1991).

The major constructs that were relevant to this study were the characteristics, values, and personalities of each generational cohort. Each generation's cohort classification has a significant influence on their experiences, characteristics, personality, and decisions (Smola & Sutton, 2002); thus my decision to use the overarching generation theory (including Karl Mannheim's theory of generations, generational cohort theory, and the Strauss-Howe generational theory) as a theoretical framework for the study. Generation theory explains that the era in which a person was born affects how they view the world (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Using generation theory as a foundation for this specific study presented great potential in helping to answer the *what* and *how* of the research question. Generation theory merely suggests the potential influence of an individual's generation classification and one's experience with recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteerism. Generational theory is not psychological theory, but sociological (Smola & Sutton, 2002). No claim exists to emphatically prove that generation theory explains each individual's action, nor are there claims that generation theory predicts an individual's behavior. However, with the combination of personalities, culture, gender, etc., generation theory can be an extremely helpful lens of analysis of what drives people's motivational behaviors (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Directly in line with how I perceive the connection between generation theory and how generational cohorts are motivated to be recruited, recognized, and retained in volunteerism, exists three main theorists/theories: Karl Mannheim's theory of

generations, generational cohort theory, and the Strauss-Howe generational theory. Karl Mannheim's theory of generations suggests a significant influence on people by the socio-historical environment that dominates their forming, on the specific basis of that sole experience (Mannheim, 1936). Generational cohort theory proposes that important historical events and social changes in society affect the values, attitudes, beliefs, and inclinations of individuals (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012). Strauss-Howe generational theory implies that individuals who share an age group also have a tendency to share attitudes and behaviors simply because they grew up in a specific period in history (Smola & Sutton, 2002). These theorists and theories are currently being used in the field of volunteer management, specifically to explore and understand the engagement and retention of volunteers. These theories are explained in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The phenomenological approach identifies phenomena through the perception of the actors in a situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In my study, I gained an understanding of the essence of the recruitment, recognition, and retention experience of volunteers among five generational cohorts in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Primary data were collected via long, in-depth interviews consisting of open-ended questions regarding individual experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention as a volunteer. I engaged in 20 one-on-one interviews that were conversational versus structured. These data were recorded via audio and written notes. Phenomenology depends upon the creation of data that is solid, thick, or descriptive (Silverman, 2010) in

order to increase the credibility of the current study. Hence, in order for me to increase the applicability of this study to future studies of this nature, a rich description of the research participants' experiences was created. Therefore, the procedure for analyzing data collected was influenced by Moustakas (1994) data analysis method, outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis procedure	Process
Organize and prepare data for analysis	I transcribed each interview. Data were stored electronically to NVivo (2012) as audio and word processing files. The transcripts were stored in a secure area that was locked away with me being the only individual with access to those transcripts. Audio recordings and transcripts were destroyed at the completion of the study.
Review data	I read through the data in order to get a sense of the information.
Begin detailed analysis with a horizontalization process	I identified significant statements, sentences, or quotes that specifically describe the participants' experience of the phenomenon. I listed these statements, with the assumption of equal worth (horizontalization of data). I developed a list of nonrepetitive and non-overlapping statements.
Develop descriptions of themes and sub-themes	I grouped significant statements into larger units of information (clusters of meaning or themes). I generated descriptions of themes and sub-themes.
Determine how themes and descriptions will be presented	I used narrative descriptions to express the findings of the analysis. I discussed the themes and sub-themes to describe the phenomenon.
Interpret meaning of the data	I wrote textual descriptions of what the research participants experienced in the phenomenon (including exact examples and structural descriptions of how the experienced happened). I synthesized the data and created a composite description of said phenomenon that incorporated the textual and structural descriptions – the essence of the experience.

A review of the literature provided current knowledge base related to generational cohort theories and compared those similar theories and its potential influence on volunteer recruitment and retention. The need for this comparison was to increase clarity concerning the relationship between five generation's specific generational cohort classification and their experience of the three Rs of volunteer management. Current research has not clearly isolated whether the influence of generational cohorts determine how volunteers are engaged and retained in volunteer involvement. It is impossible to isolate generation cohort influence as a variable for quantitative research until additional exploration of the phenomenon through qualitative observation exists (Moustakas, 1994), thus the selection of the phenomenological paradigm for this study.

Definitions

Cohort: For the purpose of this study, *cohort* was defined as a group of individuals banded together as a group.

Generation: For the purpose of this study, *generation* was described as a group of individuals having common knowledge and experiences that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Generational cohort: For purposes of this study, *generational cohort* was defined as a specific population of individuals who are experiencing, or have experienced the same event within the same time interval (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Lived experiences: For purposes of this study, *lived experiences* was defined as the nonacademic experience of an individual that may include, but not limited to social

relationships, personal feelings or observations, emotional growth, cultural adjustments, and more specifically, the act of volunteerism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Volunteer resource manager: For purposes of this study, *volunteer resource manager* was defined as personnel liaison between a board or managing committee and the actual volunteers at said organization. They manage an organization's volunteer program, and are also often referred to as Volunteer Coordinator, Volunteer Manager, Volunteer Director, or Director of Volunteer Services (Herman, 2011).

Assumptions

Assumptions in a study are things that are out of the researcher's control; however, if there were no assumptions, then the study would be irrelevant. Assumptions are basic to the point that, without them, the examination issue itself couldn't exist (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). This particular study's focus was on five generations who have either been in an ongoing volunteer position, or have been a part of a singular event. Underlying assumptions suggest that understanding what motivates individuals to volunteer will continue to be important as long as work is to be done in organizations. For my specific study, I assumed that people would answer interview questions truthfully, especially after being told that: (1) anonymity and confidentiality would be preserved, and (2) research participants are volunteers who could withdraw from the study at any time without ramifications. A final assumption of my study was the assumption that the individuals chosen as participants were a true representation of the population that I desired to reference. Assumptions cannot just be stated as assumptions that the researcher is

making; the researcher must justify that those said assumptions are probably true (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).

Scope and Delimitations

The study attempted to explore the selected participants' lived experiences of recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteerism within a metro Atlanta nonprofit organization. This attempt was in an effort to provide guidance in developing effective volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention. I confined this study to researching members of cohorts who were experiencing volunteerism, or recently completed volunteerism whether in an ongoing capacity, or a one-time event (within six months of the participant's scheduled interview). For the purposes of my study, *volunteerism* was defined as an individual who participates in the ongoing act of volunteering through engagement, motivation, and retention (Lee, Shah, & McLeod, 2013). In an effort to collect the most appropriate responses during data collection within each participating cohort, two participants (one male, one female) were currently involved in volunteer service, and the other two (one male, one female) recently separated from their role. This effort was important because it exhibited proof that each individual recently experienced the phenomenon of volunteerism.

A review of the literature unanimously showed that the majority of the generational cohorts preferred immediate feedback no matter the subject matter (Terry et al., 2011). Needless to say, there were two specific criteria for participants of this research study. First, for research participants who were currently in a volunteer capacity, they must have been in that role for at least two years. Secondly, for research participants

who were not currently in a volunteer capacity, they must not only have been involved in a volunteer role within six months of the date of their interview, but also must have been serving in a specific volunteer capacity for at least two years, whether ongoing or a one-time event. The requirement of being involved within this certain time frame limit some of the negative compounding issues including forgetfulness, lack of interest to participate because they may have forgotten their volunteer experience, and possibility of that participant's relocation since being involved with said organization. The use of the state of Georgia was convenient, as I possessed consistent access to a database of all nonprofit organizations across the state of Georgia. Therefore, I confined the study to researching members of cohorts who lived in Georgia.

The delimitation to limit this research to individuals who had either volunteered or were currently volunteering in a nonprofit setting is twofold. First, my attempt was to isolate results of large corporation employee volunteerism. Secondly, my attempt was to also gain as much knowledge related to current volunteer management practices used in nonprofit organizations; thus fulfilling my plan to fill the gap in the literature of providing a single study illuminating the influence of generation theory on all five living generations' experience of volunteer management practices. This was for the hope to provide effective and efficient generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations, simultaneously, within a nonprofit organization. The criterion sampling technique was used in this study and participants were asked to explain their experience as a volunteer in the areas of recruitment, recognition, and retention. They

were informed as to why I was asking particular questions and were given an opportunity to withdraw from the study at his or her discretion, if necessary.

The results of this study will be transferable to other settings where volunteer resource managers: (a) work in nonprofit organizations; (b) manage volunteers; (c) are seeking knowledge on how to engage, motivate, and retain generations of volunteers; and (d) are in the state of Georgia. It will provide volunteer resource managers with detailed information on understanding five living generation's experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteerism. The results of this study may have implications for assisting those same volunteer resource managers create effective and efficient volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention for the purpose of engaging and retaining five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization.

Limitations

Limitations are those possible weaknesses in a study that are out of the control of the researcher and are found in literally everything we do. Though every study has limitations, the discussion must be restricted to those specific limitations pertaining to the investigated research problem (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). This next section includes my initial thoughts regarding the possible methodological limitations of the study.

Sample Size. This phenomenological study's criterion sampling consisted of 20 participants from five generational cohorts who were currently in a volunteer capacity or recently completed a volunteer role whether on an ongoing basis or a one-time event. Though phenomenological studies are advised to engage a small sampling size

(Moustakas, 1994), there was a possibility that such a small sample size could limit finding noteworthy relationships from data collected; as it is assumed that tests usually require a much larger sample size in order to consider it an accurate representation of the people to whom the results will be presented.

Lack of availability and/or reliable data. Although I realize the service of volunteers in nonprofit organizations is essential in ensuring that the organization functions properly, there has been very little research conducted on understanding retention in the volunteer sector (Finkelstien, 2010). An opportunity presented itself for further research to be conducted in the nonprofit sector relating to the motivation and retention of volunteers, as the majority of literature found comes from the business sector (Herman, 2011). In this case, the small sample size was most appropriate to use in order to give a valid depiction of each generation to be researched, and a larger sample size had the potential to be a hindrance to finding trends and meaningful relationships.

No fixed definition of generation. An essential limit of this particular research was the unfortunate fact that generations, themselves, are not consistent. Consequently, literature that existed on generational studies yielded several differences among the dates and time frames of the specific generation (Tapscott, 2009; Zemke et al., 2000). Though this particular research has defined each specific generation based upon all literature collected as a whole, there was still a limitation because of the lacking definition of a generation (Table 1).

Significance

Volunteer resource managers are constantly researching methods to improve the three R's of volunteer management within their respective organizations (Howlett, 2010) in order to effectively engage and retain volunteers. Research has revealed the challenge for leaders in both the business sector and the nonprofit sector, and that is the clash of generations: expectations, attitudes & behaviors, expectations, and even a collision of values (Angeline, 2011). Numerous studies exist on bridging the gap of generations in the business sector via the adoption of successful management practices, which has enhanced communication, working relationships, and effective service. However, very limited studies exist to assist volunteer resource managers in bridging volunteer generations in the nonprofit sector via successful volunteer management practices.

Adopting successful volunteer management practices to effectively engage and retain all ages of volunteers is a crucial element of a nonprofit organization's advantage (Worth, 2013). Understanding what attracts all generations, presents a higher probability that an organization will be able to effectively engage and retain those generations; thus, improving the deliverance of the nonprofit's mission (Ronalds, 2012). Five generations were empowered in this study to discuss their lived experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention practices within a nonprofit organization. Given the importance of utilizing all ages of volunteers for the success of delivering a nonprofit's mission, understanding how to successfully engaging and retaining all five living generations warrants volunteer resource managers to focus on characters, personality, skills, and experiences of each generation. It is necessary to have resources that will help to guide in

the effective and efficient development of successful volunteer management practices. Those resources cannot be created unless an adequate study is conducted, purposing to represent an individual's experience with the three Rs of volunteer management.

A qualitative phenomenological study was appropriate for this study because very little studies have exclusively explored the lived experiences of all five generations of volunteers, and how their lived experiences can contribute to developing effective and efficient practices of three Rs of volunteer management in literature. This approach best lent itself to examining this question: What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers? Study findings will be of interest and benefit to volunteer resource managers and Atlanta nonprofit organizations where they desire to engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization. My goal, as a researcher was to fill the gap in the literature by providing a single study illuminating the influence of generation theory on all five living generations' experience of volunteer management practices. The implications for social change affect four main areas, collectively: (1) bridging the volunteer generation gap, providing opportunities for all five living generation to interact with one another in a multigenerational way; (2) the Volunteer Manager who is seeking ways to increase volunteer engagement and retention, while providing an effective volunteer program within nonprofit organizations; (3) the actual nonprofit organization seeking to make a greater impact in the community via their mission; and (4) the overall community at large, seeking to resolve societal concerns.

Summary

The phenomenon of the experience of the three Rs of volunteer management among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations was introduced in Chapter 1. It began with an introduction of volunteering, which can be defined as any type of activity where time is given freely to benefit another person, organization, group, or cause, without an expectation of monetary payment (Terry et al., 2011). Considering the broad range of nonprofit organizations, coupled with the current economy (i.e., – layoffs, shrinking budgets, and service needs), the service that volunteers bring to nonprofit organizations is indispensable to the well-being of society (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2014).

There was in-depth background provided on the importance of nonprofit organizations revolutionizing their understanding of the value of volunteers, while embracing the talent of volunteers of all ages. This will be one of the most critical ways to fulfill their organization's mission. Information provided within this chapter informed that once volunteers have been properly recruited and placed in a volunteer role proving a mutual benefit to both the volunteer and the nonprofit organization, it is crucial to understand how to retain those volunteers (Volda et al., 2012). One way to ensure steady engagement and retention of volunteers is to ensure placement of effective and efficient volunteer management practices such as recruitment, recognition, and retention (Binder, 2010). Volunteer resource managers know this to be practicing the three R's of volunteer management (Bermudez, 2010); those three Rs being recruitment, recognition, and retention.

The purpose of this study, as it focused on describing the experiences that contribute developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations, was also introduced in Chapter 1. This plays a vital role in determining how to effectively engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in nonprofit organizations. Understanding what engages, motivates, and eventually retains individuals to continue volunteering their time and talents is extremely important for volunteer resource managers in nonprofit organizations where volunteers share a significant part in fulfilling the organization's overall mission (Holmes & Smith, 2012). If nonprofit organizations desire to use volunteers, it is a necessity that they understand why volunteers desire to volunteer in the first place. Engaging volunteers in the right way is crucial to any type of organization. Nonprofit organizations should look towards developing effective and efficient volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention of all ages of volunteers, especially capitalizing on the current five living generations.

There was an introduction of the theoretical framework of the study, generation theory, which consists of three theories: Karl Mannheim's theory of generations, generational cohort theory, and the Strauss-Howe generational theory. Literature has revealed that an individual's generational cohort classification has heavy influence on their experiences, characteristics, personality, and decisions (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

The chapter ends with a discussion regarding the significance of the study, as the study findings will be of interest and benefit to volunteer resource managers and Atlanta nonprofit organizations where they desire to engage and retain five generations of

volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization. As a researcher, I plan to fill a gap in the literature by providing a single study that examines the potential influence of generation theory on all five living generations' (i.e., – Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z) experience of volunteer management practices. In an effort to understand each generation and their experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention on volunteerism, Chapter 2 will provide an in-depth literature review of such knowledge and previous research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Most nonprofit organizations rely heavily on volunteers to fulfill their mission, and have created volunteer management practices that effectively recruit and retain one generation of volunteers. Many nonprofits seek a volunteer base that includes the experience and maturity of the Silent and Baby Boomer Generations as well as the creativity and advanced technological knowledge of Generations X, Y, and Z. Published literature recommends the implementation of multigenerational volunteer programs as a tool to increase the representation of multiple generations. However, there is no literature providing guidance to create generation specific volunteer management practices that simultaneously recruit and retain those generations. To guide the creation of these generation-based practices, there must first be some level of understanding of each generational cohort's experience of volunteer engagement and retention. To date, research has yielded studies that have conducted separate studies focusing on one generation, or the comparison of two generations, attempting to understand the influences that contribute to their motivation to be engaged and retained in volunteerism. The gap that remains is research conducted in a single study, including all five living generations and the influences that contribute to their motivation to be engaged and retained simultaneously within a volunteer workforce. This study purposed to fill that gap by exploring the recruitment, recognition, and retention experiences, of each living generation, that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices.

Chapter 2 includes the overall literature review strategy, to include databases and search engines used and search terms used. This chapter includes a discussion of the theoretical foundation of generation theory and includes the three theories that provide the framework for my study: Karl Mannheim's theory of generations, generational cohort theory, and Strass-Howe generational theory. The literature review presented in Chapter 2 primarily consists of a history of volunteerism in the United States, the role of the volunteer resource manager, the current general strategies for practicing the three Rs of volunteer management in the nonprofit sector, and five generation's experience of the phenomena of the general practice of the three Rs of volunteer management. Chapter 2 concludes with a discussion of why generation theory is an appropriate framework for creating environments that contribute to developing effective and efficient generation-based volunteer management practices.

Literature Search Strategy

Databases and Search Engines Used. As the iterative search process for literature that would serve as germane scholarship for my study began, I immediately decided to use the Walden University library database to begin my research. The Walden database presented a vast array of database options, but I narrowed those options to using EBSCO Publishing, ProQuest, Academic Search, Harvard University, Cornell University, and JSTOR. I also used the search engine Google Scholar. Those database searches then led me to a continued vast array of research journals, such as: *The International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, *Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resources Management*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *The International Journal of*

Volunteer Administration, The Volunteer Management Report, US Consensus Bureau, several books discussing the topics of volunteerism, generational cohorts, and generation theory.

Search Terms Used. The search terms and combination of search terms used for this study included: *challenges of volunteer resource managers; volunteer resource managers in nonprofit organizations; characteristics of generations; effective utilization of volunteers; generation theory; generations; history of volunteerism; managing volunteers; recruiting/engaging volunteers; retaining volunteers; value of an effective volunteer program; value of volunteer involvement; volunteer management; volunteer recruitment/engagement for Baby Boomers; volunteer recruitment/engagement for Generation X; volunteer recruitment/engagement for Generation Y; volunteer recruitment/engagement for Generation Z; volunteer recruitment/engagement for Silent Generation; volunteer retention practices for Baby Boomers; volunteer retention practices for Generation X; volunteer retention practices for Generation Y; volunteer retention practices for Generation Z; volunteer retention practices for Silent Generation; and volunteerism.*

Because little research including all five living generations in a single study has been conducted, the literature represents studies involving one generation, and some including two or three generational comparisons at a time. If I came across dissertations, I glanced at the study, particularly the literature review, and observed that much of the dissertation's literature review used the resources that I was finding via my own search. Also, because volunteer management is my background, I have had the privilege of

attending volunteer management conferences, led by the two top volunteer management gurus of our time, Susan Ellis and Betty Stallings; and although they are considered the pros of volunteer management, even their studies have focus on studying one generation at a time. In the current study, I documented the information I took away from those conferences, but only if a scholarly reference was attached.

History of Volunteerism in the United States

Volunteering can be defined as any type of activity where time is given freely to benefit another person, organization, group, or cause, without an expectation of monetary payment (Lee et al, 2013). The concept of what is called volunteerism is but one expression of altruism that has been a part of the United States for years. Although it is evident that volunteerism has always been an important part of society, the concept of what it means to volunteer continues to evolve. The history of volunteerism has a sense of community in the United States (Lee et al, 2013). To fully understand this particular topic, history about volunteerism and the role of the volunteer resource manager must be provided.

18th-Century Volunteerism

In 1736, Benjamin Franklin brought together a group of 30 men to create the Union Fire Company in Philadelphia, which eventually became the first volunteer firehouse. The men's equipment only consisted of two durable linen bags and six leather buckets on which each volunteer's name was marked, along with the company's name (Brands, 2010). Because of this initiative, Franklin helped to establish the foundation for fire companies across the United States, and this tradition continues today in many small

cities that have volunteer fire departments. Many of these volunteer fire departments make an overwhelming difference in communities. From 1775 to 1783, during to time of the Revolutionary War, individuals came together to fundraise for war efforts, while organizing boycotts of various Great Britain products to display patriotism and philanthropic attitudes (Brands, 2010).

19th-Century Volunteerism

The early 1830s brought about the Great Awakening of religious revivals inspiring young people to get involved in outreach work with varying religious organizations. Churches led many relief programs (e.g., – homelessness, victims of various types of circumstances). In 1844, George Williams established the first YMCA in London, England for the sole purpose of keeping young men physically active, while uplifting their spirituality (Ward & Mckillop, 2011). Years later Captain Thomas Valentine Sullivan was inspired by the creation of the Y in England, encouraging him to recreate it in Boston, which birthed the first U.S. YMCA at the Old South Church on December 29, 1851 (Omoto et al., 2010). In 1881, at the age of 60, Clara Barton founded the U.S. Branch of the American Red Cross in Washington, DC. Barton first became aware of the global Red Cross network when she visited Europe after the Civil War. She rallied for an American Red Cross and sanctioned the Geneva Convention to protect war-injured individuals; the United States did so in 1882 (Omoto et al., 2010). In 1887, Denver religious leaders came together to found the first United Way, which was formed to coordinate the needs of local people (Omoto et al., 2010).

20th-Century Volunteerism

During the 18th and 19th centuries, individuals discovered volunteer opportunities through churches or another type of private sector; the 20th century birthed mainstream volunteer organizations. In 1910 the Rotary Club was founded, and shortly after, the Kiwanis and The Lions Club were founded. A plethora of organizations were created during this time period, all vying for their existence to serve as a guide to other organizations. In 1919 came the First Bureau of Volunteer Services in Minneapolis, MN; the hope was to conserve the enthusiasm of war time for the preservation of peace time community needs (Haupt, 2010).

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps and helped to plant approximately 3 million trees in a decade. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) was created in 1964 for the purpose of fighting the war on poverty, inequality, and violence. CityCares was launched in 1987 by the city of New York as a program specifically focused on endorsing young professionals to get involved in volunteerism (Rochester et al., 2010). In 2004 CityCares changed their name to Hands on Network. Hands on Network currently has a network of over 70,000 faith, nonprofit, and corporate businesses serving and creating social change in their communities (Haupt, 2010). In 1989, President George H. W. Bush developed a strategy enforcing community service as a national policy with high priority (Haupt, 2010). In response to that call, Points of Light Foundation was created as an encouragement and empowerment to service (Herman, 2011).

21st-Century Volunteerism

In 2000, VolunteerConnections.org launched as an effort to assist volunteer centers nationwide with the effective utilization of technology (Rochester et al., 2010). Within a few years, it became 1-800-Volunteer.org, helping individuals search for volunteer opportunities, and assist non-profits with online recruiting efforts (Rochester et al., 2010).

Role of the Volunteer Resource Manager

The professional career of a volunteer resource manager is analogous to that of a human resources manager, or that of personnel in a public or private sector (Bermudez, 2010). Depending on the organization, the role of the volunteer resource manager has several other titles: volunteer director, volunteer coordinator, director of volunteer services, etc. Though some of the aforementioned positions carry management responsibilities (i.e., – no direct supervision of volunteers or staff), human resource managers are essential in ensuring that human resource matters are effectively managed in matters consistent with policies established with the organization. In a similar way, a volunteer resource manager serves as a liaison between a board or managing committee and the actual volunteers at said organization (Herman, 2011). The volunteer resource manager is not always a supervisor or manager of volunteers, but volunteer resource managers manage an organization's volunteer program. Every organization functions differently from the next, so the role of a volunteer resource manager adapts to meet the needs of the specific organization where involved (Herman, 2011).

General Strategies for Practicing the Three Rs of Volunteer Management in the Nonprofit Sector

Volunteers play an important role in many nonprofit organizations (Worth, 2013). It is imperative that nonprofit organizations place great effort into recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers, as those efforts are valuable to the organization's productivity (Ronalds, 2012). The shortage of volunteers in many nonprofit organizations today makes it even more imperative that organizations are sensitive to the needs of its potential and current volunteers so they may retain faithful volunteers (Worth, 2013).

Recruit

Recruiting is the process of inviting individuals to participate in a volunteer role within an organization (Omoto et al., 2010). My study specifically focused on the nonprofit sector. It is common for most nonprofit organizations to search first within the organization for potential volunteers because it is the easiest, as the potential volunteer currently possess knowledge about organization's cause (Worth, 2013). For example, in organizations purposed to end cancer, volunteers are usually individuals with some type of cancer, members of their family, people interested in supporting the cause, or even health care providers (Hager & Brudney, 2011). Though an easy strategy to recruit volunteers, nonprofits also understand the importance of searching outside the organization as well. Other sources for recruiting volunteers are: high schools, colleges, universities, local businesses, clubs, churches, etc. (Omoto et al., 2010). A major strategy that organizations have adopted when attempting to recruit is ensuring that specific appeal practices are in place (Hager & Brudney, 2011). Two types of appeals exist: a

general appeal and a targeted appeal. Table 3 outlines broad recruitment strategies done in nonprofit organizations for both the general and targeted appeal.

Table 3

General Ways to Recruit Volunteers

Volunteer management practice	General practices
Recruiting	Contacting the local volunteer center. Using current volunteers—they are convincing salespeople, because they are committed to your cause and believe in your organization. Using the mass media (e.g., television, radio, newspapers, billboards), as well as neighborhood newspapers, newsletters, and organizational bulletins. Making announcements at services, educational sessions, meetings, and social gatherings of your congregation or organization. Posting volunteer opportunities on appropriate Web sites. Making personal appearances at schools, senior centers, career fairs, and other venues or events. Staffing booths and exhibits at special events. Using mailings, from mass mailings to personalized, handwritten notes. Getting referrals from staff, ministers, and friends. Registering with volunteer referral organizations (e.g., – volunteermatch.com). Coordinating with schools that require community service hours for graduation. Asking people to volunteer.

General Appeal. A general appeal is a random call to both current volunteers and the general public as a means of becoming a volunteer within the organization (Terry, Harder, & Pracht, 2011). This appeal is usually made as wide as possible using radio, television, media, newspapers, flyers, board notices, direct mail, websites, and even word of mouth. The main objective of a general appeal is to get a large amount of volunteers willing to do tasks that are require relatively low skills (e.g., – distributing flyers, mailing letters, sorting items) (Reuter, Heger, & Pipek, 2013). A major advantage of this appeal is that an organization is able to immediately recruit potential volunteers in large numbers

for general, often ‘one time’ happenings that need immediate attention (Smith & Galbraith, 2012). Many disadvantages of this general appeal are: the guarantee that those numbers of large potential volunteers recruited will actually become volunteers in the organization is low; the guarantee that the individual will subscribe to being an ongoing volunteer is low; and the potential volunteer may be unable to provide specific skills needed for important roles (Hager & Brudney, 2011).

Targeted Appeal. A targeted appeal is a specific call to an individual or a volunteer who is qualified in an expertise or particular skill (Mannino, Snyder, & Omoto, 2010). The targeted appeal is usually made by a recruiter who arranges a face to face meeting with an individual to solicit support on a specific task. This appeal is specifically designated for what is called ‘skills based volunteers’, possessing specific skills needed by nonprofit organizations (e.g., – accountants, attorneys, bookkeeping associate). An advantage of this appeal is that the nonprofit organization is targeting the exact talent that is needed to benefit the organization (Choudhury, 2010). A disadvantage is that ‘skills based volunteers’ are still potentially not retained well; because, though they are able to provide benefit to the organization for a specific skill, the interests and personality(ies) often times do not match what they envisioned to fulfill for the organization. Unfortunately, the end result reflects no mutual benefit (Mannino et al., 2010).

Recognize

Recognition ensures the feeling of appreciation for a service provided. Nonprofits that provide any type of recognition practice are reportedly more attractive to volunteers (Stillwell, Culp, & Hunter, 2010). Many individuals feel that the greatest recognition for

their service is knowing that their contributed time has benefited the organization's cause in some way (Ferreira, Proença, & Proença, 2012). It is imperative that organizations recognize volunteers, even when volunteers believe no recognition is needed. Many organizations have general recognition practices (Table 4) that are both personal and professional. A major advantage of general recognition practices is that the volunteers are given even the smallest act of recognition (Ferreira et al., 2012). Although every recognition practice will not speak to the personality of each volunteer individually, as individuals enjoy recognition in varying ways (e.g., – service pins, certificates, simple gift card), it is imperative to have even the simplest practice in place (Choudhury, 2010).

Table 4

General Ways to Recognize Volunteers

Volunteer management practice	General practices
Recognition	<p>Acknowledge the volunteer's contributions – notice what they do, comment on their achievements, point out the connection between their work and the accomplishment of the larger project, service, mission.</p> <p>Ask for their feedback, welcome their input, treat their ideas with respect, and let them know what you do with their suggestions.</p> <p>Maintain an open door policy and let the volunteers know there's always someone available to back them up.</p> <p>Give awards for achievement, merit, service, including gifts, gift certificates, best parking spot, etc.</p> <p>Provide for mobility between positions – lateral and upwards promotions.</p> <p>Sponsor a volunteer recognition event – reception, tea, awards ceremony, outing, picnic, dinner.</p> <p>Have fun, find opportunities to laugh together, share the lighter side of what you do.</p> <p>Send greeting cards to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries of the date they joined the team, retirement, graduation, and to express concern over illness and absences.</p> <p>Smile, be pleasant, and do not always appear too busy to offer a personal greeting.</p>

Retain

Retention practices focus on the strategy to keep volunteers motivated in their service to the organization. Volunteers are best retained when organizations ensure that volunteers are getting satisfaction from their service, without feeling as if their time is taken for granted (Garner & Garner, 2011). When volunteers do not feel valued, they will leave and perhaps go to another nonprofit that better suits their needs (Choudhury, 2010). Nonprofits have learned the hard way that unsatisfied volunteers unfortunately tell other people about their negative experiences with organizations, almost discrediting the organization (Garner & Garner, 2011). An advantage to having general retention practices in place is simply proving that the retention practice exists (Park & Word, 2012); however, much like recognition practices, a major disadvantage is grouping all generations in one general retention practice, and not representing the personality of each individual within the generation (Choudhury, 2010). Table 5 outlines broad volunteer retention strategies performed in nonprofit organizations.

Table 5

General Ways to Retain Volunteers

Volunteer management practice	General practices
Retention	Making them feel welcome, special, and appreciated. Placing pictures of new volunteers in the lobby or volunteer room. Discovering and investigating their interests, motives for volunteering, and expectations from their volunteer experience and organization. Offering choices in volunteer placement. Briefing them on the organization's mission, goals, key people involved, and facilities. Providing an evaluation for ongoing feedback and communications with volunteers.

(table continues)

Volunteer management practice	General practices
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlining specific roles and responsibilities. Position descriptions should clearly define responsibilities. Engaging in professional development. Periodically holding volunteer forums to address issues and concerns. Keeping up with the trends in volunteering. Matching technology to future needs. Encouraging questions. Displaying volunteer opportunity board of pictures of volunteers in action. Giving immediate rewards, especially to young people who can't wait for their 30-year pin. Having members call new volunteers to welcome them to volunteer functions. Expressing appreciation of a job, especially those well done. Strengthening the links between volunteers and staff. Planning a volunteer recognition event, including staff. Dealing with ways to avoid volunteer burnout. Providing exit interviews of volunteers who discontinue service.

The adoption of general volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention in nonprofit organizations has proven to be beneficial (Herman, 2011), but the ongoing concern amongst volunteer resource managers is the lack of direction given to understand each generation's individual motivation of the practices. The challenge for leaders in both the business sector and the nonprofit sector is to understand each generation's expectations, attitudes & behaviors, expectations, and collision of values (Herman, 2011). Human capital is important for the maintenance of a competitive advantage in business. It can be said that in any industry, competitors are distinguished by the service or product that is offered, and offered at times, in the best way (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best, 2010). Different companies can have the same product, advertise it in the same way, and attempt to 'one up' their competitor, only to keep going through the process over and over again, with neither company coming out

ahead. Needless to say, the ‘competitive advantage’ is beginning to be found less in what the company provides, but more in the culture of the company, and how it sells (Herman, 2011). In the nonprofit sector, an individual’s talent is high commodity; the ability to effectively engage, motivate, nurture, and retain talented staff of all ages is one of the most crucial factors for any organization. It is important that an internal environment be created that allows individuals to feel valued more where they are, than if they were elsewhere. Generation theory provides an incredible framework for creating an environment where five generations of volunteers can interact effectively.

Theoretical Foundation – Generation Theory

This study was guided by theoretical framework and evaluated the influence of generation theory on generational cohorts’ experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteerism. The overarching generation theory (including Karl Mannheim’s theory of generations, generational cohort theory, and the Strauss-Howe generational theory) was used as the foundation for the study. Mannheim’s theory of generations suggests an influence on people by the socio-historical environment that dominates their forming, on the specific basis of that sole experience (Mannheim, 1936). Generational cohort theory (originating from Mannheim) proposes that important historical events and social changes in society affect the values, attitudes, beliefs, and inclinations of individuals (Costanza et al, 2012). Strauss-Howe generational theory implies that individuals who share an age group also have a tendency to share attitudes and behaviors simply because they grew up in a specific period in history (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

These three existing theories were used as a foundation for my research study, as the theories provided a focus for ‘attacking’ the specific phenomena of volunteerism. Literature revealed that an individual’s generational cohort classification has heavy influence on their experiences, characteristics, personality, and decisions (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Using generation theory predicts how each specific generation will tackle the next life stage faced (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Because the research consisted of individuals who are grouped by their specific generation, using generation theory was more than relevant to determine the relationship between five generation’s specific generational cohort classification and their experience of the three Rs of volunteer management practices. Furthermore, I proposed that if each generation is truly guided by prior researched and documented characteristics of their specific cohort, the nonprofit sector should understand how to successfully develop management practices as those developed in the business sector. Volunteer resource managers in the nonprofit sector should take the time to understand the characteristics of generational cohorts for volunteer retention purposes, just as HR managers in the businesses sector take the time to understand the characteristics of generational cohorts for employee retention purposes. Using generation theory as a foundation in this study provided an excellent starting place for this understanding. Generation theory provided the needed resource to answer the *what* and *how* of my research questions. All three theories displayed the potential influence of an individual’s generation classification and their experience with recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteerism. These theories are surmised and explained in greater detail here.

Mannheim's Theory of Generations

At the onset of the twentieth century, the notion of a generation became popular in European literature and scholarship, which was probably inspired by the distress of World War I. Numerous theories of generations began to develop between 1910 and 1930 (Pilcher, 1994), but none as influential as Karl Mannheim's essay *The Problem of Generations*, which was originally published in 1928, then revised in 1952. Every study of generations hereafter has credited the work of Mannheim as one of the most urbane efforts to conceptualize the problem of generations. According to Mannheim's theory, a significant amount of influence on people by the socio-historical environment exists (i.e., – noteworthy events that actively involve them) that dominates their forming, on the specific basis of that sole experience. Mannheim distinguishes a generation (or cohort) from an individual's kinship as groups of individuals of like ages who have experienced remarkable historical events in a set period of time (Mannheim, 1936). His specific theory of generations has been a significant reference in the explanation of how noteworthy events of the 1950s and 1960s have helped to educate Baby Boomers about specific historical inequalities such as the Civil Rights Movement; this same knowledge eventually influenced the Baby Boomer generation to get involved in social change through collective action. Mannheim's theory is one of the most theoretical building blocks for a theory of generations.

Mannheim's study of generations noted a lack of "conceptual clarity" pertaining to the notion of generations (Mannheim, 1936, p. 89). He had a goal of synthesizing two different approaches that he believed offer significant insights, but suffered conceptual

problems. He had strong beliefs that positivist ideas of generations were flawed. He believed that those ideas were flawed for two reasons. First, positivists relate social and intellectual change strictly based on biological facts about human life and doesn't take into consideration the "influence of social interaction" (Pilcher, 1994, p.92). Mannheim and Stewart (2013) later pointed out that any living cadence must work itself out through the medium of social occasions. Secondly, positivists relied on the definition of generations from the genealogical perspective, which comprehends a generation as the chronological distance between parents and their children. However, since the biological progression of a person constitutes a covering and steady prepare at the macro-level, the refinement between eras at the macro-level comes to be truly discretionary. Mannheim (1997) suggested then that a genealogical generation definition could not be summed up at a macro-level.

Romanticism school attempted to resolve the issues of positivists introducing age groups as units of analysis. Mannheim critiqued this action claiming that they made the same mistake of positivists pertaining to the neglect of generations engaging in social interaction: the romantic bent in Germany, completely ignored the fact that in addition to the mental and nature sphere of existence, there exists a level of social forces (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013). Because there appeared to be a lack of agreement relating to the conceptual outline of generations, Mannheim made it his mission to present the simplest, most fundamental truths to this generational phenomenon.

Mannheim's definition of generation rests upon three conceptual building blocks: "(1) generation location, (2) generation as actuality, and (3) generation unit," (Mannheim

& Stewart, 2013, p 34). Backing the research of Max Weber, Mannheim created the idea of generation location in parallel to class position, which he described as the common location that individuals possess within the elite structure of a given, specific society (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013). Generation location can be relegated to a single group of people who share a similar location in time; individuals who are categorized in the same generation, and were born in the same year are enriched with a normal area in the authentic size of the social procedure (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013). Mannheim believed that any social location, whether class position or generational location, has the potential to be both a negative and positive effect on the person occupying that location. Negatively, a location eliminates a large number of experiences, thoughts, and actions, and confines an individual's self-expression to limited possibilities (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013). Positively, it can result in the foundation of temperaments and "certain definite modes of behavior, feeling, and thought" (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013, p 36). Therefore, it can be assumed that generational location can not only determine individuals' forms of behavior, but also how individuals perceive, experience, and interpret the world.

Mannheim talks about a "generation as actuality only where a concrete bond is created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of dynamic de-stabilization" (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013, p. 46). Though generation location merely signifies an experience commonality of events by people born around the time, the distinct members of a generation as actuality are additionally known by their political reaction to historical experiences that are shared.

One main effect surfaces: intelligent responses to historical events that are unsettling results in the transformation of basic political ideas and worldviews associated with those historical events. As such, generations as actualities involved themselves in social learning and advancement.

Though members within the same generation are subject to similar formative experiences and events, response to those events will evidently differ. Generation units are then introduced, which are “those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways” (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013, p. 47). Generation units are categorized by a character of reactions, certain partiality in the route in which all move with and are structured by their normal encounters (Mannheim & Stewart, 2013). Because generation units constantly address implications of specific historical events, and are grounded in a set of shared political beliefs, they form even more solid social groups than that of a generation location, or the generation as actuality. Consequently, generation units provide the rational basis for social movements that transforms social change into political theoretical practice.

Generational Cohort Theory

The generational cohort theory is a much respected role in sociology (Pilcher, 1994); it is a cultural theory that attributes cohort differences in behavior to values and attitudes. It began as part of Karl Mannheim’s pursuit of the existence of social knowledge free of social class. It proposes that individuals who are born at the same time have the potential to share similar developmental experiences that come together and form a “natural view of the world” (Scott, 2000, p. 356). Generation cohort theory is a

different way to account for the differences in attitudes and behavior amongst various ages when cross-sectional data is used. Instead of crediting an individual's age to how they mature, and furthermore assume that the younger generation will one day act like the older generation, "the differences are assumed to be permanent" (Elder, 1999, p. 295). Generation cohort theory believes that certain effects of a certain time period, influencing every age group in the population, will keep generational differences intact.

According to generational cohort theory, "important historical events and social changes in society affect the values, attitudes, beliefs, and inclinations of individuals" (Edmunds & Turner, 2005, p. 559). Those important events might reflect something as traumatic as a war, a courageous person such as Dr. Martin Luther King, or a Woodstock experience that embodies an ideology. These events were influential in the lives of the individuals in these specific cohorts and formed their beliefs and attitudes about many things. Therefore, the generational cohort theory assumes that people born during a specific timeframe, consistent with the same cohort, will more than likely have similar cognitive styles and share exact inclinations about certain matters.

Strauss-Howe Generational Theory

Strauss-Howe generational theory characterizes historical generations through cyclical changes called 'turnings' (Strauss & Howe, 1991). The theory attempts to explain how attitudes and values are shaped in individuals and groups (Espinoza et al., 2010). Howe was of the belief that "every generation turns the corner and to some extent compensates for the excesses and mistakes of the midlife generation that is in charge when they come of age" (Galland, 2009, p. 38). According to Strauss-Howe generational

theory, prior generations have the most significant influence over the newest generations, and the ‘turnings’ occur in the recognizable patterns that are categorized as heroes, artists, prophets, and nomads. When the nomad generation has happened, then the turning returns to ‘hero’, subsequently producing a cycle of turnings.

As described by Howe, the ‘heroes’ generally respond to the skeptical nature of the previous generation and to new crises: “institutional life is destroyed and rebuilt in response to a perceived threat to the nation’s survival” and “cultural expressions redirect towards community purpose” (Howe & Strauss, 1996, p. 105). The subsequent ‘artist’ generation can be described as the post-crisis era when this particular generation observes the hero’s loss of individualism, and will respond appropriately. The ‘prophet’ turning represents a middle ground between the ‘artist’ and the ‘nomad’, when the newer generation’s individualism grows stronger. In the words of Strauss and Howe, this turning appears when “society reach[es] the high tide of public progress, people suddenly tire of social discipline and want to recapture a sense of personal authenticity.... young activist[s] look at the previous generation as an era of cultural and spiritual poverty” (Howe & Strauss, 1991, p. 101). The later generation, the ‘nomad’ is then the opposite of the ‘artist’ generation when individualism is strong and larger institutions become under attack. Howe described in an interview that nomads “learn they can’t trust basic institutions to look out for their best interest” (Galland, 2009). Pragmatic realists often characterize this as an archetype in U.S. history.

When the term *generation* is used, it is usually used to group together individuals who have little more in common than the year in which they were born. The question

then becomes, “why is the study of generations considered to be such an important study”? According to Dr. Mannheim, a generation’s “practical importance becomes clear as soon as one tries to obtain a more exact understanding of the accelerated pace of social change [in a given period]” (1927, p. 286-287).

Mannheim’s theory of generations and the generational cohort theory both suggested that generations change quickly in response to major events. This differs a bit from the Strass-Howe generational theory, which proposed a cyclical pattern of archetypes, or turnings. Strauss-Howe’s generation theory can be summarized in one main idea: each new generation responds to the previous generation. This particular theory has received criticism for not explaining the significant role of historical events. One major difficulty with the Strauss-Howe theory arises: it does not take into account that events create unpredictable reactions, though a challenge is presented when attempting to identify the primary event. This unpredictable reaction often influences the behaviors of the next generation.

While it is observed that Strauss-Howe’s cyclical theory does not recognize, or take into account, major historical events, Mannheim’s theory of generations and the generational cohort theory both suggest “major historical events are what change a society” (Mannheim, 1927, p. 290). In Mannheim’s theory of generations and the generational cohort theory, the absence of a cycle creates a theory that is less structured, but both compliment the Strauss-Howe generation theory to create a more complete explanation of each generation’s behavior through their specific life experience.

Though it may be inappropriate to generalize about individuals in each generational cohort because it may not always reflect how actual individuals view their 'jobs' and produce results, it is obvious that individuals who are born during the same time have similar experiences that influence similar expectations (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Sago (2010) used generational cohort theory to discuss generational cohorts in the workplace. He firmly believed that individuals who belong to a certain generational cohort have similar viewpoints, outlooks, habits, expectations, and communication styles (Sago, 2010). Sago cited research showing a member's generational cohort is an important predictor of behavior (Legas & Sims, 2012).

A number of authors/researchers have provided in-depth qualitative studies of generations. One study in particular used in-depth focus groups to examine characteristics that defined generations, and discovered that the biggest differences among the generations were their attitudes toward authority and the importance of work (Park and Gursoy (2012). The findings in Park and Gursoy's study reinforced the numerous stereotypes of generations. Baby Boomers work as a means to survive, and respect hierarchy; however, they are hesitant to learn new things and use technology. Generation X desires instant gratification, expecting to be rewarded instantly for good work done. They also enjoy flexible hours, independence, and a fun environment. Generation Y believed in collaboration, teamwork, was optimistic, and took technology for granted. Park and Gursoy's study provided support for generational differences.

Few researchers have found weak support for generation theory in current literature. Cennamo and Gardner (2010) could not confirm whether the differences

experienced between groups were directly linked to generational differences. They opined that true generational differences can only sincerely be acknowledged, or identified, when groups are studied over long periods of time. Their overall recommendation was for organizations to not only examine differences among individuals of varying ages, but also acknowledge any types of commonalities. Wong, Gardiner, Lang, and Coulon (2012) found that generational differences are based on current age and maturity, than generational boundaries. In their study, generational boundaries were defined as the birth year that a specific group shares (i.e., – Baby Boomers born between 1945 and 1964).

Jorgensen (2013) also rejected any idea or concept of generation theory, and also the idea that organizations should adapt to the differences in the ‘workplace’. His review of current literature revealed that organizations should attempt to create environments that include work life balance, enjoyable work, care for individuals, and flexibility. He suggested this be done by paying close attention to current economic, political, technical, and social trends. He believed that those things are more substantial than data written on generations. Jorgensen (2013) believed that all types of data found on generations is subjective and references only one point in time that happened during an individual’s formative development.

Five Generations Defined and Their Experience of Volunteerism

There were five generational cohorts involved in this research. Through previous research of volunteer management literature, this section of the literature review includes: what is known about each generation’s experience of the phenomena of the general

practice of the three Rs of volunteer management; what is controversial (e.g., – determining whether or not a generation’s documented characteristics, lifestyles, and values have any type of influence on how they relate to the generation practice of the three Rs of volunteer management); and what remains to be studied about them (e.g., – experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices). Within this section, methodologies and research techniques that have been used in generation volunteerism studies (to include their advantages and disadvantages) among the five living generations were identified. Most studies have examined one generation and the experience of the phenomenon; few studies include the comparison of two generations. Furthermore, this section relates generation theory to methodologies used in the field of generations & volunteerism.

Silent Generation

The Silent Generation (Table 6) was born from 1925 to 1945, and as of 2015, their ages range from 70 to 90 years. The Silent Generation places very high value in ethics, moral, and saving. This is a very patriotic generation that witnessed the United States emerge as a very powerful nation. Serenity and spending time with family is of extreme importance to them (Sherman et al., 2011). The Silent Generation is a generation who places high reliance on true and tested ways of doing things; hence, their attitude of slowly embracing new things and distrust of change. Many individuals in this cohort are still quite very healthy, active (Haupt, 2010), and possess home equity wealth and savings (Tang, Choi, & Morrow-Howell, 2010).

Table 6

Silent Generation

Generational cohort	Characteristics/lifestyle/values
Silent	Volunteering is the norm. A high rate of church/civic participation. They respect authority and want to be respected in return. They are insightful, knowledgeable, and wise. They are dedicated and “in it for the long haul”. They are the “do the right thing” generation.

Thornhill (2010) described how ‘active seniors’ who range between the ages of 65 and 82 are consistently making a difference in their surrounding communities by setting an incredible example of volunteering at record rates, in hopes that their commitment to volunteering will influence Baby Boomers to follow in their footsteps. Statistics from the National Corporation for Public Service reveal that volunteer involvement for adults over 65 are at an all-time high, actually higher than it has ever been (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2013). Approximately 9.1 million (or 24 percent) adults over the age of 65 participate in some type of volunteer capacity every year. In addition to volunteering in education and sports, culture and the arts, the ‘silent’ are active in social and community services as well as civic, political, professional, and international endeavors. They are known as the generation for being well-rounded in where they give back.

Baby Boomer Generation

The Baby Boomer generation (Table 7) was born from 1946 to 1964, and as of 2015, their ages range from 51 to 69 years. Baby Boomers were shaped by the events of

Watergate, the assassinations of both John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, the heart-wrenching events of the Vietnam War, and both the Women's and Civil Rights movement (Landau, 2010). It is believed that Baby Boomers stay for the long term, contribute the maximum of efforts, and are results driven (Volda et al., 2012). Individuals who are members of the Baby Boomer generation value self-expression, optimism, and individualization (Hawkins et al., 2010). When thinking about their lifestyle and characteristics, they are defined by their careers and many of them are workaholics. Many of them have retired, but even more of them are continuing to work and grow into what is termed *active retirement*, which is equivalent to them recreating a life for themselves (Haupt, 2010). Baby Boomers possess discretionary time and income (Zopiatis, Krambia-Kapardis, & Varnavas, 2012), are more technologically savvy than generations prior (Landau, 2010), set high goals for wellness and health (Morrow-Howell, 2010), are apprehensive about authority (Achenbaum, 2012), and are considered to be a self-centered generation (Landau, 2010).

Table 7

Baby Boomer Generation

Generational Cohort	Characteristics/Lifestyle/Values
Baby Boomer	There are 75 million in this generation. There is a high rate of church participation. They are social changers – they created the women's movement, sexual revolution, the environmental movement, and the civil rights movement. They have defined themselves by their careers and many are workaholics; hence they are active givers.

Finkelstien (2010) reported that Americans ranging between the ages of 44 and 79 years are normally healthy, free of care-giving commitments, and are equipped to increase their participation in volunteer service upon retirement. More than 40% of the adults surveyed have an expectation in the near future to increase the amount of time they spend volunteering; coincidentally, approximately the same number of retirees reported doing so after retirement. Results from this survey also revealed that offering volunteer opportunities for older Americans is both critical for the country, as well as for individuals who volunteer (Finkelstien, 2010).

Eisner, Grimm, Maynard, and Washburn (2009) purported that senior volunteer involvement is undergoing major changes, unprecedented even, simply because of the shift in the baby boom population. Approximately 34.7 million individuals age 65+ are living, and by 2030, that number is expected to double (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). From a demographic perspective, the numbers provide a wake-up call to action. Today, 34 million people or nearly 13 percent are 65+ years. This number rose to 40 million by the year 2011 (U.S. Census, 2011). By 2030, one in every five Americans will be over the age of 65 (U.S. Census, 2011). With medical advances and healthier, active lifestyles, people are beginning to live longer which means they will absolutely have longer retirement years, plenty of time to participate in volunteerism or other leisure pleasures, and also a probability that there will be a substantial need for community services that help to aid in sustaining independent living (U.S. Census, 2011). Research implies that this population shift will influence America's socioeconomic infrastructure, literally changing several aspects of the American life (U.S. Census, 2011).

One of the major thoughts provoking individuals and organizations is understanding how to integrate these changes into the culture of existing programs. Certain questions that will be asked are: What are some of the new resources that we will need? What are programs or policies needed to invite and retain this specific generation of potential volunteers? How will we respond to this generation (Eisner et al., 2009)? Research suggests that senior volunteerism (Baby Boomer generation and Silent Generation) issues are multifaceted, requiring organizations to dramatically change their organizational structures, values, and do a complete about-face to market its volunteer opportunities effectively to this generation of Baby Boomers.

Eisner et al. (2009) conducted a qualitative study that purposed to shed light on ways to strengthen the volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention. Their study's overall purpose was to understand the generational traits of the Baby Boomer generation and begin to use those traits to strengthen engagement and retention of the generation in a volunteer capacity. The researchers suggested that because of the experiences by which this specific generation is shaped, they would be more likely to respond to volunteer management practices that were results driven. The study included actual face to face interviews that focused on asking members of the Baby Boomer generation: how they believe their participation in volunteerism has prepared the next generation; in what volunteer capacity to they feel most comfortable; and why some of them do not currently serve in a volunteer capacity. The study revealed some fascinating results. Vast majorities (55%) of the Baby Boomer generation feel that their particular generation is unfortunately leaving the world in a worse condition than it was

before their inheritance; while a mere 20% believe the complete opposite (Eisner et al., 2009). Baby Boomers have been reported to expressing greater interests in mentoring youth, ensuring that elderly remain independent, and serving in organizations such as Meals on Wheels and the Peace Corps. It is unfortunate that 68% of Baby Boomers who do not volunteer feel that the primary reason for their non-involvement is because they were never asked to serve. A major part of changing these views of this particular generation is to change the views of existing volunteer programs and how it values generational attitudes toward volunteerism. The major advantage of this study was the use of the qualitative method, allowing the Baby Boomer generation to have a voice in their actual experience of the general practices of volunteer management. Their voice proved the need to understand each generation's attitude toward volunteerism to acquire mutual benefit of both the volunteer and the organization. Eisner et al. made recommendations for further study to be conducted in the field of generations & volunteerism to include the other existing generations, as they believe it could provide greater understanding of their attitudes toward and motivations for volunteerism.

Generation X

Generation X (Table 8) was born from 1965 to 1980, and as of 2015, their ages range from 35 to 50 years. Generation X has experienced the AIDS epidemic, economic insecurity, and the fall of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, Generation X has the greatest experience with witnessing the divorce of parents and loss of jobs by parents during downsizing. Because of these specific experiences, they are alleged to be more independent than any other generation, preferring to be self-employed vs. loyalty to a

company (Twenge, 2010). Because of the independence of these latch-key children, they raised themselves and are less traditional than their prior generations (e.g., – they date and marry cautiously) (Hawkins et al., 2010).

Table 8

Generation X

Generational cohort	Characteristics/lifestyle/values
Generation X	Less than 50 million living in this generation. They are results focused; they “get to the point”. They are self-reliant and resourceful. They are technologically literate. They want life/work balance, personal goals, and values. They are lifelong learners. They respond positively to competent engaging leadership.

According to this less traditional generation, nothing is permanent and thinking globally is the absolute norm. They are very well educated, a bit skeptical, completely disillusioned by many things, question conventionality, and were the generation to experience the massive impact of the personal computer (Williams & Page, 2011). Research indicates “characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes of Generation X include balancing family, life, and work” (Little, Little, & Cox, 2011, p. 21). Unlike Baby Boomers, they will not sacrifice relationships or time or major advancement, and do not profess to be team players (Binder, 2010).

Finkelstien (2010) conducted a qualitative study seeking to understand the volunteer experience of Generation X vs. the Baby Boomer generation. The overall purpose of the study was to understand how Generation X vs. the Baby Boomer

generation experiences the general volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention. Finkelstien (2010) understood that individuals who share an age group also have a tendency to share attitudes and behaviors simply because they grew up in a specific period in history (Smola & Sutton, 2002). In his study, focus groups were used and nonprofit organizations revealed that it is not that Generation X is less interested in volunteerism like their parents and grandparents; they desire to be involved in a different way. This Generation X desires to learn more about groups before donating time or money because of their distrust of large organizations. They will also search opportunities that will provide some type of challenge and involve social networking and connections Finkelstien (2010). Generation X did not participate in large social movements like their Baby Boomer parents did, they come from a world of domestic instability. Generation X is more skeptical than prior generations and leery of bureaucracy. Finkelstien (2010) suggested that individuals who fall in the Generation X cohort, specifically men, desire family time, which does not free a lot of time for civic duties. Finkelstien (2010) further suggested that because Generation X are life-learners who desire to be understood, it would be of great value to engage in conversations about their motivation to volunteer for the simple benefit of having resourceful, educated, technologically literate individuals as a part of any organization. The advantage of this study was the use of qualitative methodology and the use of focus groups to gather data. The focus group allowed both Generation X and the Baby Boomer generation to discuss their experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention in volunteerism. Finkelstien (2010) made recommendations for further study to be conducted in the field of

generations & volunteerism comparing other generations so that there would be a full understanding of each generation's motivation to be involved in volunteerism.

Generation Y

Generation Y, or Gen Y (Table 9) was born from 1981 to 2000, and as of 2015, their ages range from 15 to 34 years. Generation Y are the offspring of the Baby Boomer generation, yet their numbers rival the boomers. They grew up in the fast paced change era, seeing a standard of dual-household income, women equal employment opportunities, diversity in family types, respect of cultural and ethnic diversity, heightened social awareness, and computers in both schools and home (Hawkins et al., 2010). Generation Y are wiser than their age and are very well grounded. They were born during the rise of technological advancements, to include a wireless society. They became accustomed to "a diverse universe where anything seems possible" (Hawkins et al., 2010, p. 78). Their characteristics are reflective of a self-reliant and self-absorbed individual who strongly appreciates autonomy and possesses a strong nature of independence. They are a results driven cohort, with little to no concern about how or why it happened (Williams & Page, 2011). Because they are driven by image, they tend to speak a lot about their image, needing a significant amount of acceptance from peers. They enjoy connecting with their peers to ensure that they fit in, and thrive off of networking (Williams & Page, 2011).

Table 9

Generation Y

Generational cohort	Characteristics/lifestyle/values
Generation Y	Currently 100 million individuals in this generation. They are collaborative and team players. They desire and need quick feedback. They are socially responsible, particularly with the environment. They do not believe in bosses. They are high performers, high maintenance, and question everything. They are more ethnically diverse than any other generation.

Shields (2009) conducted a quantitative study that purposed to prove, if any, a relationship between the characteristics of Generation Y and their motivation to be recruited, recognized, and retained. The overall purpose of the study was to create strategies that would guide volunteer resource managers in recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers in Generation Y. The study used questionnaires to ask 150 individuals in Generation Y questions about situations in their life that may have an impact on their specific motivations for being recruited, recognized, and retained in volunteerism. The results of the study discussed strategies on how to engage and retain Generation Y. These strategies were created as a result of how Generation Y participants answered the questionnaire:

- They perform best when they have a structured environment where specific directions, instructions, and checklists have been given.
- They have strengths that could be very beneficial to an organization: tech savvy, ability to multitask, teamwork is of high importance, networking skills, potential to think globally, very optimistic, and diversified.

- They need as much help as possible in the areas of: thinking as independent, recognizing the importance of deadlines, and office etiquette such as not using phones during trainings/meetings.
- Because they often fear taking risks, they should be heavily rewarded for innovative ideas.
- Always be aware of their need for working conditions that are flexible.
- Give frequent feedback on how they are doing, and how their work is improving the organization.
- Mentors, training, and anything that will help to develop their skills for greater responsibility at high levels are a plus.

The study proved that Generation Y's characteristics and lifestyles influenced their motivation to be engaged and retained in volunteerism. Shields (2009) was appreciative of the results of the study, but felt like proving a relationship alone, and creating strategies for engaging and retaining Generation Y was not enough. Shields desired to put those strategies to use and create recruitment, recognition, and retention practices specifically geared towards Generation Y. Shields made recommendations for further study to be conducted in the field of generations & volunteerism that includes creating specific recruitment, recognition, and retention practices geared towards each living generation of volunteers for the sole purpose of fully understanding how to engage and retain each generation separately.

Generation Z

Generation Z (Table 10) was born from 2001 to present and as of 2015, their ages range from 14 years and younger. Members of this newest generation are still in their formative years, as they are having the pleasure to witness the Obama children in the White House. Unfortunately, yet another great recession is being experienced, coupled with global terrorism, severe violence in school, uncertainty of the economy, and a rising mortgage crisis. However, Generation Z is also witnessing more stable marriages as parents are marrying later in life, with the possibility of divorce being little to none. This particular generation is also experiencing what is termed *tweendom*, which includes the unfortunate commercial exploitation of both young girls and boys, so much so that their teen aspirations eventually lead to the demise of childhood (Williams & Page, 2011). The characteristics of Generation Z resemble the second coming of the Silent Generation, as they place heavy value on the family as a unit, are responsible, and welcome traditional beliefs. Generation Z has never experienced a world without the internet, which opens them up to all types of messages and images that can weigh heavily in several influences (Schwartz & Suyemoto, 2013).

Table 10
Generation Z

Generational cohort	Characteristics/lifestyle/values
Generation Z	<p>They are digital natives - highly connected, many having had lifelong use of communications and media technologies such as the World Wide Web, instant messaging, text messaging, MP3players, mobile phones and YouTube.</p> <p>They are new conservatives embracing traditional beliefs, valuing the family unit, self-controlled, and more responsible.</p> <p>They value authenticity and realness.</p> <p>They are ready to be on mission, confident, and very optimistic.</p> <p>They believe that they can impact the world and can visualize changing places.</p> <p>They are redefining face-to-face via Facebook, Skype, Facetime, etc.</p> <p>They are extremely altruistic, caring deeply about the environment and global humanitarian issues.</p>

The perceived thoughts of Generation Z is that volunteerism is not boring, or an activity relegated to retirees; but they consider it to be based on individual knowledge, experience, and interests. This perception could very well be the reason why Luping (2011) suggested that organizations need to partake in an entire makeover for the purposes of attracting those certain individuals who are yet to volunteer. Luping believes that organizations have to focus on the diversification of roles, as well as the potential for those roles to bring about networking opportunities and personal development for those involved. Luping is not suggesting that less we forget about what volunteerism means, but organizations can no longer just wait for someone to feel obligated to give back, because that traditional approach is not working.

Gienow (2013) conducted a quantitative study purposed to create a motivational wish list for their specific desire to be involved in volunteerism. The overall purpose of the study was to draw a comparison between their generational characteristics, and their

desired motivations to be involved in volunteerism. The study used questionnaires to gather data from 100 individuals from Generation Z. The questionnaire reflected a series of questions re: their characteristics, as well as top motivations for serving in a volunteering capacity. The study revealed that Generation Z desires volunteer work that will offer great satisfaction in return. The study further revealed that what motivates Generation Z to volunteer are recognizable job skills. The findings concluded with a proverbial motivation wish list by this particular generation, they desire: to make a difference seen through tangible outcomes, a volunteer service that will be of great interest, and interacting socially with others.

Gienow (2013) revealed an unfortunate assumption that younger generations are attracted to particular sectors or volunteer roles. Previous research continues to suggest a great need for organizations that wish to attract younger generations of volunteers, find alternate ways in engaging and recruiting. Gienow (2013) opined that a broad call for volunteers will not always be operative way of engaging and recruiting younger generations of volunteers. Instead, there needs to be volunteer requests that will provide the younger generation with opportunities that will spark their interests, while they build their social clientele, and acquire certain skills that they feel will be of use to them in the future (Gienow, 2013).

Gienow (2013) discussed the benefits of youthful volunteer involvement. A well-known charity, My New Red Shoes, launched a video to promote its program nationwide, and the majority of the help came from a group of teenage volunteers (Gienow, 2013). Researchers are beginning to recognize the benefits that young volunteers bring to

organizations and are slowly beginning to examine numerous aspects of their experiences to better understand how to keep them motivated in volunteering. Although research has shown that young people volunteer, little research is known about their experience of volunteering because they have never been asked about their particular experience as a volunteer (Schwartz & Suyemoto, 2013). Because this is the newest generation, and one that seems to be influential, Gienow deemed it crucial for future qualitative studies in the field of generations & volunteerism to include understanding the experiences of Generation Z via face to face interviews, in order to understand what it takes to effectively recruit, recognize, and retain this growing generation.

Literature review has revealed that understanding the general practice of the three Rs of volunteer management within generations is important and relevant to determining how to motivate each living generation in volunteerism. There has been an effort to help volunteer resource managers create improved practices to effectively engage and retain volunteers who are members of different generations, but also collectively committed to ensuring the fulfillment of an organization's mission. Though the adoption of general volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention in nonprofit organizations has proven to be beneficial (Herman, 2011), volunteer resource managers continue craving additional methods to improve those practices and make them specific to each generation within their volunteer program (Hawkins et al., 2010).

The literature review in the field of generations & volunteerism has revealed a balance between studies being conducted in both qualitative and quantitative measures. Studies using quantitative methodology and techniques have revealed a few advantages

to using those quantitative methods in this field: surveys were practical, large amounts of data were collected from a large number of people in a short time period and in a cost effective way, the results of the data were quickly and easily quantified via the software being used by the researcher, and existing hypotheses were easily tested. The disadvantages observed prove that by using the quantitative methodology, it is inadequate in understanding important forms of information (re: emotions, behaviors, and feelings); it only asks a limited amount of information without explanation. This method does not reveal how truthful a response is from a participant; individuals reading the literature might read the question different and base their responses on their interpretation of the question (i.e., – what is good to someone may be poor to someone else, therefore a level of subjectivity is not acknowledged), presenting a level of imposition on the researcher to form decisions based on beliefs and not facts.

Many researchers believed that though quantitative studies were more cost efficient, qualitative studies may provide greater detail needed to understand each generation's motivation to be engaged in volunteerism. For those few studies using the qualitative method, literature review revealed that, unlike quantitative research where an objective research is conducted based on numbers and statistics, using the qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to have richer and deeper insight into the phenomenon of study. The advantages of qualitative research is that the researcher is allowed to conduct subjective research based on detailed observations of individuals in different settings using either individual interviews, observations, or focus groups. There was a disadvantage of using the qualitative methodology that was also observed.

Researchers found that though qualitative studies produces information rich data, it is time consuming, immeasurable, and it is a bit more expensive.

Summary

Chapter 2 included an in-depth literature review of the history of volunteerism, strategies for the general practice of the three Rs of volunteer management, the theoretical framework of this study, and five generations' experience of volunteerism. Observing literature review presented a theme that resurfaced numerous times in the study of volunteer engagement, that being the influence of generation theory. There seemed to be an agreement that the combination of personalities, culture, gender, etc., can be a helpful lens of analysis of what drives people's motivational behaviors (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Another theme that arose in the literature was the overwhelming recommendation to conduct future studies that involved a combination of generations and their relationship between generational characteristics and their motivation to be recruited, recognized, and retained. Research revealed that every generation is influenced by someone or something (e.g., – peers, parents, economic and social events, popular culture, media) that generate shared value systems that are different from individuals who were raised during a different period of time (Cusack et al., 2013). According to Scott (2000, p. 356), this influence “stays with the individual throughout their lives and is the anchor against which later experiences are interpreted. Individuals are thus fixed in qualitatively different subjective areas.” A significant factor surfaced in regards to the ability to understand the influence of generation theory on cohorts: in order to appreciate this influence, studies have to engage in qualitative methods. The reason for this

conclusion is because qualitative methods and research techniques have the best potential to provide a rich description of the individual's experience of being a part of a particular cohort.

Literature has revealed that what is well-known about engaging and retaining volunteers is to have general, broad volunteer management practices in place (Tables 3, 4, and 5), as an initial attempt to engage and retain volunteers in a nonprofit organization. Research has also provided vast knowledge of the volunteer experience of one generation or two and three generations in a single study. Though it is important to understand a single generational cohort, this does not provide help to the volunteer resource manager attempting to engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in one volunteer program. The majority of existing nonprofits depend upon volunteers bringing their mission to life, providing a service, and reaching individuals (Tang et al., 2010). Many nonprofit organizations have developed several methods to successfully engage one type, group, or generation of volunteers. Auxiliaries, for example, specifically are comprised of retired [women] individuals. Lion and Rotary Clubs are civic organizations specifically comprised of professional working men. 4-H leaders are generally comprised of the parents of the members.

Though the majority of the literature review covered in the field of generations and volunteerism has spoken on the controversy of determining whether or not a generation's documented characteristics, lifestyles, and values have any type of influence on how they relate to the generation practice of the three Rs of volunteer management in a positive light; research proves potential for more to be studied in the field of

generations and volunteerism. What is not well known are what effective and efficient generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers resemble in a nonprofit organization. Currently, no resources exist for volunteer resource managers desiring to engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a single nonprofit organization. This study provided the necessary resources needed to develop generation-based volunteer management practices for all five living generations in nonprofit organizations.

Literature also revealed that the majority of the research pertaining to generations in the nonprofit sector has been quantitative in nature where surveys were administered; very rarely has there been qualitative research where the individual had the opportunity to descriptively share their lived experience as a volunteer. This is the difference I have brought (via this study) – the result of real conversations with five living generational cohorts and their active experience with recruitment, recognition, and retention as a volunteer. I desired to fill the gap in the literature by providing a single study illuminating the influence of generation theory on all five living generations' experience of volunteer management practices. This is with the hope that nonprofit organizations will strengthen their volunteer programs by complimenting each cohort's desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained. I chose a qualitative study so that there could be real, live conversation involving five living generational cohorts experiencing recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteerism in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations.

To acquire the collective experiences of five generational cohorts, I collected primary data of each of the five generations separately. Phenomenology depends on the

creation of data that is solid, thick, or descriptive (Silverman, 2010). This increased the credibility of my study. Hence, for me to increase the applicability of this study to future studies of this nature, a rich description of the research participant's experiences was created. My procedure for analyzing collected data was influenced by the Moustakas (1994) data analysis method outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. The primary intent of this study was to answer the following research question: What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers? Chapter 3 includes a description of the qualitative research approach of this study. Research design can be referred to as a crossing point of logic, methods of request, and particular techniques (Moustakas, 1994). An in-depth discussion of the research framework relative to the study is reflected in this chapter. Moustakas (1994) described five procedural steps in the phenomenological research process: (1) determine whether a phenomenological approach is best, (2) identify/acknowledge the phenomenon, (3) specify philosophical assumptions of phenomenology, (4) collect data, and (5) analyze data. Qualitative data analysis includes a description of each participant's experience (textual descriptions) and the actual context of the experience (structural descriptions). Those specific descriptions are then synthesized into the true essence of the phenomenon (see Table 11 for the phenomenological research procedures).

Table 11

Phenomenological Research Procedures

Research procedure	Process
Determine if a phenomenological approach is best	I determined that the phenomenological approach was best to describe the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Phenomenological qualitative research is uniquely designed to understand several individuals' common or shared experience of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).
Identify/acknowledge the phenomenon	The central phenomenon of this study is the experience of the general practice of the three Rs of volunteer management among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations.
Specify philosophical assumptions of phenomenology	I followed the social constructivist world view where I proposed that people look for understanding of the world in which they live and work. People create subjective meanings of their specific experiences; meanings that are focused on things or objects. These meanings are fluctuated and numerous, guiding researchers to search for the intricacy of perspectives as opposed to narrowed meanings placed into categories. Phillips and Burbules (2000) inform that there are several assumptions about constructivism: (1) meanings are developed by individuals as they engage and interact in a world in which they are attempting to interpret; (2) individuals engage with the world and attempt to understand it based upon their social and historical viewpoints; and (3) the simple creation of meaning and interpretation will always be social, stemming from interaction with a community of individuals.
Data collection	My research question involved one broad, general question as suggested by Moustakas (1994): What have you experienced? And What are the contexts of your experiences? The actual participant research questions are broad, open-ended questions that all participants to share rich descriptions of their lived experiences.
Data analysis	I identified significant statements elicited by the participants' experiences (horizontalization) and cultivate a cluster of meanings from those statements into themes.
Describe participant's experiences	I described 'what' the participants' experienced (textual description) and the 'how' of their experiences (structural description).
Composite description of the phenomenon	I synthesized the participant's descriptions of the essence of the phenomenon (the common experience of the participants).

Research Design and Rationale

Tradition of Inquiry

Qualitative research is designed to inquire about social or human research problems through the actual experiences of an individual or group. The goal of qualitative research is to not predict what will happen in the future; rather, it serves as an analysis that is determined to provide depths of understanding for individuals who are interested in the events of a specific setting and time (Yin, 2013). Qualitative research is exploratory and discovery driven, as it focuses primarily on exploring how individuals make sense of their experience and further convert said experience into consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers employ this approach when a problem warrants exploration and detailed understanding is strongly desired. The primary purpose is to essentially discover why or how. Research participants are empowered to share stories and minimize any power relationships that have the potential to exist between the researcher and study participant(s). Discovering the insights that bring revelation to the world of reality among five generations of volunteers most certainly warrants qualitative inquiry.

My exploratory desire drove both the method and design for this study.

Moustakas (1994) described five qualitative inquiry strategies: (a) case study, (b) ethnography, (c) grounded theory, (d) narrative, and (e) phenomenology.

Phenomenological qualitative research methodology explores the essence of a human experience about a specific phenomenon as described by the participant. Moustakas recommended phenomenological research when it is paramount to comprehend normal

encounters to create practices, approaches, or a deeper sense about the specifics of the phenomenon. Answers to research questions are derived from the researcher eliciting stories from individuals who have lived the phenomenon. I desired to identify commonalities among participants and determine what establishes the nature of the specific lived experience. The focus of phenomenology is the process as opposed to the outcome, context as opposed to variables, and discovery as opposed to confirmation. The determination of reality is solidified through participants' individual and collective definition of the given situation (Denzin, 2011).

The phenomenological study describes the significance that individuals may make of their specific lived experience of a particular phenomenon (Van Manen, 1997). This phenomenon can be an organization, culture, relationship, program, job, or even an emotion. The main goal of a phenomenological study is to comprehend the experiences and perspectives of participants through entering their innermost thoughts and world (Yin, 2013). The result of the study is then an in-depth description of commonality amongst the study participants as they experienced the phenomenon (Silverman, 2010). Phenomenology is a methodical approach closely linked to small sample sizes due to the profound depth of the interviewing style.

There were four main reasons why phenomenological inquiry was chosen as the research tradition for my study. First, literature lacked research describing the development of effective and efficient volunteer management practices based on the experience of five living generation's experience with recruitment, recognition, and retention in a nonprofit organization. Phenomenology allows the reader to walk in the

shoes of the participants because they will have an opportunity to describe this experience through their very own lens. Secondly, review of literature has revealed minimal engagement of all five living generations, simultaneously, in volunteer management practices research. My research approach gave participants their own voice, describing the experience it takes to develop effective and efficient volunteer management practices amongst five living generations. Thirdly, participants have similar desires to be recruited, recognized, and retained in a way that is specific to their personality; this common phenomenon lends itself to the phenomenological research approach. Phenomenological qualitative research is uniquely designed to understand several individuals' common or shared experience of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Fourthly, quantitative analysis cannot describe the essence of the participants' experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention as a volunteer in a metro Atlanta nonprofit organization. The qualitative methodology of phenomenology strives to reveal the meaning of a given phenomenon and is a vivid account of an individual's experience of a phenomenon.

The Phenomenon

The central phenomenon of this study was the experience of the general practice of the three Rs of volunteer management among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers is an abiding concern (Van Manen, 1990) among volunteers and volunteer resource managers, and the concern warrants special attention.

Philosophical Paradigm

Phenomenology is deeply rooted in the work seen through philosophers Kant, Hegel, and Mach; however, it was introduced formally by Edmund Husserl towards the early twentieth century time (Guignon, 2006). Husserl then became known as the pioneer and founder of phenomenology, whose main goal at the time was to transform philosophy into strict science. Husserl was of the opinion that the way to separate science from philosophy was to aim an individual's attention to meanings that connect the experiences of objects (Guignon, 2006). Principles of phenomenology proclaim that the validity of investigation is solid when gained information is acquired through rich description, as it allows for greater understanding of the essences of experience (Moustakas, 1994). The philosophical phenomenological method encompasses four steps that are intertwining: the epoch, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis (Moustakas, 1994).

Step One – Epoch (Greek word meaning, to avoid). In the first step of the epoch, the researcher's biases are excluded. Husserl equated epoch to when an individual's prejudices and predispositions are put aside, allowing events, people, and things to be seen again as if it were the first time (Moustakas, 1994). The epoch warns the researcher to be conscious of what is there and steer free of familiarity of everyday events, people, and happenings. It is some sort of a reflection-meditation technique which allows a preconception to present itself into our conscious, and then exit itself freely; once we are ready, prejudgments can be written off (Moustakas, 1994). Moreover, phenomenology endeavors are to return to the search of understanding of said

phenomena. To completely ensure that my biases were put aside as this step advises, I treated the phenomenon of volunteerism as a unique topic that I have never experienced, or of which I have had no prior advanced knowledge.

Step Two – Phenomenological Reduction. Phenomenological reduction allows the innate biases and preconceptions of the researcher to be held to not influence the study (Moustakas, 1994). By doing so, the researcher allows the world to see the phenomenon in its natural state and emerge purely. I recognized that an examination of the experiences of five generational cohorts involved in volunteerism in nonprofit organizations was best addressed by using a descriptive phenomenological approach. Therefore, I was challenged with the concept of laying aside any biases and prior knowledge to prompt pure descriptions of the generational cohort's experiences as volunteers. This can be difficult to exercise for those researchers whose expertise is within volunteer management. To rid the research study of presuppositions and preconceptions, investigators must make them explicit and extract them in the clearest way possible. The technique that would be best to do this is bracketing, as phenomenologists believe it is the most effective method in achieving this (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing sets aside the researcher's personal knowledge, presuppositions, and preconceptions when listening to and reflecting upon what may have been said, relating to the study participants' lived experiences. Wall, Glenn, Mitchinson, and Poole (2004) outlined a reflective diary process that can serve as an excellent and efficient tool to use for developing bracketing skills. Sharpening listening skills, engaging in visual imagery, and fine tuning neutral nonverbal behavior helps to improve bracketing skills as a

preparation for research. Bracketing was an ongoing process that I used in order to ensure there was a clear emergence of the studied phenomenon of volunteerism amongst generational cohorts.

Step Three – Imaginative Variation. Imaginative variation seeks to discover possible meanings of experiences through different roles, functions, and perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological reflection and imaginative variation are used by researchers to create descriptions and themes from the textual meanings that go far beyond surface meanings to the actual essence of an experience (Moustakas, 1994); “it is the articulation, based on intuition, of a fundamental meaning without which a phenomenon could not present itself as it is” (Miles & Huberman, 2014, pg. 67). As the researcher, during this process of the phenomenological method, I was charged with effectively identifying the true essence of the phenomena of volunteerism, in order to gain a greater understanding. As previously noted, actuality of an item is inseparably identified with one's awareness of it (Moustakas, 1994). In essence, it was required that I provided opportunities for participants to describe the phenomenon specifically to the way that they understood it. That is specifically how perception is made aware.

Step Four – Synthesis. This step is somewhat of a continuation of the preceding one. This perception is a rejection of the subject-object dichotomy (Van Manen, 1997). The actuality of an article is just observed inside the importance of the knowledge of a single person (Husserl, 1970). The phenomenon then becomes the reality of an individual's immediate experience. As it relates to this fourth perception of synthesis, I

developed open-ended interview protocol that purposed to understand the lived experience of five generations of volunteers.

Philosophical Foundations

Philosophy is the driving force that guides a dissertation; it resembles a roadmap for research. If philosophy does not exist in a study, no direction can be provided to guide one's research. As observed by Bracken (2010), "the practical implications are that, through a deeper awareness of the ontological substructures informing studies, researchers will be more clearly positioned to iteratively reflect upon, and define how best to engage with their research projects" (p. 1). Through philosophy, the research process is better explained, while aligning dire aspects of a dissertation, addressing any types of dilemmas that might ensue for the researcher (Efinger, Maldonado, & McArdle, 2004).

Qualitative research influences philosophical ideas, hence the need for those ideas to be identified and shared (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). The researcher's worldview obliged to enlighten readers about his or her general introduction about the world and the way of research that an analyst holds (Moustakas, 1994). The research process was guided by this orientation. The social constructivist worldview is a perspective typically seen as an approach to qualitative research. The ideas stemmed from Mannheim (1936) and from works such as Berger and Luekmann's (1967) *The Social Construction of Reality*, and Lincoln and Guba's (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*.

The social constructivist worldview taken by myself, proposed that people look for understanding of the world in which they live and work. People create subjective

meanings of their specific experiences – meanings that are focused on things or objects. These meanings are fluctuated and numerous, guiding researchers to search for the intricacy of perspectives as opposed to narrowed meanings placed into categories. In the social constructivist worldview, the main goal of the research was to place sole dependency upon the research participant's view or experience of the phenomenon being studied. This worldview offered itself to a phenomenological study, where experiences are described by the participants. Questions asked were broad and general, which allowed participants to create or determine the meaning of the phenomenon, which typically appears when discussions and interactions form with other people. It is wise to have open-ended questions, so a researcher is able to listen carefully to what participants really have to say about their experience. Often times these experiences are conveyed in a social and historical text. The influence of these experiences are not simply fixed on individuals, but are created through interactions with others; hence social constructivism, and through cultural and historical norms that happen in an individual's life.

Social constructivists also focus on the environment in which individuals work and live, to gain a full perspective of an individual's cultural and historical setting. In my study, the contexts in which a participant volunteered, in conjunction with their process of interaction was my main focus. The meanings given to an individual's experience were the objects of study; hence they were interpreters and co-constructors of their descriptions. The participant's personal story and the context became the data that enlightened the research study. This study explored the contexts of participant's volunteer related experiences with recruitment, recognition, and retention. Social constructivists

realize that their personal background forms their interpretation (Phillips & Burbules, 2000), so they personally place themselves in the research, acknowledging how their interpretation comes from their own historical, cultural, and personal experiences.

Role of the Researcher

Quantitative studies have proven that a researcher's role is, in theory, non-existent. The participants are literally independent of the researcher, as if they are not there. Quantitative studies use questionnaires, machines, and inventories to rely on data collection. Qualitative research is much different, as the researcher takes on the role of an instrument, meaning that he or she interacts with the participants, collaborating and mediating the data through this human instrument called, self (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). For this role to be fulfilled, individuals reading this research should possess knowledge about the human instrument (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). As a qualitative researcher, I described relevant traits of myself, which included biases, assumptions, expectations, and even experiences that provided qualification for me to conduct this specific research.

Researcher's Role

Moustakas (1994) posited that "we are not so engrossed in our conscious experience that we lose touch with what is actually before us, with the thing itself" (p. 91). I was fully aware that both my professional and personal experiences had the potential to influence my interpretation of the data. As a critical researcher, it was crucial that I positioned myself to recognize how my data interpretation was derived from personal, historical, and cultural perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). My emic role as a researcher positioned me as an insider who is an active participant and manager of the

phenomenon of volunteerism. My ultimate role as a researcher was to interpret meanings that others have about the world, specifically the phenomenon that is the focus of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

My experience participating in volunteerism (from 1985 to present) and working in the field of volunteer management (from 2003 to present) led to potential bias and there was a need for me to bracket my personal viewpoints. It is a fact that every researcher approaches their research with particular bias based upon their own personal experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative researchers have written about the importance of epoch (Moustakas, 1994) where the researcher sets aside experiences to understand the experiences of the research participants. Moustakas (1994) defines epoch as the focused intent to eliminate “everything that represents a pre-judgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and openness, a readiness to see in an unfettered way” (p. 41). In one style of bracketing, the researcher should be committed to isolating his or her own predetermined concepts or philosophies in order to understand the world from the point of views of the study’s participants. This will provide an accurate glean of significant meaning from the experience of an interpreter. This results in the core of a phenomenological research; I used bracketing during the long interviews.

I began this phenomenological research study as a researcher who desired to listen and learn. I was under the assumption that different generations have different views of how they like to be recruited, recognized, and retained in a specific volunteer role, based upon their personalities, skills, characteristics, and life experiences. Because of the

amount of time that I have spent in this specific field and am familiar with many people in volunteerism in Atlanta, there was no research participant with which I had ever volunteered or supervised.

Context: Self of the Researcher

I began volunteering in 1985 at the age of ten, and began my career as a volunteer director in 2003. I am currently serving as the associate director of volunteer services at a local Atlanta nonprofit. I also serve as the President of a nonprofit organization that provides extensive training to the various nonprofit organizations in the metro Atlanta area. As a volunteer, I have served with nonprofit organizations in roles that did not match my personality, but because I knew the work needed to be done, I did the work, finished my role for the day, and never returned to the organization. Although the organization was satisfied with my work, there was no mutual satisfaction on my behalf because I never felt connected during the recruitment process and there was no recognition after the work was done. Unfortunately, the organization was unsuccessful in retaining me as an ongoing volunteer.

As a volunteer director, I have been in the position where our organization has needed a warm body to fill a role. We may have properly engaged the person in said role, but because we never took the time to understand the individual's personality, skills, and characteristics, they stayed for the role, and then left immediately after it was done. When the time arose to ask that individual if they wanted to serve in another role with the organization, they refused. After that specific experience occurred numerous times, I knew that something had to be done, especially with our organization growing rapidly. I

began to see numerous generations sitting around waiting to be used in ways that personified their skills, abilities, and life experiences. I began to change the way individuals were recruited, by having conversations with them about their gifts, motivation, abilities, personality, and life experience; however, keeping them motivated and retained was and still is a difficult task. Because each generation is influenced by different events that shaped their aspirations, attitudes, relationships, and personalities (Espinoza, 2010), I began to realize that each generation, separately, needed a different way to be retained, recognized, and retained. As I currently work with several nonprofit organizations across Atlanta, I have witnessed the frustration of both volunteers and volunteer resource managers in regards to the proper and adequate use of volunteers. Needless to say, the result is unfortunate: volunteers are not retained, entire generations of volunteers are being lost, the generation gap keeps getting larger, and some organizations are unable to fulfill their mission because of the loss of large amounts of volunteers.

Because it is my desire to strengthen nonprofit organizations in the area of volunteer management, I focused this particular study on improving generational retention rates in the nonprofit sector. I have decided to dedicate my professional life service to understanding this phenomenon, in order for nonprofit organizations to not only succeed in their missions, but also to improve their volunteer engagement and retention rates. I started this doctoral pursuit with one goal in mind – to be a major nonprofit management influencer in metro Atlanta, specifically in the area of volunteerism. I sit on several nonprofit organization boards, participate in speaking

engagements, and have even started a business, all with the focus of improving efficient and effective volunteerism in nonprofit organizations.

I have witnessed organizations that are effective in retaining the younger generations because of the specific causes in which they focus, but are starving in the engagement and retention of the older generations. On the flip side, I have witnessed organizations that are more than efficient in retaining the older generation, because of the services in which they offer, but are weak in the area of retaining the younger generation in services that need those fresh new ideas and labor. The first question that is always posed to me is: 'How can our organization bridge the volunteer generation gap to have a healthy representation of each generation needed?' As I completed this research, my desire able to provide a firm answer to that question, with resources to match continued to be at the forefront of my mind.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Participant Selection. I confined this study to 20 individuals (both male and female) who have had at least two years of experience as a volunteer in a nonprofit organization in the metro Atlanta area. The population for this study was five generations of volunteers (Silent Generation, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z). There were four participants represented from each generation with the following specifications: (1) two individuals (one male and one female) currently involved in a volunteer capacity, and (2) two participants (one male and one female) not involved in a volunteer capacity. Potential participants were pooled from nonprofit

organizations across the metropolitan city of Atlanta, GA. The youngest participant (from Generation Z) was 13 years of age, born by January 1, 2001 and the oldest participant (from the Silent Generation) was 69 years of age, born at least by December 31, 1945. No two individuals came from the same organization, and no participant was used from any organization where I had been employed, or was involved as a volunteer. These specific criteria lessened researcher bias, and served as a fair indicator of participant selection.

To identify participants, I provided information pertaining to my study, along with an invitation to participate in the study. This invitation was extended to volunteer resource managers of at least 20 to 35 nonprofit organizations. Through those volunteer resource managers, an invitation was sent via their database to individuals who matched the research participant qualifications. There were two specific criteria for participants of this research study. First, for research participants who were currently in a volunteer capacity, they must have been in that role for at least two years. Secondly, for research participants who were not currently in a volunteer capacity, they must not only have been involved in a volunteer role within six months of the date of their interview, but also must have been serving in a specific volunteer capacity for at least two years, whether ongoing or a one-time event. This invitation continued until I acquired 20 participants of whom to collect data.

The volunteer resource manager was responsible for asking confirmed participants/parents of confirmed child participant for permission to release specific contact information so that I could provide a formal introduction of the study via an email solicitation and confirmation of their participation (Appendix F). There was no contact

information given to myself prior to the participant's agreement to participate in the study. The data collection took place over a two month time frame and in settings that were comfortable and convenient to the participant. To reduce researcher bias, there were no participants with whom I had previously worked.

Sampling Strategy. Criterion sampling was used to select research participants who have experienced the phenomenon. Criterion sampling involves identifying particular criterion of importance, enunciating those specific criterion, and precise survey and investigation of cases that meet the paradigm (Moustakas, 1994). The explanation behind undertaking criterion sampling is to distinguish significant framework shortcomings for development. This sampling strategy is most appropriate when attempting to show quality assurance. The overall point of criterion sampling is to make certain to comprehend cases that are liable to being data rich in light of the fact that they may uncover framework shortcomings that get to be focuses of chance for system or framework change. This was especially appropriate for this study, as the goal was to understand and describe specific phenomena from the perception of individuals who have experienced it, and to improve those experiences. Morse (2000) suggested researchers interview at least 6 individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Morse further suggested that "there is no exact way of determining sample size in qualitative research, nor a 'right' answer in the same way a power calculation may yield a sample size in quantitative research" (p.3). Sample size relies upon attention of various components including: the nature of information, the extent of the study, the way of the subject, the measure of suitable data got from every member, the amount of meetings for every

member, the utilization of shadowed information, and the qualitative technique and study configuration utilized (Morse, 2000).

Data Collection

Data Generation. Qualitative data generation speaks to theories and methods used that will ultimately create data from sampled data sources. Those specific sources may include participants, organizations, documents, events, or even media. Qualitative data then becomes a result of those data resources and can include transcripts, observations, field notes, and even excerpts from documents like newspaper articles or images. To generate data from certain data resources, researchers must interact with said data source using a qualitative method within a greater inquiry strategy.

Data Collection Process and Instrument. In this study, I interviewed participants until data saturation was attained. Twenty participant interviews were collected. I purposely recruited over 20 participants, in the case that an initial “yes I would love to participate in the study” became an “I can no longer participate in the study. Collecting in-depth, rich, thick descriptions of each participant’s experience of the phenomenon was paramount to the success of this study. The interview questions were general, broad, open-ended questions that offered participants the freedom to share a rich description of their lived experience of the phenomenon. I followed the interview protocol found in Appendix D and used the data collection tool inspired by Cusack et. al. (2013) and (Achenbaum, 2012) found in Appendix E. The nine questions within this data collection tool was sufficient enough to gather the true essence of the what and how of

each generation's experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention of volunteerism in their metro Atlanta nonprofit organization.

Ethical concerns were addressed at each phase of this study. Participants were treated in compliance with the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This study had no known risks. Anonymity and confidentiality were extremely important considerations. Participants were assigned pseudonyms for the protection of their identities. Participants chose mutually agreeable places for the interview, which were places that were very comfortable and convenient for the participant(s). They were given an informed consent for the study and were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty (Appendix A). Participants were further informed that although the results of this study will be disseminated among the professional community, absolutely none of the responses will be traced back to them. Furthermore, participants were also able to review their interview transcript. Though this did not solely help with ensuring the trustworthiness of the study, but it also served as the participant's debriefing procedures for exiting the study. Participants were told, upon the close of the interview, whether or not there was the potential for a follow-up interview to take place. This was not the case.

Research participants were initially contacted by email (Appendix F) with a follow-up telephone call (Appendix G) to further request their full participation in this study, and to arrange a date, time, and location (Appendix H) to conduct the one-to-one interview. I spoke to the parents of Generation Z with regards to gaining permission and meeting for the one-to-one interview. Participants of Generation Z were also accompanied by a parent during the interview. Face to face, semi-structured interviews

were conducted with all research participants. The interviews averaged 45 – 60 minutes and were audio recorded with the permission of the research participants/parents of research participants. I also recorded detailed notes during the interviews. To further augment data collection, each research participant completed a background information form (Appendix I). Research participants were asked open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview format (Appendix E).

Data Analysis Plan

Phenomenological data analysis ensues via the method of reduction, the analysis of exact statements and themes, and an examination of all possible meanings (Van Manen, 2002). As the researcher, I was aware that I had to avoid bias by bracketing my experiences and solely relying on intuition, imagination, and collective structures to achieve the experience.

Data Analysis exists to make sense out of text and associated data. The process involves collecting data that has been generated by open-ended questions from information provided by research participants. It also includes processes like coding (open, axial, and selective), categorizing, and shedding light on the crucial understandings of said phenomenon. As the researcher immerses him or herself in the rich descriptive data, common themes begin to come to the forefront and emerge. It was my goal to be so immersed in the information, for as long as it takes to ensure a thorough description of said phenomenon. This yielded purity in the results.

I anticipated that I would use reflective interpretation of the text to achieve a meaningful understanding of the data collected. This interpretation not only included a

rich description of the experience as it appears, but it also included a detailed analysis of the underlying conditions that account for the experience. Moustakas (1994) summarized phenomenological research analysis as (a) analyzing significant statements, (b) generating meaningful units (themes), and (c) developing an essence of description.

I used NVivo (2012) to assist with data preparation and analysis. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software tool that allows identification and organization of significant statements and themes within transcripts. I was extremely confident that this software would help to manage and bring sense to the unstructured data that was collected. This particular software allowed me to sort, classify, and observe relationships in data, and pool analysis with shaping, modeling, searching, and linking. Through NVivo (2012) I was able to recognize trends and investigate information in numerous ways. Having NVivo available helped me manage my time in analyzing my material, quickly recognizing themes, garnering insight, and cultivating conclusions that were meaningful to my study and knowledge in the volunteer management field.

I initiated data analysis by listening to the audio recording of each interview and then reading the transcript of each recording (that I transcribed). Moustakas (1994) recommended investigating the data to acquire a general feeling of the data. I initially imported the transcript into NVivo (2012) software for further analysis. I reviewed each transcript and identified significant participant statements which were listed (horizontalizing the data) using NVivo (2012). Each statement was initially viewed as having equal worth, and then I refined the list of statements into a “list of nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statements” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97). Consequently, the statements were

sorted into meaning units (themes and subthemes). A summary of my suggested data analysis procedures is presented in Table 12; it is based on specific data analysis steps recommended by Moustakas.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers are responsible for instituting reliability procedures and validity strategies in their study which will lead to both realistic and credible results. Moustakas (1994) suggested that researchers rely on four tools: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability (Moustakas, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined provisions that may be made by a qualitative researcher wishing to address four criteria for trustworthiness (Table 12). Credibility of research results is a main goal of a researcher, especially if the researcher wants to contribute to the further study of the specific topic in the qualitative field. I ensured reliability through consistency of information. I also assured validity when information was proven accurate.

Table 12

Provisions for Addressing Four Criteria for Trustworthiness

Strategy	Samples of how strategy can be used
Credibility	Random sampling of individuals serving as informants. Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants and different sites. Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants. Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues. Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors Description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher. Member checks of data collected and interpretations/theories formed. Examination of previous research to frame findings.
Transferability	Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made.

(table continues)

Strategy	Samples of how strategy can be used
Dependability	Employment of “overlapping methods”. In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated.
Confirmability	Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias. Admission of researcher’s beliefs and assumptions. Recognition of shortcomings in study’s methods and their potential effects. Use of diagrams to demonstrate “audit trail”.

Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argued that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors of establishing trustworthiness. It seeks to answer the question, how congruent are the findings with reality? Member checking occurs to increase the research validity. The participants confirmed the accuracy of the transcribed interview, significant statements, themes, and descriptions. Findings in a research are only meaningful if the findings mean something to those who have experienced the problem (Klenke, 2011). The comprehensive use of member checking ensures the accuracy of gathered data. Credibility is also aided by triangulation via multiple layers of data. During each participant’s interview, additional notes were taken to describe how comfortable the participants were with answering questions, as well as an observance of their body language during the interview.

Transferability

External validity is concerned with determining to what extent the study’s findings can be applied in other situations, more specifically, to a wider population (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Thick, rich, and in-depth descriptions of each participant’s environment and experiences conveyed findings that provide readers the opportunity for

transferability. Readers can then determine whether the findings have any relevance to their situations. Research participants were heavily quoted to provide rich illustrations of emerged themes.

Dependability

Reliability is concerned with determining whether or not a study can be repeated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). It is an expectation that findings will not be different each time the measures are used, with the assumption that what is being measured does not change (Wahyuni, 2012). A researcher can enhance reliability by: being transparent about the procedures that steered the research findings; thoroughly checking his or her interpretations; ensuring that each participant has a sufficient opportunity to richly discuss their experience; analyzing the evidence systematically; and providing strong evidence in the interpretations, while proposing balanced perspectives (Ritchie & Lewis, 2013) suggested that. Each one of these topics is included in the current study. Dependability is also aided by using multiple data analysis methods, specifically coding. My data analysis plan is discussed in great detail in Table 2.

This study produced useable information that volunteer resource managers alike will be able to make better decisions for volunteer engagement and retention. Wahyuni (2012) used the following qualities to define usable information: reliable sources, research relevance, and accessibility to the researcher. To ensure repetition of the research, the research questions and methodology are accessible to other researchers.

Repeatability and stability are two primary objectives of reliability (Wahyuni, 2012). Hence, the research instrument was generated to ensure that each research

participant focused on the same subject and ensured that there was consistency in the responses, which represents reliable information in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2003). Strategies were put in place to omit abnormalities in responses, to include triangulation and participant verification.

Confirmability

A key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions (Miles & Huberman, 2014). As noted in the role of the researcher section, I have discussed my bias relative to the study.

Ethical Procedures

Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for ensuring that all research is in compliance with not only the university's ethical standards, but also the United States federal regulations. I ensured that proper IRB was approved before any data collection ensued. I did so by completing an IRB application, as I was to be conducting research that involved both data collection and data analysis.

As previously stated, ethical concerns were addressed at each phase of this study. Once my IRB application was approved, I then moved into the data collection phase of the study, where each participant was treated in compliance with the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This study had no known risks. Anonymity and confidentiality were extremely important considerations. Participants were assigned pseudonyms for the protection of their identities. They were given an informed consent for the study. This form was also used to explain the nature of the study, expectations of the participants, and any related risks and benefits. It also provided explanations of the

confidentiality issues, and stressed that participation in the study was strictly voluntary. Participants were told that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If at any time there was a research participant who had to withdraw, I would have had another research participant take their place; it was my plan to initially recruit more participants than my research sample called for in the study. Participants were informed that although the results of this study will be disseminated among the professional community, absolutely none of the responses will be traced back to them.

During the data collection process, each participant/guardian received an informed consent form/notice (available in full in Appendix A). They were asked to sign said form to show that they had agreed to actively participate in the research study, giving permission for me to contact them for any information. The form/notice followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards and was explained thoroughly to the participants at the beginning of the interview process. The form/notice also explained an important fact: participation in the research study was voluntary and any participant had the right to cease participation at any time during the research, even after an interview has been completed.

Participants were continuously reminded that information obtained during this study that could potentially identify the participant would be kept strictly confidential (Appendix B). They were also informed that data would be stored in a locked cabinet in my home and on a password protected computer. I was the only individual with access to the data. Audio recordings and transcripts were deleted after the completion of the study. The information obtained in this study may be published in academic journals or

presented at academic meetings and/or conferences. Pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities.

It was a crucial part of my interview protocol to inform each participant about the purpose of the study, any procedures that were to take place both during the interview and following the interview, as well as an offer to remain an anonymous participant. It was also my responsibility to remind each participant that an executive summary of the research would be provided to fulfill a portion of my doctoral degree from Walden University.

Summary

Chapter 3 included a discussion about the qualitative research approach of the study. A phenomenological approach was extremely appropriate to examine the experiences that contribute to the development of effective and efficient practices of the three Rs of volunteer management among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Though examining these particular cohorts using the phenomenological perspective had potential inherent challenges, it was the most appropriate methodological fit. Bringing about a comprehensive understanding of the method and the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology, coupled with an acute awareness of the potential challenges and benefits is crucial. By doing that, I employed a laborious process of inquiry that resulted in solid, empirical findings that will guide volunteer resource managers in successfully engaging and retaining the proper volunteers needed for their specific nonprofit organization. To fully acquire in-depth understandings of philosophies and methods specific to this particular phenomenological approach, it is

crucial for a researcher to examine the original work of philosophers who shaped it and brought about significant influence. Whenever the philosophical underpinnings of a method is examined, prior to implementing it, the result of a study will be clearer in its structure, findings, and overall purpose (Moustakas, 1994).

Chapter 3 included information about my emic role as a researcher which positioned me as an insider who is an active participant and manager of the phenomenon of volunteerism. My ultimate role as a researcher was to interpret meanings that others have about the world, specifically the phenomenon that was the focus of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Within this chapter, there was a discussion about the 20 research participants from which data were collected. Chapter 3 also included a discussion about the data analysis plan for the study. NVivo (2012) was used to assist with data preparation and analysis. Through NVivo (2012) I was able to recognize trends and investigate information in numerous ways.

Ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Chapter 3 outlined my plan to ensure credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Chapter 3 concluded with an in-depth explanation of how ethical concerns will be addressed at each phase of this study. Participants were treated in compliance with the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Chapter 4 will reflect the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Phenomenological research inquiry was employed to understand the recruitment, recognition, and retention practice experiences of those five generations. The following central research question, and four sub questions, formed the foundational background for the questions asked during the in-depth interviews conducted for this phenomenological study:

What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers?

- Sub question 1: How has an individual's specific generational cohort classification influenced his or her desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained?
- Sub question 2: How has each generation of volunteers experienced recruitment, recognition, and retention?
- Sub question 3: What are important considerations when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers?
- Sub question 4: How can the development of generation-based volunteer management practices potentially increase engagement and retention of five living generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization?

Prior to beginning each in-depth interview process with the research participants, I thanked the participants for their time, and informed them of what would be explored during their specific interview. I reminded each participant: that the interviews would be recorded (audio) for the purpose of transcription, that they would receive a copy of the transcript for their personal review, and that they could ‘opt-out’ of the interview/study for any reason.

The in-depth interviews were recorded using a handheld Dictaphone device, and was later transcribed by me. Once the transcripts were complete, per the request of all the participants, each transcript was sent to each participant for their review and editing. Three participants returned their transcripts, all having minor edits, which were corrected by me. During the interviews, when appropriate, I would repeat back comments to clarify the participants’ meaning. There were no participants who withdrew from the study, and no participants who had any issues during the interview.

To ensure the consistency of the interview flow, I used an interview protocol guide (see Appendix D). Probing questions outlined and described in Chapter 3 were used to further explore and expound upon the participant’s experience. Those probing questions were also used to document specific examples of those experiences. The longest interview lasted 60 minutes. The shortest interview lasted 45 minutes. The average time of the in-depth interviews was 50 minutes.

This chapter presents the findings of the interviews of five generational cohorts who were either current volunteers or individuals who had previously volunteered (within two years of the interview). In this chapter, the settings of the interviews, the

demographics of the research participants, and the method of data collection will also be discussed. The method of data collection used was the informal and interactive long interview involving a series of open-ended questions (available in full in Appendix E) designed to evoke a comprehensive exploration of volunteerism. There will also be discussion surrounding the data analysis of the study, as well as evidence to prove trustworthiness of the study.

Setting

The setting for each interview differed. Although the research partners offered their database to assist with participant recruitment for this research study, as well as a room in their organization for interviews, all of the participants decided against meeting at the organization where they volunteer (or recently volunteered). Each participant (whether a current or past volunteer), had an overwhelming desire to meet elsewhere for their specific interview. There was no negative connotation to their request, but interestingly enough, each of them had the same desire to go elsewhere to be away from where they spend/spent time volunteering.

To ensure there was no bias in my favor, all interviews took place in a local library that was a mutual meeting place for each participant. I gathered enough information about each participant to become aware of what local library would be convenient for each participant. Because these were local libraries, the library personnel did not require me to sign anything stating any type of research partnership. Because there was no official business being conducted where money would be exchanged, the library personnel simply saw it as a meeting between individuals. Each library had

private meeting rooms that I was able to reserve for two hours at a time. The room was private enough so that each participant would feel comfortable with sharing his or her personal experience via each question asked. Each participant expressed their comfort level in sharing their personal volunteering experience in their respective setting. The interviews were able to be recorded and conducted in such a way that I would gain enough information to get the true experience of each participant. Nothing presented itself as a hindrance, as each participant spoke truth about his or her current or former volunteer experience.

Demographics

The participants of this study were 20 individuals from the metro Atlanta area who are members of the current five living generations (i.e., - Silent Generation, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z). Table 13 depicts participants by generational cohort, revealing that of the 20 participants interviewed for this study, four participants were from the Silent Generation, four were from the Baby Boomer generation, four were from Generation X, four were from Generation Y, and four were from Generation Z. It was also comprised of an equal amount of males and females (50% males and 50% females). Table 15 depicts the participation by gender. The sample was also comprised of 50% active volunteers and 50% inactive volunteers. Table 14 depicts the active or inactive status of volunteerism within the generation. This participant sample composition was the result of the sampling design that targeted the following specifications: (1) two individuals (one male and one female) currently involved in a volunteer capacity, and (2) two participants (one male and one female) not currently

involved in a volunteer capacity. Participants were pooled from nonprofit organizations across the metropolitan city of Atlanta, GA. The youngest participant (from Generation Z) was 13 years of age, born in 2001 and the oldest participant (from the Silent Generation) was 69 years of age, born in 1934. No two individuals came from the same organization, and no participant was from any organization where I had been previously employed. This was specifically done for the sole purpose of lessening researcher bias.

Table 13

Participation by Generation

Generation	Number of participants per cohort	Percentage of cohort
Silent Generation	4	20%
Baby Boomer	4	20%
Generation X	4	20%
Generation Y	4	20%
Generation Z	4	20%

Table 14

Participation by Active or Inactive Volunteerism Status

Generation	Active	Inactive	Number of participants	Percentage of cohort
Silent Generation	2	2	4	20%
Baby Boomer	2	2	4	20%
Generation X	2	2	4	20%
Generation Y	2	2	4	20%
Generation Z	2	2	4	20%

Table 15

Participation by Gender

Gender	Active	Inactive	Number of participants	Percentage of gender
Male	5	5	10	50%
Female	5	5	10	50%

The influence of generation theory on each cohort's desire to be recruited, retained, and recognized was examined in this study. An underlying assumption is that an individual's cohort classification plays a significant role in influencing individual's perceptions and lived experiences. Interviews were performed to assess individual's lived experiences of recruitment, recognition, and retention.

The recruitment of the participants in this study took approximately 1 month. Having certified the requirements for participation, the 20 participants, including parents of Generation Z, and representatives of both the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer generation were sent letters of consent. The volunteer manager/coordinator representing the nonprofit organizations contacted individuals (current and former volunteers) to provide me with their personal information. Sixteen of the participants were found using this recruitment method; the remaining 4 expressed an interest to me, as they stumbled upon an article written by me regarding volunteerism. The interview instrument (in-depth interview) met the objectives of this study. Therefore, there was no change necessary to any of the original interview questions.

Data Collection

There were a total number of 20 participants from whom data were collected. There were four individuals represented from each of the five generational cohorts of the study. Within each cohort of four individuals there was one active male, one inactive male, one active female, and one inactive female.

All interviews took place in a local library that was a mutual meeting place for each participant. Each library had private meeting rooms where the interviews were

privately conducted. The room was private enough so that the participant felt comfortable with sharing his or her personal experience via each question asked. Each participant expressed that they felt comfortable with sharing their personal volunteering experience in their respective setting. Open-ended questions allowed each participant the opportunity to focus on whatever area they chose. Thus, each participant was able to identify information that they believed was pertinent to their own experience regarding recruitment, recognition, and retention as a volunteer (whether past or present). If there were nonverbal signals given (i.e., – discomfort displayed via body language), the raising or dropping of voices, or any type of emotions displayed (i.e., – laughing), I documented that type of information in the field notes maintained during the interview. The longest interview lasted 60 minutes. The shortest interview lasted 45 minutes. The average time for the in-depth interviews was 50 minutes. The interviewer only had to interview each participant one time and gathered all pertinent information related to each research question. For the vulnerable populations of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomer, and Generation Z, there was one additional individual who accompanied them during the interview. If the participant was part of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer, they were asked to bring another adult to accompany them during the interview time. All 8 participants, though hesitant to ask someone to accompany them, adhered to the request. Participants from the older generations felt as if they were not vulnerable, but complied with the request. For Generation Z participants, they were accompanied by one adult parent. The participants' names were coded with the first letter representing their active or inactive volunteerism status, the next two letters representing their generational cohort,

and the last letter representing their gender of male or female. The active volunteer code is A, the inactive volunteer code is I. The code for male is M and the code for female is F. As seen in Table 16, the participants selected from the five living generations are coded as follows: SG, BB, GX, GY, and GZ.

Table 16
Code Designated by Generational Cohort

SG – Silent Generation	BB – Baby Boomer	GX – Generation X	GY – Generation Y	GZ – Generation Z
ASGM	ABBM	AGXM	AGYM	AGZM
ISGM	IBBM	IGXM	IGYM	IGZM
ASGF	ABBF	AGXF	AGYF	AGZF
ISGF	IBBF	IGXF	IGYF	IGZF

The in-depth interviews were recorded using a handheld Dictaphone device, and was later transcribed by me. Once the transcripts were complete, per the request of all the participants, each transcript was sent to the original participant for their review and editing. Three participants returned their transcription, all having minor edits, which I corrected. During the interviews, when appropriate, I would repeat back comments to clarify the participants' meaning. There were no participants who withdrew from the study, and no participants who had any issues during the interview. There were no variations in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. There were no unusual circumstances encountered in data collection.

Data Analysis

To move inductively from coded units to larger representations, I followed the data analysis plan outlined in Table 2.

Step 1: Organize and prepare data for analysis. For the purpose of being as close to the data as possible, I chose not to hire a professional transcriber, and personally transcribed each interview. My intention was to become closer to each participant's experience. Data were uploaded in NVivo as both audio and word files. Once the transcript was transcribed, both the original interview/audio file and transcript was saved to a password protected computer, and stored in a safe place in my home office. Data has since been destroyed.

Step 2: Review Data. The page length of each participant's interview transcript varied. The average length of the transcripts was 15 pages, and because this was such a small number, it was fairly simple for me to read through each transcript as many times needed to gain a keen sense of the information. I broke the transcripts up into each participant's respective cohort. The initial read was a simple read through to become familiar with each participant's experience, as told through their words.

Step 3: Begin detailed analysis with a horizontalization process. During the follow-up reads of the transcripts, I began to notice significant statements, such as:

- "...this volunteer opportunity spoke to where I am right now in my life and career, and so it provides balance"
- "I would like to remain active as I grow older in age"
- "I wanted to get more experience, and gain more skills"
- "I am interested in volunteerism because I want to make a difference"
- "My parents and grandparents influenced me to volunteer"
- "My generation has always volunteered"
- "My generation are the next leaders, so we should have some type of understanding of volunteerism"
- "I appreciate being recognized for my time, money, and efforts"
- "there should be easier ways to recruit each age group differently"
- "Volunteers would be retained better if there were organizations that had more opportunities that are age group specific, family opportunities, and opportunities to engage with other age groups"

These statements, sentences, and quotes are very significant to the study, and seemed to emerge as participants began talking about their experience as someone who has been/or is currently being recruited, recognized, and retained as a volunteer.

Step 4: Develop descriptions of themes and sub-themes. As the coding process ensued, I asked myself the following questions:

1. What is each participant attempting to convey?
2. What pattern(s) are beginning to emerge?
3. What is the story to be told about each participant's experience with the phenomenon?

After those questions were thoroughly investigated, certain themes and sub-themes became vividly clear to me (See table 17):

Table 17

Revealed Themes

Theme no.	Main theme	Sub theme(s)
Theme 1	Identity	Life-stage Characteristics/values/life-style Generational cohort classification
Theme 2	Defining moments	Life experiences Life influences Personal relationships
Theme 3	Volunteer motivation/need to participate in volunteerism	Initial desire/need to volunteer Desire for a structured Volunteer Program
Theme 4	Experience of volunteer management practices	Recruitment practices Recognition practices Retention practices
Theme 5	Thoughts about the future of volunteerism	Age-group specific marketing Multigenerational volunteerism Intergenerational volunteerism

Step 5: Determine how themes and descriptions will be presented. In the results section, I used narrative descriptions to express the findings in the study. The research has presented one broad research question, followed by four sub questions. The findings of the study are presented by the study's sub questions. The main research question is discussed in the summary section of the chapter. There will be a descriptive narrative of each question, told through the experience of the research participants.

Step 6: Interpret meaning of data. To interpret the meaning of the data, there will be textual descriptions written to describe what the participants experienced as participants of the phenomenon. There will be exact examples, and structural descriptions of how the participants have been/are recruited, recognized, and retained in volunteerism. There will also be a discussion surrounding the influence of generation theory.

Nonconfirming Data

In the case of long interviews, it is typical to discuss topics from various angles, while receiving anomalous comments. I took those anomalous comments into consideration and they: (1) were recorded and (2) were organized by the theme that closely related. In the case of this study, there was one particular instance where the responses pertaining to one generation's experience of the phenomenon strongly resembled the experience of another generation's experience of the phenomenon. It is perceived that each separate generation's experience will not resemble another generation's experience because they have different values, characteristics, life experiences, and seemingly come from two different worlds. The instance, to which I am making reference, is the experience of recruitment. It is perceived that one specific

generation favors recruitment one way, and another specific generation favors it an entirely different way. The similarity in desired recruitment seemed to consistently overlap across the generations, and was a bit surprising. This data actually broadened the pattern that emerged from data analysis, and has become an indication of all the generations' desire for the future of volunteerism. It speak volumes to what researchers, who desire to understand generations and volunteerism, can further study to bring clearer understanding.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

It is impossible for a qualitative study to be transferable unless it is credible, and credibility is not possible unless it is dependable. Trustworthiness answers the question: how can an inquirer encourage his or her audiences (and self) to believe that the findings of an inquiry are worth the time to pay attention? Valid inquiry must: (1) prove its truth value, (2) deliver the basis for applying it, and (3) permit external judgments to be made about the consistence of procedures and neutrality of the findings (Moustakas, 1994). This section will describe processes I used to prove trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argued that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. I initially stated that member checking would occur to increase the validity of research. It was my goal to have each participant confirm the accuracy of their transcribed interview, significant statements, themes, and descriptions. Klenke (2008) opined that findings in a research are only meaningful if the findings mean something to those who have experienced the problem.

Member checking was done during the interview and at the conclusion of the study because I desired to increase the credibility and validity of this study.

Prior to each interview, it was important for me to build a rapport with each participant to obtain their honest responses. As I listened to the participants' answers to each question, I ensured that I restated and summarized the information presented when needed. My goal was to ensure that participants' experience was captured accurately, to determine greater accuracy of their experience. During each participant's interview, additional notes were taken, describing the comfort level of each participant as they responded to questions asked, paying close attention to their body language during the interview.

Of the 20 participants interviewed, there were no signs of being uncomfortable during the interview. One week following each participant's interview, I provided an email of their transcript to each participant, respectively, to ensure the responses to each question were documented correctly. There were a total of three participants whose responses had to be updated, which was very minimal. Member checking was also conducted at the conclusion of the study. I shared all of the findings with each of the 20 participants involved. My goal was to provide each participant the opportunity to critique and analyze the findings, and comment on the overall findings. The participants affirmed that the summaries reflected their feelings and views of their experience of the phenomenon. Many participants were surprised to see the views of their cohort, overlapped a bit with some of the other cohorts. I performed this member check to provide findings that are true, authentic, and reliable.

Transferability. External validity is concerned with determining to what extent the study's findings can be applied in other situations, more specifically, to a wider population (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The questions and probing questions I posed allowed for thick, rich, and in-depth descriptions of each participant's experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention, which can easily relate to audiences who may be struggling with understanding how to engage and retain many generations within a nonprofit organization. Research participants were heavily quoted (which can be found in the research results) to provide rich illustrations of emerged themes.

Dependability. Reliability is concerned with determining whether or not a study can be repeated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). It is an expectation that findings will not be different each time the measures are used, with the assumption that what is being measured does not change (Neuman, 2009). I am certain that the reliability in this study has been enhanced because I have been very transparent about the data analysis procedures that have led to the research findings; my interpretations of the findings were checked; I ensured each participant had an opportunity to richly discuss their experience and verify their responses; and made the research questions and methodology accessible to other researchers.

Confirmability. A key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions (Miles & Huberman, 2014). This is the degree to which findings are the specific product of the focus of inquiry, and not the bias of the researcher. As noted in the role of the researcher section, I discussed my bias relative to the study. Having discussed those biases in truth provided room to create a

confirmability audit trail. An adequate trail enables the auditor to conclude whether or not conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to the sources and supported by the inquiry.

Results

The current study presented the following research question: What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers? Because of the number of generational cohorts used in this particular research, and the large amount of information collected, reporting each component of the research findings would be extensive and unproductive. Therefore, it was determined that the key themes that consistently emerged during data collection would be interwoven, and provide the focus of discussion of the results of this research. It was also determined that this would be the most effective method of presenting the findings. The results will be organized and presented by each sub question, and will also present participant's quotes. Because the sub questions are a large part of answering the main, over-arching research question, it will be discussed in greater detail in the summary section.

Sub question 1: The Influence of Generational Cohort Classification

How has an individual's specific generational cohort classification influenced his or her desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained?

The intent of sub question 1 was to investigate the potential influence of an individual's cohort classification on his or her desire to be recruited, recognized, and

retained. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed three major themes consistent with experiences that have helped to shape each participant's values, perceptions, and influence: (1) identity, including each participant's life stage and values; (2) defining moments; and (3) participant's motivation/need to participate in volunteerism. There were additional probing questions asked of each participant asking them to outline their initial desire to participate in volunteerism, which is how the third theme emerged. The results of those questions are discussed here.

Identity

Life stage. Each generation interviewed experienced very similar life-stage moments within their specific generation. Silent Generation participants are all retired from their career, but looking to remain active and social in the community. Each participant spoke about at least one health issue that has crept up since they have begun to age. ASGM participant admitted that because of his minor chronic illness, it has sparked him to take an interest in a nonprofit organization that is combatting his chronic illness; he believes that this not only benefits him because of the educational resources that are provided, but it helps people know that they are not alone.

The Baby Boomer participants have been in their career for more years than they care to think about it, and the majority of them are in the process of planning for retirement. Seventy-five percent of Baby Boomer participants (ABBM, ABBF, and IBBF) are experiencing the empty nest syndrome for the first time, and looking for opportunities to spend their time. All four participants are new grandparents, and are caring for their Silent Generation parents. They all spoke about finding the balance

between setting a standard of service for their grandchildren, being defined by their career, and the time it takes to care for a parent(s). ABBM participant admitted to being empty nesters, in need of some type of activity for him and his spouse to engage.

Generation X participants admitted to this being the busiest time of their life, with each of them being in mid-stage career and fully understanding home ownership. Seventy-five percent of the participants (AGXM, AGXF, and IGXF) spoke about being very busy parents, and admitting that their own time is really not their time. AGXD participant feels like this is the busiest time of her life as she attempts to balance a career and personal life, and cannot imagine adding any other activity.

Seventy-five percent of Generation Y participants (AGYM, IGYM, and IGYF) are very recent graduates (both undergrad and grad), so the majority of them are in the very early stages of their career. Seventy-five percent of the participants (IGYM, AGYM, and IGYF) were married by the age of 26 and are experiencing the growth of their family via their first child. All four participants have recently purchased their first home, and learning the housing market for the first time.

Generation Z participants are still very dependent upon their parents and are still living in the household of their parents. Seventy-five percent of Generation Z participants (AGZM, IGZM, and AGZF) admit that, though they are still in school, they are beginning to care about their career as an adult. All four participants expressed that they are still attempting to understand their identity.

Values. There were common lifestyles and values that emerged from the research as well. Silent Generation participants spoke about volunteering being a normal way of

living. There was a common understanding that even if one engages in a selfless act for a family member that is considered volunteering; and volunteering at home is how one is introduced to the concept of doing for others. ASGM admitted to her age group as being individuals who see volunteerism as a norm. ASGF admitted to participating in volunteerism at her local church and in the community. All participants spoke of respecting authority, while expecting respect in return. ASGF prides herself on being dedicated to a certain task for the long haul.

Fifty percent of Baby Boomer participants (ABBM and ABBF) are heavily involved in their church, and admit to being mostly involved in volunteerism at their local church. Fifty percent of the participants (IBBM and IBBF) also pride themselves on being workaholics, and because of the extra money that comes in from working long hours, they are able to simply give money to a local charity of choice. All four participants believe that their generation set the standard for being social change agents, giving the examples of different movements that existed in their time (i.e., – environmental movement, the civil rights movement). All four participants spoke of a desire to serve as a mentor in some capacity, but also desired the extra hours to have the opportunity to do so.

There were common lifestyles and values that emerged from Generation X participants as well. AGXF admitted that because her time is very limited, she can be come off as being a very ‘get to the point’ individual. IGXF prides herself on being part of an age group that is very self-reliant and are extremely resourceful. Each of the four participants from Generation X spoke of a strong desire to accomplish work/life balance,

values, and personal goals. Seventy-five percent of the participants (IGXM, AGXM, and AGXF) are currently in grad school in pursuit of education that they feel will draw them closer to their specific purpose. Each one of them prides themselves on being life-learners.

When speaking to Generation Y about their specific values, because they are socially responsible, all four participants expressed a desire to do things that matter in the community. They also want to do those things that matter in via a collaborative team effort.

Seventy-five percent of Generation Z participants (AGZM, IGZM, and AGZF) all say that they embrace traditional beliefs and value the family unit. When speaking about their personality, 75% of the participants (AGZM, IGZM, and IGZF) participants expressed delight in being able to sit at the dinner table to not only have dinner, but also talk about the events of their day. Seventy-five percent of the participants (IGZM, AGZM, and AGZF) expressed their optimism in having the ability to impact the world, and desire to participate in opportunities where they can learn how to be leaders.

Defining moments. Participants of the Silent Generation all chimed in on being obedient children who desired to show the elders who came before them that they honored their sacrifices. ASGM remembers the great depression, and how powerful it was to survive the depression. ISGM spoke about the desire to honor those who came before him. ASGF feel as though giving back to the community is not only a way to repay the generation who came before them but also leave a legacy/example of giving to the generations to follow.

Seventy-five percent of Baby Boomer participants (ABBM, ABBF, and IBBF) claimed that they identify with a time of when the environmental movement began, as well as the civil rights movement. They mentioned this being a time of deciding whether or not you were going to be part of the solution, or part of the problem. IBBM, ABBM, and ABBF recalled their coming of age being centered on low housing prices and free student grants. All participants identified with having the ability to save money, which allows them to have the freedom to give monetarily to an organization without flinching. IBBM, ABBF, and ABBM admitted to placing their lives on hold, to raise their children; needless to say, they all admitted to their defining moment with understanding self is when the final child left the house, and they were able to think about giving time to a cause. Fifty percent of the participants (IBBM and IBBF) admitted that they would be more apt to participate in anything that didn't involve self after they were retired. IBBF admitted that the first thing she did after retirement was walking into the first nonprofit organization that she could, volunteered, and had the most amazing volunteer experience. She plans to go on a weekly basis.

Seventy-five percent of the participants (IBBM, ABBF, and IBBF) admitted to being stuck in midlife crisis at the moment. They are beginning to ask themselves about the plans for the remaining years of their life. For this reason, they would like to ensure that if they do plan to participate in volunteer work, they want it to have meaning. Both ABBM and IBBM spoke from a mindset of determining how to move from being successful to being significant. ABBM, IBBM, and IBBF are successful in a career, and

now desire to be significant with their lives. All participants admitted to being in a space of learning their true identity after all these years of being in corporate America.

Generation X participants identified with being latchkey kids, and admit that the independence learned by being a latchkey child, has taught them to desire independence, being a leader, and having entrepreneurial interests.

Generation Y participants all spoke about being proud to be a generation of diversity. Seventy-five percent of the Generation Y participants (AGYM, AGYF, IGYM) mentioned growing up in a time of unrest (mentioning 9/11 specifically), and because of this defining moment in particular, has heightened an interest to 'do good' in the community.

Generation Z participants gladly admitted to ongoing struggle of understanding their defining moments, as they are still young, and living at home with their parents. All participants believe that they have grown up in a time of uncertainty, complexity, and chaos, especially having witnessed Hurricane Katrina and the Afghan war. Seventy-five percent of Generation Z participants (AGZM, IGZM, and AGZF) feel as though they have learned a lifetime of lessons, even though they have lived only a few years. Those same participants understand that they are the generation that is well-versed in technology, and believe that they will be the changing face of how organizations are run, simply because it is an easier way to get things done via technology. All participants admire the bravery of President Obama and admit to witnessing the first African American President has been encouragement to strive for things that may be well beyond their reach in the eyes of others.

Participant's Motivation/Need to Participate in Volunteerism.

Silent Generation. Seventy-five percent of the participants (ASGF, ASGM, and ISGF) all stated that because of the sacrifices of the generation that came before them, they firmly believe there exists an unspoken understanding for them to influence their peers, and generations to follow. Those same participants spoke about their preference of being involved in a nonprofit organization: they prefer to fully understand the mission and history of the organization in order to determine if there will be a mutually enjoyable experience between the participant and the organization. Fifty percent of the participants (ASGF and ASGM) spoke strongly about their desire to see a structured volunteer program that includes: onboarding volunteers in an interview format, volunteer roles that are engaging and show impact, a wide range of volunteer opportunities where the volunteer can be involved in all aspects of the nonprofit organizations' operations, volunteer roles that are both short-term and seasonal, and skills-based volunteer opportunities.

Baby Boomer generation. When speaking with Baby Boomer participants about their initial volunteering experience, 75% of the participants (ABBF, ABBM, and IBBM) viewed volunteering as a significant opportunity to feel significant, and fill a need for community and social involvement. All four participants admitted that the majority of their middle-aged counterparts were still very involved in their careers, leisure activities, and families; they believe that volunteerism is an extremely positive way to give back to their surrounding community.

As the findings for the Baby Boomer generation were analyzed, there were six areas of importance that emerged in understanding what the Baby Boomer desires their initial volunteer experience to entail: (1) organizations that are well managed and professional; (2) organizations where volunteers are truly valued; (3) volunteer opportunities that are creative, challenging, and meaningful; (4) organizations that seek to understand the needs of the volunteer; (5) organizations that will provide educational opportunities that will enhance their skills; and (6) opportunities that fit into the time they have available. IBBF believes that when there seems to be no structure, and it seems as though no one knows what is going on in the organization, one really does not want to be a part of what seems to be confusion. IMMB admitted that if he gives of his time, he desires to do something that is both challenging and interesting. He does not want to just help out; he desires an opportunity that will keep him coming back.

Generation X. Participants from Generation X all appeared to be committed volunteers, even though 50% of them are not currently involved. All four participants made note that they are interested in their contributions being useful to the entire cause of the organization; they do not just want to be assigned busy-work that seems to be wasting their efforts. All four participants believe that it is important to acknowledge individuals of Generation X's professional background, as well as their talents. Seventy-five percent of the participants (AGXF, AGXM, and IGXM) initially seek, for their initial volunteer experience, to immediately use those skills through specific volunteer roles, and desire to work alongside competent volunteers.

Generation Y. Seventy-five percent of generation participants (AGYF, AGYM, and IGYM) all desire to make a difference in society. Upon their initial interest in getting involved with a nonprofit organization, they want to immediately inform the organization about the skills that they can offer to the mission of the organization. They want to be asked this question up front, so that they can be heard very clearly on how they want to utilize their time. Those same participants voiced a desire to understand whether or not they will be presented with challenging tasks that have a decent award attached to completing said challenging task. Seventy-five percent of the participants (AGYF, AGYM, and IGYM) also voiced a concern about micro-managing. They admitted to loving the idea of having a supervisor to lead them, rather than to feel as if they are being managed by them.

Generation Z. All four participants were a lively group as each participant, at one time or another, during their interview expressed the desire to change the world. Seventy-five percent of the participants (AGZF, AGZM, and IGZF) seek to have volunteer opportunities that will build expertise, something that leads to some type of training or certification. Each participant admitted to feeling valued when these types of opportunities are offered. All four participants admitted that as much as they enjoy volunteering at an organization (onsite) that impacts their surrounding community, they also want to see that the organization is current on its technology. AGZF, AGZM, and IGZF stated their interest to multi-task across many screens, and they want to see that an organization is able to use and brand themselves via all types of social media platforms.

AGZF, AGZM, and IGZM admitted to the enjoyment of creating new things, and connecting in all types of ways.

Sub Question 2: Experiencing Recruitment, Recognition, and Retention

How has each generation of volunteers experienced recruitment, recognition, and retention?

The intent of sub question 2 was to hear and understand the experiences that each participant has experienced with recruitment, recognition, and retention. It gives in-depth descriptions of each of the five generations' experience as volunteer who have been recruited, recognized, and retained in volunteerism. Participants were given the opportunity to discuss in great detail, giving both their positive experience, and negative experiences (where applicable), without judgment. Each participant gave no indication of being uncomfortable with discussing their true experience. The results are discussed here.

Both the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer participants expressed pure excitement in being a part of the study. All eight participants expressed a concern that many organizations are unsure of how to engage and retain older individuals simply because they do not take the time to ask for feedback or for help from individuals who share their same, mature age. When reviewing the transcripts regarding the participants' experience(s) of recruitment, recognition, and retention, I noticed the extreme similarities of the experiences of the Silent Generation and the Baby Boomer generation. Table 18 outlines the experiences of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers.

Table 18

Silent Generation and Baby Boomer True Experience of the Three Rs of Volunteer Management

Volunteer management practice	True experience of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer generation
Recruitment	Word of mouth Health fairs Retirement/corporate events Calls to the organization
Recognition	Year-end banquet
Retention	None

Recruitment Experience

Word of mouth. Silent Generation participants all expressed that they have stumbled upon their volunteer involvement by learning about it from their children or grandchildren. Each participant expressed that they have never truly felt personally recruited by a nonprofit organization, as they believe that organizations are unaware of how to successfully market to the older generation. ISGF stated that word of mouth can be a powerful tool, but it can also be a confusing tool. Although her grandchild informed her about an organization and their mission, her grandchild was unable to inform her about volunteer shortage. ISGF believes that organizations have not taken the time to really assess what they need, and who can fill that need. Often times it's an older crowd needed, but the organization is confused about how to engage them.

Baby Boomer participants said that they have had a similar experience with recruitment. The organizations with which the majority of them are currently serving, or have served, were introduced by their children. Seventy-five percent of Baby Boomers (ABBM, ABBF, and IBBM) expressed a firm belief that organizations should have a

better way of marketing to their age group, especially since many of them are either retired, nearing retirement, or simply looking for ways to use their time.

Health fairs. Participants from both the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer generation expressed that they suffer from some type of health issue, whether it is a chronic illness, or something that is less severe, but requires medication. Having said that, many of them participate in local health fairs that they may have heard about via their doctors or fellow peers.

Retirement/corporate events. Participants from both the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer generation are either nearing retirement, or are currently retired. Fifty-percent of the participants from each generation (ASGM, ASGF, ABBM, and IBBF) shared that their current companies host a small scale opportunity that assists the employees in transitioning into retirement. A large part of that transition speaks about what can be done after retirement.

Calls to the organization. Participants from both the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer generation expressed that they are still believers of picking up the telephone, and physically talking to someone about the becoming engaged in an organization. An ISGF participant expressed that she still prefers to be engaged the old fashioned way of making a telephone call. Organizations have to be really conscious about returning telephone calls within 48 hours, or an interested individual will lose interest quickly. Although this may be a daunting task, organizations must still consider that individuals from the older population truly do prefer to be engaged in a more personal way of communication.

Recognition Experience

Year-end banquet. All participants from the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer generation spoke about receiving recognition in the form of a year-end banquet. Fifty percent of the participants from each generation (ASGM, ASGF, ISGF, and IBBM) shared that in addition to the typical “thank you for volunteering” statement, their organization(s) invite all volunteers to the annual year-end banquet. All of them have stated that they attend the banquet because they actually enjoy the experience, and love connecting with the volunteers who they typically never see during their volunteer shift. IBBM, IBBF, ABBF, and ISGM also shared a similar experience with being invited to the annual year-end banquet, but choose not to attend anymore simply because they desire a more personal form of recognition. They believe that this is not a true reflection of them being appreciated for their service because so many people are in one place.

Retention Experience

None. Oddly enough, no participant spoke about the organizations where they currently volunteer intentionally engaging in retention practices. When asked the probing question about how do they feel that their organization attempts to motivate them to come back in an ongoing basis to volunteer, 50% of the Silent Generation participants stated that their organizations will simply ask about their experience for the day, and will then ask when they would like to sign up for an additional opportunity. Seventy-five percent of the Baby Boomer participants said that they have been asked to perhaps lead an

upcoming volunteer project, but was never informed about the said project, even when they continued to volunteer. Needless to say, neither generation of participants had a true retention experience in their opinion(s).

Generation X participants shared no similar experiences with any of the other generations. Table 19 outlines their experiences, and is further discussed here.

Table 19

Generation X True Experience of the Three Rs of Volunteer Management

Volunteer management practice	True experience of Generation X
Recruitment	Online/website Corporate recruitment Calls to the organization
Recognition	Thank-you email Year-end banquet
Retention	Flexible opportunities Meaningful tasks

Recruitment Experience

Online/website. Seventy-five percent of the Generation X participants (AGXM, AGXF, IGXM) made mention to being recruited via an organization's website. AGXM stated that he was looking for volunteer opportunities for his graduate chapter fraternity, and decided to surf the net in search of an organization, he stumbled upon an organization, discovered how to become engaged, and signed his fraternity up for an opportunity. All four participants agreed that online volunteer recruitment only works if the organization's website is one that is kept current. Fifty percent of Generation X research participants actually admitted to preferring online/website engagement over any other form of recruitment.

Corporate recruitment. All four participants excitedly shared that their respective employment companies allow them to take time away from the office to volunteer, for which they are extremely appreciative. IGXM stated that his company actually plans team volunteer initiatives, and all they have to do is inform the team leader their desire to participate. AGXF admitted that if she did not participate in her company's volunteer impact day, she would have no clue about the nonprofit organizations in the metro Atlanta area. All four participants admitted that once they volunteered with a nonprofit organization with their specific place of employment group, they continued to be engaged with the organization.

Calls to the organization. All four Generation X participants spoke about there being a time when they actually picked up the telephone to call a nonprofit organization to attempt to learn more about their volunteer opportunities. Fifty percent of the participants experienced success after several tries, the other half of the participants said that there was no success. AGXF called an organization and was never able to physically get a person from the volunteer team on the telephone. IGXM called several organizations when he was looking to simply get his family involved in volunteering; the organization apparently was not kid-friendly, but encouraged volunteers to 'get your family involved in just one phone call'. AGXM called an organization, and on his first attempt, the organization was able to get him signed up for a volunteer opportunity and an orientation all in the same day. IGXF called an organization initially for community service hours that she had to complete. She admitted to having such a great experience that she continued volunteering even after her hours were completed.

Recognition Experience

Thank-you email. All four participants from Generation X stated that the organization in which they currently volunteer, or have volunteered have sent emails at the completion of their opportunity, as a way to show appreciation for the volunteer activity done on that day. Fifty percent of the participants stated that they truly do feel appreciated by receiving the email. The other half of the participants admitted that they do not feel as appreciated since it is an automatic email that is sent once you clock out of your volunteer activity.

Year-end banquet. All four participants stated that the organization in which they currently volunteer, or have volunteered hosts a year-end banquet/party to show appreciation to all individuals who have volunteered within the year. AGXM participant admitted that he enjoys attending the event because he has a chance to see other volunteers who he might not see throughout the year. IGXF participant admitted that towards the end of her volunteer participation with one organization, she became uninterested in attending the year-end banquet because it felt very methodical and insincere. AGXF participant states that she enjoys the year-end banquets, especially since many nonprofit organizations really do not have the funds to do such things, but she also admitted that she would also prefer ongoing recognition that is more personal.

Retention Experience

All four participants admitted that they are unaware if the organizations where they currently serve, or have served, have ever verbally expressed that they have retention practices in place. Seventy-five percent of Generation X participants (AGXM, AGXF, and IGXM) admitted that they have never seen a volunteer handbook that specifically outlined whether or not the organization(s) has strict retention practices. IGXF stated that though she never saw anything written on paper, she simply deduced that an organization's retention practices all resemble the organization doing something to keep volunteers coming back. There were two areas that all four participants believed outlined how their respective organizations attempt to retain volunteers (through their experience): by providing flexible opportunities, and giving the volunteer meaningful tasks.

Upon evaluating the transcripts from Generation Y and Generation Z, it was observed that both generations had similar experiences with recruitment, recognition, and retention. Needless to say, the results of their experience are presented together. Table 20 outlines what the generations have experienced as it relates to the three Rs of volunteer management.

Table 20

Generation Y and Generation Z True Experience of the Three Rs of Volunteer Management

Volunteer management practice	True experience of Generation Y and Generation Z
Recruitment	Online/social media Required hours
Recognition	Social media Year-end banquet
Retention	Utilization of skills for meaningful tasks

Recruitment Experience

Online/social media. Participants from both Generation Y and z have experienced recruitment via online mechanisms. The four participants from Generation Y stated that they learned of volunteer opportunities from their respective organizations from VolunteerMatch, Indeed, Idealist, and All For Good. AGYF participant stated that she prefers to be engaged by hearing about opportunities that have been posted on such online platforms. IGYM participant stated that it is simply easier to get involved by signing up for an opportunity via online platforms dedicated to recruiting for organizations. AGYM participant admitted that he has gotten used to being engaged into volunteerism via their online platform, as opposed to calling the actual organization. Generation Z participants all admitted to literally living online. All four participants collectively stated that they have been engaged into volunteerism primarily via an organization's Facebook page, Instagram, or app (if applicable). They all admitted to not being interested in an organization unless they are tech savvy.

Required hours. Participants from both Generation Y and z have also experienced recruitment via the required hours that they have to complete for undergrad, graduate (depending upon your degree), and high school. High schools, colleges, and universities are now requiring students to have a certain amount of hours before they can graduate. Fifty percent of Generation Y participants, and 75% of Generation Z participants admitted that although they were recruited in volunteerism via having to complete service hours, they appreciated that form of recruitment, as they would have never known about to organizations had it not been for that requirement.

Recognition Experience

Social media. IGYF, AGYM, IGZF, and IGZM participants have all experienced recognition via their respective organization's social media platform(s). IGYF participant stated that she was recognized as her organization's volunteer of the month and it was shared via their Facebook page, Instagram, and twitter accounts. AGYM participant stated that he was shown appreciation when his respective organization wrote a blog about his dedication to the organization and posted the blog n all four of their social media platforms. IGZF participant stated that her respective organization recognized her volunteer efforts as their volunteer ambassador and advocacy volunteer by writing a blog about why she loves prompting the organization. They, too, shared this blog on both of their social media platforms. IGZM participant stated that she participated in a one-time event with an organization. Because the event was so monumental to the organization, each new volunteer was featured on their page, simply because they stepped in on short notice and did a wonderful job. These stories were added to the organization's four social media platforms.

Year-end banquet. Nearly 90% of the combined Generation Y and Generation Z participants (AGYF, AGYM, IGYF, AGZF, AGZM, and IGZM) participants recalled being invited to their organization's year-end appreciation party/dinner. All participants recalled this being the only other appreciation practice in addition to the occasional posts on the organization's social media platforms. Both generations suggested organizations being even more personal in their recognition strategies by providing reference letters as a form of appreciation. They also strongly believe that form time to time, a gift card to

their favorite restaurant or store would also be something to consider for recognition, as it seems a bit more personal.

Retention Experience

Utilization of skills for meaningful tasks. All participants from Generation Y and Generation Z believe that organizations attempt to retain their volunteer services by creating meaningful tasks where they can utilize the skills that are needed for certain projects. The Generation Y participants stated that they have observed that organizations do not understand how to incorporate retention practices, so they try to hold on to their specific age group by offering opportunities to them where they can utilize their skills for administrative tasks, leading projects, or even overseeing social media platforms. They all agree that this is truly a way that they would stay engaged with an organization – the utilization of meaningful tasks that will enhance skills that they already acquire. When asked the same question re: retention to Generation Z, all participants admitted that they really do not understand how they are retained with an organization. After further probing, each participant then understood, but admitted that they feel organizations really do not know how to retain the younger generation because they might not feel that the younger generation is serious about volunteerism. Each participant then stated that they feel they have been retained by organizations when they have asked them to help out with updating their social media platform, blogging about the organization, and engaging in virtual volunteering.

Sub Question 3: Considerations When Recruiting, Recognizing, and Retaining

What are important considerations when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers?

The intent of sub question 3 was to understand what participants of this study believe volunteer resource managers should consider when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers. Because participants were so excited about participating in a study that truly used their opinions, there were not many probing questions that needed to be asked. Participants jumped right in, giving their suggestions, and collective suggestions (displayed in Table 21), and are discussed here.

Table 21

Considerations When Recruiting, Recognizing, and Retaining Volunteers

Considerations
Focus on the individual's motivation to volunteer.
Have a structured volunteer program in place.
Make it easy to get and stay involved.
Offer a menu of opportunities that are meaningful and beneficial.
Offer flexible and episodic/seasonal volunteer opportunities.
Ensure generation specific recruitment messages and platforms are in place.
Have intentionality about the recognition/awards program.
Offer opportunities for multigenerational involvement.
Offer opportunities that enhance and transfer skills.
Offer a feedback system.

Focus on the individual's motivation to volunteer. There was an overwhelming 80% response across all 20 participants simply expressing that organizations should attempt to focus on an individual's desire to volunteer, by taking the time to understand each individual's need to have an impact. AGXM, IBBF, AGXM, IGYF, and AGZM participants firmly believe that everyone's need is different, and once an organization

understands those needs, the organization will be able to involve them as volunteers that will result in a mutual benefit. ASGM, ASGF, and ISGM participants believe that because of the sacrifices of the generation that came before them, there exists an unspoken understanding suggesting that they will use their time to help the world through volunteerism. IBBF participant desires to feel significant, and fill a need for community and social involvement. AGYF participant believes that when she takes an interest in a nonprofit organization, she wants the nonprofit to give her clear information about their mission and vision, and then ask her how her specific talents, time, and treasure can be used wisely to support their mission. AGZM participant would prefer volunteer opportunities that allow him to tangibly see his influence in his surrounding community.

Have a structured volunteer program in place. There was an overwhelming 70% response across all 20 participants whole-heartedly believing that organizations must have a structured volunteer program that clearly shows that they value having the following practices: recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, feedback, recognition, and retention. These same participants expressed repeatedly that being part of a well-organized program is extremely important, as this shows an interested volunteer that their time and talents will be valued. ASGF participant prefers a volunteer program that includes: onboarding volunteers in an interview format, volunteer roles that are engaging and show impact, a wide range of volunteer opportunities where the volunteer can be involved in all aspects of the nonprofit organizations' operations, volunteer roles that are both short-term and seasonal, and skills-based volunteer opportunities. IBBF participant believes that when there seems to be no structure, and it seems that no one knows what is

going on in the organization; one really does not want to be a part of confusion. IGXM participant said that he contacted an organization three different times, and each time he received different responses to the same inquiry. From that experience, he believed that no one was communicating with one another within the organization, and decided to not be a part what resembled confusion.

Make it easy to get and stay involved. There was an overwhelming 100% response across all 20 participants for organizations to make it easy to get involved in an organization and stay involved. ISGF participant reflected on a time where she called an organization to gain more information about their opportunities. She had to leave a message, asking for a return call; there was never a return call. IBBM participant recalled a time when he actually stopped by an organization to inquire about volunteer opportunities. He was informed that he needed to attend an orientation that was only offered on the third Saturday of the month; he had recently missed that particular Saturday. AGZF participant spoke about her first interest in volunteerism. She saw an offering on Facebook and sent an email to the appropriate person. She received a telephone call the next day simply because the organization believed in responding within 24 hours of an initial interest. She believes she will volunteer at this organization for many years.

Offer a menu of opportunities that are meaningful and beneficial. There was an overwhelming 90% response across all 20 participants stating that organizations have to offer a menu to volunteer opportunities that cover a gambit of the organization's operations. That response continuing by informing that some individuals like to involve

themselves in all aspects of an organization, often times, this is how some individuals feel as if they have offered value to the organization. This also gives the volunteer a chance to utilize, develop, and improve skills. One interesting thing that emerged from Generation X participants is the fact that they might take on trivial tasks when presented the option, or request by an organization, but they will not volunteer again. One interesting thing that emerged from Generation Y participants, unlike Generation X, when presented the request to fulfill trivial tasks, they are not afraid to express to the volunteer manager from the beginning that they will not perform those types of tasks as their volunteer work.

Offer flexible and episodic/seasonal volunteer opportunities. There was an overwhelming 95% response across all 20 participants believing that organizations have got to offer one-time (or short term) opportunities, seasonal opportunities, and skills based opportunities that align with the volunteer's availability, and skills. AGXF participant shared that she has an overwhelming desire to see a wide range of volunteer opportunities where she can be involved in all aspects of the nonprofit organizations' operations so that she can maximize all skills that can be brought to the organization. ABBM, IBBF, IBBM participants expressed the stress of busyness in their careers, and feeling as if they do not have much additional time to contribute to volunteerism. IBBF admits that she cannot find enough time to do anything but care for other people. For this reason, her initial volunteer experience has to be meaningful enough to fit it into an already busy schedule. AGXF believes that she is more apt to continue in a volunteer opportunity if the organization offers short-term, time-specific opportunities where she can make a difference without stressing her already hectic schedule. AGZM claims that

he responds better to volunteer opportunities with little to no pressure for a regular commitment. He desires a low-level initial volunteer experience to get a taste of what it looks like to be a part of the organization. AGYF needs to understand how she can contribute to the overall mission of the organization before getting completely involved in volunteerism within the organization.

Ensure generation specific recruitment messages and platforms are in place.

There was an overwhelming 95% response across all 20 participants stressing the need to have targeted brand marketing that is specific to an individual's age. ASGF, ASGM, ISGM participants have expressed that they still believe in receiving telephone calls, or what current technology deems as calling posts. ABBF, ABBM, IBBF participants admitted to enjoying those shiny brochures that organizations distribute. AGXF, AGXM, IGXM, AGYM, AGYF, and IGYF participants revel in organizations that engage volunteers successfully through websites such as VolunteerMatch and Indeed. All four of the Generation Z participants prefer all things social media as a way of engagement. ASGM believes that nonprofit organizations should be aware that targeting to the older generation easy, as they like things written down, and meaningful conversation about what is needed. ABBM enjoys a variety of volunteer opportunities that provide lasting influence; he specifically desires to volunteer with the youth, providing mentorship in the area of planning and achieving goals. AGYF firmly believes that organizations need to be online via VolunteerMatch because individuals can quickly search the database, learn about the organization, and connect with someone within the organization quickly.

Have intentionality about the recognition/awards program. There was an overwhelming 85% response across all 20 participants stating that organizations should be more intentional about recognition practices. They believe nothing is wrong with the traditional year-end volunteer appreciation event, but they have a strong desire to be rewarded on a personal level. Generation Y discussed promoting volunteers in leadership roles to showcase their leadership abilities; Generation X participants rallied behind giving volunteers greater responsibility; Baby Boomers desire for organizations to understand the value that individuals place on being a life-long learner; and Generation Z desire to improve their networking database, even at a young age. Silent Generation participants admitted that in addition to being able to complete a well done job, they appreciate a year-end banquet style dinner that highlights their achievements, and allows for them to mingle with fellow volunteers. ASGM participant admitted to also enjoying a lapel pin that highlights milestones in their involvement in volunteerism in the specific organization where they give the most time.

Offer opportunities for multigenerational involvement. There was an overwhelming 90% response across all 20 participants for organizations to offer volunteer opportunities that involved their family members, opportunities for the older generation to work with the younger generation (to gain current skills), and opportunities for the younger generation to gain wisdom from the older generation (mentorship). IBBF believes that the balance for her time, coupled with her desire to participate in volunteerism, is going to an organization where her entire family can be involved. She admits that when this opportunity is available, she does not feel like she is neglecting her

family, as she gives back to a meaningful cause. ISGF would love to see volunteer opportunities that involve multi-generations. She desires to spend time with her family, volunteering together. She believes that nonprofits should consider this offering when attempting to recruit the older generation. AGXM, AGYF, IGZM participants desire to be paired with older individuals where they can be mentored and learn how to close the volunteer generation gap.

Offer opportunities that enhance and transfer skills. There was an overwhelming 65% response across the majority of the participants for opportunities that provide professionalism and training. Baby Boomers specifically expressed that instead of training for certificates, they desire to learning and educational opportunities that will develop their current skills that will benefit both the organization and themselves.

Offer a feedback system. There was an overwhelming 100% response across the majority of the participants for opportunities that allowed volunteers to give feedback about their volunteer experience with the organization. Silent Generation participants collectively agreed that when organizations allow volunteers to provide feedback about their volunteer experience, it makes volunteers believe they have a voice with the organization. Baby Boomer participants collectively believe that when volunteers are allowed to give feedback, they truly feel like a valued part of an organization. Generation X participants collectively believe that when volunteers are allowed to provide feedback, organizations have a better chance at actually retaining individuals as volunteers. Generation Y participants collectively believe that when organizations allow volunteers to provide feedback, it makes an organization's volunteer program more attractive for

volunteer engagement and seemed more organized. Generation Z participants collectively agreed that if an organization allowed their age of individuals to provide feedback from a volunteer experience, they would feel honored, simply because it is typical for their age group to not be asked about their experience with anything, anywhere.

Sub Question 4: Benefits of Generation-Based Volunteer Management Practices

How can the development of generation-based volunteer management practices potentially increase engagement and retention of five living generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization?

The intent of sub question 4 was to understand how developing generation-based volunteer management practices can potentially increase how volunteers are engaged and retained. There were probing questions asked to specifically get honest answers from the participants about how they felt the development of generation-based volunteer management practices could potentially engage and retain volunteers on a more consistent basis. There were four main thoughts that were shared across all 20 participants, and they are discussed here.

Potential for each age group to feel adequately represented. The Silent Generation and Baby Boomer participants continued to express the honor of being a part of a study who wishes to engage with the older population. Seventy-five percent of Silent Generation participants believe that the information of generation-based volunteer management practices has the potential for every age group to be adequately represented in an organization. They believe that many organizations miss out on several age groups because they do not know how to effectively market to them personally. Seventy-five

percent of Baby Boomer participants believe that organizations who would consider creating generation-based volunteer management practices would meet the need of the older generation desiring to connect with youth to serve as mentors. Generation X participants had a resounding response (100%) to the belief that when organizations take into consideration marketing specifically to an age group, no one gets left out. Generation Y and Generation Z participants were similar in their responses of the belief that when organizations consider all age groups, it allows for the organization to truly be considered a multigenerational organization, closing a significant gap between older individuals and the younger generation.

Makes individuals feel personally invited, vs. recruited, to participate in volunteerism. There was an overwhelming 90% response across all 20 participants simply believing that the creation of generation-based volunteer management practices gives the impression that organizations are really interested in understanding a potential volunteer's motivation to volunteer. Participants also believe that organizations who consider this creation will make people of all ages feel personally invited, rather than recruited, to volunteer.

Makes volunteers truly feel appreciated for their service. Ninety percent of the participants across all five generations expressed sincere appreciation if there was the potential for them to be recognized in a way that truly spoke to them personally. From conversations had during the interview, each generation agreed that although a year-end volunteer appreciation is greatly needed by an organization, but they also desire to be appreciated in an ongoing manner that speaks to their personality. Consequently, each

generation's desire to be recognized was extremely uniform. Seventy-five percent of Silent Generation participants revel in the year-end volunteer appreciation, but all made mention to receiving a milestone lapel pin as they progress in their time with an organization. Seventy-five percent of Baby Boomer participants feel appreciated when they are able to serve in a mentorship capacity. Seventy-five percent of Generation X participants spoke about feeling valued when organizations invite them to opportunities where they can increase their networking circle. All four participants from Generation Y revel in organizations that are able to provide a reference letter, or serve as a reference for them in the future. All four participants from Generation Z all expressed being appreciated via social media avenues showing exactly what they've done at said organization.

Has the potential to actually reach retention goals of an organization. The majority of the participants from each generation (at least 75%) agreed that if organizations take into careful consideration the creation of generation-based volunteer management practices, they would actually have a solid plan that could actually help them to increase their retention goal. AGXF participant believes that organizations always set a goal to increase retention, but really have no true plan in actually meeting that goal, because they have no idea where to start. AGYM believes that if an organization genuinely took the time to create practices targeted to each generation separately, their volunteer programs would do a tremendous service to themselves because they would be able to incorporate talents that span generations.

Summary

Main Question: What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers?

Five experiences of the research participants contributed to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. First, an individual's identity plays a significant role in the contribution to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. Participants believe that where they are right now in their life-stage contributes to their identity because it is tied to what they experience on a daily basis. Secondly, an individual's defining moments play a significant role in the contribution to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. Participants believe that they have been greatly influenced by certain life experiences that they have experienced, as well as personal relationships and influences that are tied to those moments. Third, an individual's motivation and/or need to participate in volunteerism play a significant role in the contribution to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. The participants in the study firmly believe that their specific motivation to volunteer, coupled with the experiences of their actual initial volunteer experience is crucial to developing healthy practices. Fourth, an individual's initial and ongoing experience of volunteer management practices play a significant role in the contribution to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. Participants firmly believe that in order to create effective generation-based volunteer management practices, there must be a greater understanding of what has already been experienced by the general volunteer

management practices. Fifth, individuals' thoughts regarding the future of volunteerism play a significant role in the contribution to developing generation-based volunteer management practices. Participants believe that in addition to having effective generation-based practices, organizations should be thinking about the future of volunteerism, which means including volunteer programs that cover multigenerational and intergenerational options. These five areas are summarized in great detail within the sub questions of this study.

Sub question 1: How has an individual's specific generational cohort classification influenced his or her desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained?

The intent of sub question 1 was to investigate how a generation's cohort classification potentially influences his or her desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained. My desire was to become familiar with each participant. Probing questions asked revealed three themes consistent with experiences that have helped to shape each participant's values, perceptions, and influence: (1) identity, including each participant's life stage and values; (2) defining moments; and (3) motivation/need to participate in volunteerism.

Life-stage moments. Each generation collectively had similar life-stage moments, within their respective generational cohort. Silent Generation participants were all retired from their career, but looking to remain active and social in the community. Baby Boomer participants are still in their careers, but looking forward to retirement. Generation X participants feel as if this being the busiest time of their life, as each of them is in mid-stage career. Generation Y participants were recent graduates (both

undergrad and grad); the majority are in the very early stages of their career. Generation Z are still very dependent upon their parents and are still living in the household of their parents and are still attempting to understand their identity.

Values. There were common lifestyles and values that emerged from the generational cohorts respectively. The Silent Generation all spoke about volunteering being a normal way of living. Baby Boomer participants desire to serve as mentors to the generation coming behind them. Generation X participants have a desire to accomplish work/life balance, values, and personal goals. Generation Y participants have a desire to do things that matter in the community, in a collaborative manner. Generation Z participants value family, as they appreciate being able to sit at the dinner table to not only have dinner, but also talk about the events of their day.

Defining moments. Participants of the Silent Generation all chimed in on being obedient children who desired to show the elders who came before them that they honored their sacrifices. They remember the great depression, and how powerful it was to survive the depression. Baby Boomers identified with a time of when the environmental movement began, as well as the civil rights movement. They mentioned this being a time of deciding whether or not you were going to be part of the solution, or part of the problem. Generation X participants identified with being latchkey kids, and admit that the independence learned by being a latchkey child, has taught them to desire independence, being a leader, and having entrepreneurial interests. Generation Y participants all spoke about being proud to be a generation of diversity, also mentioning growing up in a time of unrest (mentioning 9/11 specifically); and because of this defining moment in

particular, has heightened an interest to “do good” in the community. Generation Z participants gladly admitted to still understanding their defining moments, as they are still living at home with their parents.

Motivation/need to participate in volunteerism. Silent Generation prefers to fully understand the mission, history, and structure of the organization in order to determine if there will be a mutually enjoyable experience between the participant and the organization. Boomers view volunteering, but also need to be appreciated for the time they are sacrificing. Generation X is interested in their contributions being useful to the entire cause of the organization; they do not just want to be assigned busy-work that seems to be wasting their efforts. Generation Y want to immediately inform the organization about the skills that they can offer to the mission of the organization. Generation Z seeks to have volunteer opportunities that will build expertise, something that leads to some type of training or certification.

Sub question 2: How has each generation of volunteers experienced recruitment, recognition, and retention?

The intent of sub question 2 was to hear and understand how each participant has experienced with recruitment, recognition, and retention. Each participant is either currently involved in volunteerism, or has been involved in volunteerism within the past year. The results revealed that the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer generation had very similar experiences, so their responses were grouped together. Generation X shared no similar experiences with any of the other generational cohorts; needless to say, they

were in their own category. Generation Y and Generation Z had very similar experiences, so their responses were also grouped together.

Silent Generation and Baby Boomers. Silent Generation and Baby Boomer participants mentioned four ways that they have similarly been recruited by organizations: (1) word of mouth from their children or grandchildren; (2) by attending local health fairs and hearing about organization's volunteer opportunities; (3) participating in retirement/corporate events that are sponsored by their former employers; and (4) personally calling the organization, whether the outcome was positive or negative. When speaking about recognition, both cohorts admitted that their only recognition experience has been their organization's year-end banquets that are hosted for the purpose of honoring individuals who have participated in volunteerism throughout the year. Unfortunately, when speaking on their retention experience, both cohorts admitted that they do not feel like they have experienced a retention practice with their respective organization(s).

Generation X. Generation X participants mentioned three main areas in which they have experienced recruitment into volunteerism: (1) searching an organization's website, and inquiring an interest to participate in their volunteer program; (2) through their company's corporate recruitment volunteer policy, where they can participate in their company's corporate volunteer day; and (3) by personally calling the organization to learn more about getting involved. When speaking about recognition, Generation X shared two ways that they have collectively experienced recognition: (1) by receiving a "thank-you" email from the organization, once their volunteer opportunity has ended for

the day; and (2) by being invited to the annual year-end banquet that shows appreciation to individuals who have volunteered throughout the year. On retention, Generation X participants openly admitted to not fully understanding whether or not their organization(s) in which they participate in volunteerism has a formal retention process, but believes that they have been retained overall in two ways: (1) by the organization always providing attractive flexible opportunities, that invites them back; and (2) by always giving them meaningful tasks that contribute to the organization's overall mission.

Generation Y and Generation Z. Upon evaluating the transcripts from Generation Y and Generation Z, it was observed that both generations had similar experiences with recruitment, recognition, and retention. Needless to say, the results of their experience will also be presented together. On recruitment, both Generation Y and Generation Z experienced recruitment in two main ways: (1) through online mechanisms such as VolunteerMatch, Indeed, and Idealist; and (2) the requirement of having to fulfill volunteer hours for both college & universities and high school. Both cohorts have experienced recognition in two ways: (1) by having their efforts recognized via an organization's social media platform, whether it is Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram; and (2) being invited to the organization's year-end banquet where individuals are appreciated for their yearly volunteer participation within the organization. Generation Y and z participants believe that they have been retained via their respective organizations in one significant way: (1) the organization's efforts to use their skills for meaningful tasks.

Sub question 3: What are important considerations when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers?

The intent of sub question 3 was to understand what participants of this study believe volunteer resource managers should consider when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers. The results of this sub question represent the collective responses of all 20 participants. There were ten main areas that all 20 participants collectively mentioned in their response to what they feel are important considerations.

First, 80% of the participants believe that organizations should focus on the individual's motivation to volunteer, by taking the time to understand each individual's need to have an impact. Second, 70% of the participants believe that organizations should have a structured volunteer program in place, as it shows an interested volunteer that their time and talents will be valued. Third, 100% of the participants believe that organizations should make it easy to get and stay involved by specifically making it as seamless as possible to become and stay involved in the organization's volunteer program. Fourth, 90% of the participants believe that organizations should offer a menu of opportunities that are meaningful and beneficial, as many individuals enjoy involving themselves in all aspects of an organization as a way of offering value to the organization. Fifth, 95% of the participants believe that organizations should offer flexible and episodic/seasonal volunteer opportunities, as individuals desire to see a wide range of volunteer opportunities where they can be involved in all aspects of the nonprofit organizations' operations, as well as finding the actual time to volunteer. Sixth, 95% of the participants believe that organizations should ensure generation specific recruitment messages and

platforms are in place to meet volunteers where they are, for their organization to be attractive. Seventh, 85% of the participants believe that organizations should have intentionality about their recognition/awards program, keeping in mind that individuals truly enjoy being rewarded on a personal level. Eighth, 90% of the participants believe that organizations should offer opportunities for multigenerational involvement, especially since participants desire opportunities for the older generation to work with the younger generation (for purposes of gaining current skills), and opportunities for the younger generation to gain wisdom from the older generation (mentorship). Ninth, 65% of the participants believe that organizations should offer opportunities that enhance and transfer skills. Finally, 100% of the participants believe that organizations should offer a feedback system, as it gives volunteers a voice in the organization, as well as makes them feel like a valued part.

Sub question 4: How can the development of generation-based volunteer management practices potentially increase engagement and retention of five living generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization?

The intent of sub question 4 was to understand how developing generation-based volunteer management practices can potentially increase how volunteers are engaged and retained. There were four main thoughts that were shared across all 20 participants.

First, 85% of the participants believe that by developing generation-based volunteer management practices, each age group will feel adequately represented. Participants believe that many organizations miss out on utilizing the skills and talents of several age groups simply because they do not know how to effectively market to them

personally. Secondly, 90% of the participants believe that generation-based volunteer management practices could give the impression that organizations are really interested in understanding a potential volunteer's motivation to volunteer, and makes individuals feel personally invited, rather than recruited, to volunteer. Third, 75% of the participants expressed sincere appreciation if there was the potential for them to be recognized in a way that truly spoke to them personally. Finally, 75% of the participants believe that organizations would actually have a solid plan that could actually help them to increase their retention goal. Participants believe that organizations always set a goal to increase retention, but really have no true plan in actually meeting that goal, because they have no idea where to start.

Chapter 5 focuses on a discussion of the findings and conclusions of the study. The chapter also addresses the recommendation for further studies. Finally, I will discuss the study's minor limitations as well as its contribution to positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Phenomenological research inquiry was employed to understand the recruitment, recognition, and retention practice experiences of these five generations. This study was conducted in hopes of: (1) bridging the volunteer generation gap, providing opportunities for all five living generation to interact with one another in a multigenerational manner; (2) the Volunteer Manager who is seeking ways to increase volunteer engagement and retention, while providing an effective volunteer program within nonprofit organizations; (3) the actual nonprofit organization seeking to make a greater impact in the community via their mission; and (4) the overall community at large, seeking to resolve societal concerns. When all generations of individuals are able to utilize their talents within an organization, the possibilities of that organizations succeeding are endless.

The key findings that emerged from this study are:

- An individual's identity (i.e., – characteristics, values, and lifestyle), combined with defining moments (i.e., – life experiences, personal influences) contribute drastically to their motivation/need for participation in volunteerism.
- All five generational cohorts have a strong desire for nonprofit organizations to have structured volunteer programs with effective volunteer management practices, as they believe this helps to increase engagement and retention.

- Although the Silent Generation and Baby Boomer share many experiences in how each generation has been recruited, recognized, and retained in volunteerism, they collectively believe that more needs to be done to ensure their specific age group has volunteer practices that are unique to their value system.
- Although the 21st-century volunteers (Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z) shared many experiences in how each generation has been recruited, recognized, and retained in volunteerism, they collectively believe that more needs to be done to ensure their specific age group has volunteer practices that are unique to their value system.
- All five generational cohorts believe that major thought should be given to creating separate marketing brands for each generation, thus creating an effective multigenerational volunteer program.
- All five generational cohorts believe that nonprofit organizations should invest in intergenerational programs to bring value to their surrounding communities.

Interpretation of Findings

One major premise of this study was that different generational cohorts of volunteers have different attitudes and value systems affecting how they prefer to be recruited, recognized, and retained in volunteerism (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Results from previous studies have shown that members of generational cohorts have experienced events in their lives that were instrumental in shaping their

values, attitudes, and belief systems (Wymer, 2011). Numerous life events occur (i.e., – economic, political, and social) during the most critical developmental stages of an individual’s childhood. Consequently, those life events influence an individual’s perspective on life (Kearns, Bell, Deem, & McShane, 2012).

Global events that have occurred in one’s lifetime are the primary reason why generational cohorts differ so much (Day, 2013). These specific experiences play a large role in how individual’s respond to their surrounding environment (Day, 2013). This seems to be very evident in environments such as work, and even in the world of volunteerism. Therefore, it is crucial for volunteer resource managers to understand each generation’s uniqueness, and how an individual’s cohort classification might affect the engagement and retention amongst generational cohorts of volunteers (Benson & Brown, 2011).

Discussion on Findings for Overarching Research Question

The main research question inquired: What are the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five living generations of volunteers?

The main research question inquired about the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. The use of generation theory as a foundation for this study was believed to present the greatest opportunity to help in answering the *what* and *how* of the research question. The overarching generation theory (including Karl Mannheim’s theory of generations, generational cohort theory, and

the Strauss-Howe generational theory) can be used to present the premise that the desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained, and specific values of various generational cohorts of volunteers are based on the social norms, behavioral values, historical experiences, and the reactions to those events developed by each generation (Benson & Brown, 2011). Strauss and Howe (1991) theorized that generational cycles have historical foundations and that 89 generational cycles forecast the movements of future generations; while Mannheim's theory of generations and the generational cohort theory suggest "major historical events are what change a society" (Mannheim, 1927, p. 290). The historical events that change a generation are the most interesting because both the event and reaction have separate consequences. Such events and reactions are why both Strauss-Howe and Mannheim's generational theories had to be used simultaneously in order to properly represent the generation theory.

According to several theorists, values, social events, global events, and even fashion that occur during the formative years of an individual impress upon individuals traits shared amongst peers (Rowe, 2010). Many people tend to believe that their personality, attitudes, perspectives are inherently singular. However, since generation theory has been in existence, there have been several researchers who have attempted to illuminate the influence(s) of the cultural environment on facets of individuals' attitudes, perspectives, and personalities (DelCampo, Haggerty, & Haney, 2010). There have been skeptics that propose that generation theory has no influence on individuals, and is completely inconclusive (Gladwell, Dorwart, Stone, & Hammond, 2010). However, many researchers believe that there have been collective traits uncovered that distinguish

one generational cohort from the other (Rowe, 2010). I believe that generation theory played an important factor in this study in understanding each generation's identity and their experience with volunteer management practices. Results from this study provide support for the premise of the overarching generation theory, while few results did not provide support for the premise of the overarching generation theory.

Discussion on Findings for Sub Question 1

Sub question 1 inquired: How has an individual's specific generational cohort classification influenced his or her desire to be recruited, recognized, and retained?

The intent of sub question 1 was to investigate whether or not a generation's cohort classification may potentially influence how they feel they should be recruited, recognized, and retained. Generational theorists believe that generational cohorts are influenced by experiences, events (Gentile, Twenge, & Campbell, 2010), and even technology that existed/exists during the formative years of their life. It is evident that individuals who are born during a certain time are prone to share common experiences. Their attitudes, values, and perspectives of specific topics tend to be similar. A very small explanation of why this phenomenon occurs is because of the defining moments that capture the emotions of all cohorts during the formative years of their life (Gentile et al., 2010). Findings from sub question 1 did support the notion that generational cohorts of volunteers are affected differently by events, such as social, political, and economic events that occur during the developmental stages of childhood (Benson & Brown, 2011). Those findings also supported the notion that their reaction to those events presented similarities (within their specific cohort) in how they responded to such events.

Silent Generation was influenced in their thinking by World War II, and the great depression. Baby Boomers were influenced in their thinking by the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and John F. Kennedy, as well as the Vietnam War. Generation X witnessed the Challenger explosion, the fall of the Berlin wall, operation desert storm, and massive corporate layoffs. Generation Y was, and continues to be, influenced by the attacks of the World Trade center, violence in their schools, and a globalized economy. Generation Z is influenced by Hurricane Katrina, the nomination of the first African American president, and the influence of social media.

Within those defining moments are also life experiences, personal influences, and even personal relationships that lend to how each generation specifically desires to be recruited, recognized, and retained. The Silent Generation admired their parents who sacrificed serving in World War I; this influenced their value of understanding to be sacrificial to others. The Baby Boomers truly admired the peacefulness of both Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the fairness of John F. Kennedy. They grew up during a time of 'world peace', they were sheltered, experienced very few divorces, and economic times were improving. Because economic times were improving, they did not experience the strong need to sacrifice during those formative years. Hence, many of them truly have not saved enough for retirement, and find themselves working harder than many of the other generations. This has attributed to them feeling as if they cannot add much more to their plates. Generation X is the very first generation to experience high divorce rate during their formative years. With that experience comes becoming extremely independent at a young age. Even members of this generation who had two parents in the

household, both parents had jobs, which meant that this generation of children would be home alone fending for self, until one parent got home. This generation also saw the effects of downsizing, which had an overwhelming influence on their ideas about being loyal to an organization, and how they would spend their money. Generation Y was a bit more sheltered than Generation X. They have a very close relationship with their boomer parents. Generation Y is our first generation to experience the digital world, and have naturally embraced cultural diversity. Because they were required to participate in volunteer activities during their formative years, being civic minded is a natural for them. They have always observed their parents in their uncertainty of jobs, so it has become an expectation for them that changing careers is a norm. Generation Z is the newest generation still seems to be forming their beliefs, values, and attitudes. They are growing up in a very digital world, and they actually prefer communication with family members and friends via text. This could very well be the generation that changes how communication enhances the lives of organizations and companies.

Discussion on Findings for Sub Question 2

Sub question 2 inquired: How has each generation of volunteers experienced recruitment, recognition, and retention?

The intent of sub question 2 was to hear and understand the experiences that each participant has experienced with recruitment, recognition, and retention. Findings from sub question 2 did support the notion that generational cohorts of volunteers are affected differently by events, such as social, political, and economic events that occur during the developmental stages of childhood (Benson & Brown, 2011). Those findings also

supported the notion that their reaction to those events presented similarities (within their specific cohort) in how they responded to such events. The specific findings of this question revealed that: Baby Boomers and Silent Generation have had similar experiences with volunteerism; Generation X appears to be a group of their own; and Generation Y and Generation Z also have had similar experiences with volunteerism. The question arises: why have the results fallen this way? Because no fixed definition of generations exists, an opportunity that presents itself: many of the generations experiences will overlap. This fact is not harmful, because the findings did support the generation theory, but it did present a limitation in the responses to this sub question.

The sagely Silent Generation and the ‘driven to succeed’ Baby Boomers

Silent Generation. Ninety-five percent of the Silent Generation has retired from working (Pruchno, 2012). Though a few individuals from this generation are familiar with technological advances, recruiting is more successful when done through the traditional ways of word of mouth (Pruchno, 2012), classified ads, or even telephone calls. The Silent Generation is a group of individuals who truly place their value in loyalty, sacrifice, hard work, and showing respect towards others. Their motivation lies in attaining and maintaining respect that is due. The Silent Generation prefers to be recognized and appreciated for their wisdom, knowledge, and doing a job well done. Because they are influenced by the patriotism of the World War, they place great faith in institutions and maintained their loyalty to one company throughout their career (Howe, 2010). When the Silent Generation believes that respect towards them has remained intact, it is very easy to keep them on board with any mission at hand.

Baby Boomer generation. Baby Boomers proved to be another generation that knows enough about technology to get by, but also still prefer a more traditional method of word of mouth. If they venture outside of the traditional recruitment route, they prefer to see brochures, or any type of advertisement that will depict their age group (Konrath, Chopik, Hsing, & O'Brien, 2014). For them, that is their confirmation that there will be like-minded individuals their age, attempting to also make a positive difference. Boomers appreciate an array of recognition practices from public ceremonies, to personal handwritten notes (Pruchno, 2012); any type of thanks would be considered an important way to recognize, value, and even retain this generation of volunteers. Boomers believe that part of feeling valued by the organization is to be given incentives as recognition (Son & Wilson, 2011). Incentives that motivate boomers to continue volunteering with an organization is recognizing their expertise, their leadership skills, the hard work that they have put into a task and their commitment to said task. When actually considering retention practices, boomers believe that organizations can improve upon their retention practices among boomers in three ways: (1) opportunities where they can be fully committed to a cause; (2) opportunities to give back to the community; and (3) opportunities resulting in individual impact (Son & Wilson, 2011).

The independent Generation X

Generation X, as latch-key kids, learned the value of independence early and immediately became the responsible generation (Bianchi, 2014). Generation X appreciates understanding the value of changing the life of one individual (Hutchens, 2010). Participants from Generation X discussed four main recruitment practices that

they have enjoyed, and would look forward to experiencing in order to be involved in a nonprofit organization. First, they prefer volunteer opportunities that are local (Rochester et al., 2010). Though they understand the importance of being globally minded, they prefer to see results in their local community. Secondly, when recruiting Generation X, they desire to be told upfront the specific results and the potential difference that can be made through their participation (Howe, 2010). Third, members from Generation X like to see volunteer opportunities that are flexible, creative, and provide the freedom needed to get the job done. Fourthly, Generation X needs to be able to quickly identify what they will learn and gain from being involved in volunteerism with the organization (Howe, 2010).

Generation X individuals are all about adding to their network, and being introduced to individuals who can bring value to their professional network (Howe, 2010). Recognition, for Generation X, is not a monetary focus, but rather a 'can you progress me in my career' focus (Konrath et al., 2014). They also genuinely appreciate a simple 'thank you for your time' email that comes at the most spontaneous moment (Howe, 2010). Continued recognition practices for Generation X involves: offering to be a reference, sending a letter or an email to their supervisor expressing appreciation for allowing their employee to give their time, offering opportunities for them to develop skill sets, and giving their volunteer position a creative title (Kearns et al., 2012).

Generation X appears to be the generation that understands that retention is an end result of a meaningful assignment (Higgins, & O'Gorman, 2014). They genuinely appreciate meaningful volunteer opportunities (Howe, 2010) that are welcoming and well

organized. Though Generation X appreciates volunteer opportunities that give them meaningful assignments (Konrath et al., 2014), participants from Generation X are very vocal in four major areas pertaining to their experience of retention practices. Generation X desire individual recognition for their contribution. This individual recognition is what will retain them in their continual volunteer contribution to an organization. Secondly, Generation X not only appreciates a volunteer program that is well organized, but they also appreciate an organization that will value their time (Howe, 2010). This generation seeks efficient meetings that are run tight, and extremely brief (Higgins, & O'Gorman, 2014). If a Generation X individual plans to get involved with an organization as a volunteer, they absolutely appreciate the fact that the organization has a well-organized orientation, but they do not want the orientation to last all day. A volunteer orientation (no matter the volunteer opportunity) should be concise, well-planned, and to the point (Konrath et al., 2014). Generation X is ready to be involved quickly. Third, Generation X is a very creative group of individuals with very meaningful skills to offer (Higgins, & O'Gorman, 2014). A large part of retaining Generation X is listening to their concerns, while respecting their opinions, and skills that are offered. Offering this generation an opportunity to provide feedback, and opportunities for change could be very crucial to an organization (Konrath et al., 2014). Fourthly, in order for Generation X to get involved, the process of getting involved needs to be easy (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Generation X appreciates word of mouth recruitment, but is also not opposed to seeing opportunities offered online (Son, & Wilson, 2011). Once their interest is piqued, they enjoy a well written volunteer description that outlines the responsibilities of the position, the benefits,

the individual to whom they will be reporting, and the benefit of the volunteer opportunity to both the organization and themselves.

The 21st-century volunteers: Generation Y and Generation Z

Generation Y. Generation Y thinks a bit differently from the previous generations, and has very unique needs and desire a whole new style of management. They have little, to no tolerance for working conditions that are unpleasant. Generation Y is primarily engaged through technology (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010). Generation Y values flexibility, and prefer for any extracurricular activities to work around their family and personal lives. Because they respect people in authoritative (mentor) positions, they seek leaders who can provide clear instructions and direction (Rochester et al., 2010). Unlike other generations, Generation Y's tolerance for not having satisfaction in what they do is extremely low. When they grow tired of their jobs, they will seek to be moved to another position, or go to an entire different organization altogether (Higgins, & O'Gorman, 2014). Because they are easily bored, they seek projects where they can serve as the leader, so that they can be in charge and stay engaged (Konrath et al., 2014).

Generation Y is used to getting constant praise from family members (Meagher, 2010), so this is what is expected from them as a volunteer. This type of reinforcement is what is not only expected, but is needed to encourage this generation to continue their volunteerism participation (Rankin, 2013). Much like Generation X, Generation Y appreciates authentic recognition programs, and not the simple traditional recognition party (Meagher, 2010). Generation Y prefers recognition practices that are unique to

them personally, offers meaningful feedback, or even increased responsibility in a volunteer opportunity.

On retention, Generation Y seeks volunteer opportunities where they can utilize their skills, while developing new professional skills (Meagher, 2010). Although they wish to give back to an organization, they prefer to see how a volunteer opportunity will be beneficial professionally (Konrath et al., 2014). Generation Y also seek meaningful relationships with organizations that they find inspiring (Rochester et al., 2010). Generation Y has a strong desire to influence; meaning, they need tangible documents that show how the organization is benefitting the community (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Generation Y needs to see statistics, testimonials, pictures, videos that is usually seen through social media that shows that the organization is truly making a difference in the community.

Generation Y is also retained via clear communication (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Though they are a generation that appreciates social media, they are also a generation that appreciates a concise message. Spamming their devices with a barrage of useless information turns them off, and often times drives away this generation (Son & Wilson, 2011). Generation Y prefers to be informed about exactly how their volunteering has made a difference, where exactly their monetary donations are being used, and how the organization plans to save and plan for the future.

Generation Y likes to help in telling the story of the organization (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). They are capable of representing the organization by sitting on panels, holding workshops, blogging about the organization, or even overseeing a twitter

account. Organizations have to remember that this is the generation that revels in being able to express their feelings and individuality (Rochester et al., 2010). They are more than honored to be able to tell the organization's story, to the public, through their creative expression.

Generation Z. Sahri, Murad, Alias, and Sirajuddin (2013) have reported that Generation Z is the most diverse and multicultural of any generation to date: 55% are Caucasian, 24% are Hispanic, 14% are African-American, and 4% are Asian. It is estimated that by 2019, 30 million of these diverse individuals will be employed in the United States (Rochester et al., 2010). It is the most importance that we begin to get some knowledge on these future leaders of the free world. The Chronicle of Philanthropy recently published an article containing advice on reaching out to Generation Z. The article suggested numerous approaches including:

- Ask for creative input by putting each person's specific skills or talents to work, whether this is asking for help with your organization's website, feedback on a flyer for an event, or some other creative activity.
- Treat them as knowledgeable teammates.
- Be open and honest with them; transparency is important.
- Use good design tactics, which Gen Zers seem to appreciate. This could be particularly useful in regards to your website or marketing materials.

The Chronicle's findings seemed to be in line with the responses that emerged from the participants in this research. There were four common themes that emerged from their experience and interests in being recruited: (1) the desire for an organization to have a

credible brand, (2) the desire for organizations to have a strong storytelling model, (3) the desire for an organization to be authentic, and (4) the desire to obtain skills that moves them closer to mastering their craft.

Much like Generation Y, Generation Z is used to constant praise from family members (Son & Wilson, 2011). Generation Z needs to be told on a consistent basis that they are doing a great job, exactly how they are doing a great job, and what they will get for a job well done (Twenge et al., 2010). Much like Generation Y, they are not excited by traditional recognition practices that gather all volunteers together at the end of the year for a volunteer recognition party (Konrath et al., 2014). Instead, they appreciate authentic recognition practices that are tailor fit for interests and career pursuits. Because they are so accustomed to receiving trophies, plaques, and even ribbons for accomplishments, organizations will have to constantly change how they reward Generation Z (Rankin, 2013).

Much of how Generation Z enjoys being recognized, has bled over into how they prefer to be retained in an organization. Participants expressed a strong desire to see training opportunities in organizations that strongly resemble what they desire to do career wise. Generation Z appreciates a sense of community. Because social media has become the number one word of mouth promoter, it is important for organizations to create a page that is welcoming to form a community of followers (Bianchi, 2014). When Generation Z sees that organizations have taken the time to create a platform that not only gets the word out about their organization, but also allows for individuals to voice

their opinions, while receiving a response, they feel a great sense of satisfaction with the organization of which they have decided to be a part (Bianchi, 2014).

Discussion on Findings for Sub Question 3

Sub question 3 inquired: What are important considerations when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers?

The intent of sub question 3 was to understand what participants of this study believe volunteer resource managers should consider when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers. Engaging and retaining volunteers can be a very daunting and challenging task for nonprofit organizations. Encouraging others to be passionate about the cause of an organization can be extremely difficult if the individual doing the encouraging does not fully understand the demographic in which they seek to acquire (Higgins, & O'Gorman, 2014). In order for volunteer resource managers to actually engage and retain volunteers, they must be willing to fully grasp the knowledge of the volunteer pool that has become ever-changing (Kearns et al., 2012). In this instance, that means grasping as much knowledge about each living generation, and their specific desire to be engaged and retained in volunteerism.

I originally thought that there would be overwhelming responses within each generation that would prove that their generational cohort classification had a major influence on their responses. Findings from sub question 3 did not support the notion that generational cohorts of volunteers are affected differently by events, such as social, political, and economic events that occur during the developmental stages of childhood (Benson & Brown, 2011). Those findings also did not support the notion that their

reaction to those events presented similarities (within their specific cohort) in how they responded to such events. Though it is quite evident that generational cohorts differ primarily due to the global events they experience (Parry & Urwin, 2011), findings from sub question 3 did not support the notion that those events drastically affected important considerations when recruiting, recognizing, and retaining volunteers of different generations. Although there were very responses within each generation, those responses did not outweigh the similar responses that existed across the generations combined. The question arises: why have the results fallen this way? Again, because no fixed definition of generations exists, an opportunity that presents itself: many of the generations experiences will overlap. Another reason why the results have fallen this way is because of the limitation of a small sample size: not every cohort was represented well enough. These facts are not harmful, but it did present a limitation in the responses to this sub question.

Within the saturated data, there was an overwhelming desire by many of the participants that suggest that volunteer resource managers should take into consideration actually creating some type of multigenerational marketing and branding. Participants suggested that nonprofit organizations would have more success of engaging multiple generations within their volunteer programs by adjusting their marketing, or recruitment, strategies accordingly. The Silent Generation is a much disciplined generation that sees work as a privilege, but in 2015, they are less tech savvy (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Baby Boomers are very driven by work and have an optimistic outlook (Higgins & O'Gorman, 2014). Generation X are both creative and independent, but they are

extremely distrustful of authority, even skeptical at times (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Generation Y is extremely tech savvy, but they tend to think socially (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Generation Z desires to be involved in all things social media and branding (Higgins & O'Gorman, 2014). Each generation, though defined by experiences that may have occurred in their formative years, are beneficial to a non-profit organization. Volunteer resource managers must gain a greater understanding of the five living generations, if they plan to be successful in engaging and retaining each of those generational cohorts. Incorporating multigenerational volunteerism has the potential to encourage a true representation of all living generations, and furthermore, keep them engaged on an ongoing basis (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011).

Discussion on Findings for Sub Question 4

Sub question 4 inquired: How can the development of generation-based volunteer management practices potentially increase engagement and retention of five living generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in a nonprofit organization?

The intent of sub question 4 was to understand how participants perceive what the development of generation-based volunteer management practices could potentially mean for increasing how volunteers are engaged and retained. Findings from sub question 4 did not support the notion that generational cohorts of volunteers are affected differently by events, such as social, political, and economic events that occur during the developmental stages of childhood (Benson & Brown, 2011). Those findings also did not support the notion that their reaction to those events presented similarities (within their specific cohort) in how they responded to such events. Much like sub question 3, although there

were responses within each generation that presented the desire for there to be separate volunteer management practices related to their specific cohort, those responses did not outweigh the similar responses that existed across the generations combined. The question arises: why have the results fallen this way? Again, because no fixed definition of generations exists, an opportunity that presents itself: many of the generations experiences will overlap. And again, because of the limitation of a small sample size, not every cohort was represented well enough. These facts are not harmful, but it did present a limitation in the responses to this sub question.

When recruiting, recognizing, and retaining individuals, it is extremely important to take into consideration what type recruitment, recognition, and retention approach will suit each generation. Each generation, because it has its own characteristics, responds to messages differently; therefore, it is extremely important to consider targeted approaches. A targeted approach to recruitment, recognition, and retention will ensure that organizations continue engaging and retaining their preferred generational cohort. A targeted approach will also enable an organization measure the success of their volunteer management practices approach. If a volunteer manager's desire is to ensure that a nonprofit organization has a true representation of every living generation, it is necessary to develop generation-based volunteer management practices. Upon listening to the experiences of each generation, I have crafted initial suggestions for generation-based volunteer management practices that provide a starting point for volunteer resource managers who may read this study, and desire a starting point (see table 22).

Table 22

Suggestions for Generation-Based Volunteer Management Practices (of Recruitment, Recognition, and Retention)

Generational Cohort	Recruitment Practices	Recognition Practices	Retention Practices
Silent Generation	<p>Traditional methods: print (i.e., – newsletters and brochures).</p> <p><u>Channel:</u> Shopping centers and supermarkets. Civic clubs. Social clubs. AARP. Large business and organizations w/individuals close to retirement.</p> <p><u>Targeted Approach:</u> Newspaper classifieds. Radio. Television. US mail. Face to face.</p> <p><u>Message:</u> We value, desire, and need your knowledge and experience.</p>	<p>Flexibility. Milestone pins. Year-end banquet.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities that are meaningful. Provide opportunities that focus on skills and experience. Provide opportunities for mentorship and leadership. Provide opportunities for networking for the organization: being out in the community and telling the story.</p>
Baby Boomer Generation	<p>A combination of high-tech media/technology and traditional methods.</p> <p><u>Channel:</u> Outplacement agencies for short-term and episodic opportunities. Skill development centers. Gyms and health/fitness businesses.</p>	<p>Flexibility. Offer opportunities that will provide help with work-life balance. Provide challenging work opportunities. Provide mentor/mentee opportunities. Recognition via print (i.e., – newsletter, online, newspaper).</p>	<p>Focus on skills and work to be done. Design and manage volunteer positions like paid positions with job descriptions, training, supervision, and benefits. Show personal and community impact.</p>

(table continues)

Generational Cohort	Recruitment Practices	Recognition Practices	Retention Practices
Baby Boomer Generation	<p><u>Targeted:</u> Build relationships with corporations and business associations. Newspaper classifieds. Radio. Television. Face to face.</p> <p><u>Message:</u> We value your time, let us show you how.</p>		<p>Pair volunteer opportunities with education or part-time work. Consider volunteer skills and interest.</p>
Generation X	<p>Multiple technological (i.e., – electronic, visual media videos, flash website) and online methods (including the ability to register online).</p> <p><u>Channel:</u> Internet (bulletin boards, chat rooms, websites, social media sites). Post artistic flyers in cafes, diners, bookstores, other art/media centers. Employer organizations that coordinate employee volunteers.</p> <p><u>Targeted:</u> Make it local and not global. Ensure that end results are spoken upfront. Highlight the need/impact. Limit service hours. Provide family friendly opportunities.</p> <p><u>Message:</u> Be the change for at least one individual.</p>	<p>Encourage flexibility and freedom needed to reach goals. No micro-managing. Encourage creativity Provide regular feedback on volunteer performance. Continue using current technology in the organization. Keep web information current and allow for regular online feedback.</p>	<p>Flexibility in roles and schedules, casual attire, and a comfortable environment. Offer technology-centered tasks as well as one-on- one interaction. Provide meaningful assignments. Listen for their concerns. Respect their skills and opinions. Build in socializing. Run tight, brief, efficient meetings (i.e., – orientations). Make it easy to participate in volunteerism. Recognize individual contributions. Promote family opportunities.</p>

(table continues)

Generational Cohort	Recruitment Practices	Recognition Practices	Retention Practices
Generation Y	<p>Digital</p> <p><u>Channel:</u> Internet (bulletin boards, chat rooms, websites, social media sites). Mall and recreation centers.</p> <p><u>Targeted:</u> Provide college service learning and civic engagement opportunities. Peer-to-peer recruitment. Promote the cause/mission or issue to attract this civic minded generation. Focus on issues that represent the interests of the community rather than individuals. Promote collaboration, team spirit and diversity. Talk about multiple options, parallel opportunities instead of asking them to commit to one thing. Offer a variety of exciting and challenging experiences.</p> <p><u>Message:</u> Foster teamwork and collaboration.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for socializing, making friends and making a difference.</p> <p>Invite them to networking events that will enhance their directory of people.</p> <p>Provide a letter of reference.</p> <p>Invite them to leadership meetings.</p> <p>Provide gift cards that are personal to them.</p> <p>Recognize their efforts via social media.</p>	<p>Provide meaningful positions with real responsibility.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for leadership and leadership development.</p> <p>Provide opportunities that can engage more than one person to allow peer interaction.</p> <p>Provide opportunities to be innovative and creative.</p> <p>Engage them quickly, keep them busy and give ongoing, immediate feedback.</p> <p>Provide an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork.</p> <p>Treat them as a respected equal.</p> <p>Allow them to ask questions and challenge assumptions.</p>
Generation Z	<p>Digital.</p> <p><u>Channel:</u> Internet (bulletin boards, chat rooms, websites, social media sites). Video (YouTube, etc.). Mobile devices (apps).</p>	<p>Provide gift cards that are personal to them.</p> <p>Recognize their efforts via social media.</p> <p>Offer opportunities that will transfer a volunteer experience to life skills.</p> <p>Provide training opportunities for entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for advancement.</p> <p>Provide meaningful work.</p> <p>Use and keep technology current.</p>

(table continues)

Generational Cohort	Recruitment Practices	Recognition Practices	Retention Practices
Generation Z	<p><u>Targeted:</u> Ensure the company brand is effective. Offer opportunities that foster team collaboration. Offer opportunities to use and gain skills.</p> <p><u>Message:</u> Change the future both locally and globally.</p>		

Limitations of the Study

Findings from studies, such as the current study, that use small, diverse sample sizes will produce findings that detail uniqueness between participants. The use of criterion sampling was successful in “capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participation or program variations” (p. 53). The themes of trustworthiness that were established through this particular study were derived from shared perceptions amongst the generations notwithstanding the heterogeneity among the sample population. I believe the themes presented in Chapter 4 offer evidence of the necessary criteria for trustworthiness. However, there were three major limitations that could have proved to be crucial to the study.

Sample size. Though customary (and suggested) that phenomenological studies have no more than 10 research participants (Sousa, 2014), this does not guarantee such a small number will encompass the experience and perceptions of the millions of volunteers they represent. Reasonably, it has been the purpose of this study to provide insight into common instances within that variation. The intention of the study was to propose a foundation on the topic by collecting as much data as possible to reach a point

of data saturation (which occurred in this study). I sought to make sense of the personal stories and ways they intersect, in order to provide greater insight into the phenomenon. I believe I have succeeded in extending knowledge of the discipline through the participant's experience of the phenomenon.

Lack of availability and/or reliable data. As stated before, there has been very little research that has covered engagement and retention in the volunteer sector. There have been various studies on the corporate side that have examined the effects of generation theory in the workplace, but have not truly expanded into the volunteer or nonprofit sector. In this regards, there has not been much to compare results or this study, to other studies conducted in the nonprofit sector, specifically relating to volunteerism. The results from this study have the potential to be the beginning of reliable data for the world of volunteerism, as it relates to retaining and engaging multiple generations of volunteers.

No fixed definition of generation. Demographers have not reached a common consensus about how to define generations (DelCampo et al., 2010). This is in regards to naming the generations and creating a definition for the age span that covers each generation. Though proof exists claiming the oldest living generation to be the Silent Generation, born between the 1920s and 1940s, it becomes murky when the next generation of Baby Boomers emerged. Some demographers have chosen 1946 – 1964 to draw parallel to the period of increasing births, while others choose 1945 – 1964 to conform to the age groups published in census and survey data (DelCampo et al., 2010). This inconsistent data can easily explain why some of the findings of this study

revealed that the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers were so similar in their responses. Many of their life experiences overlapped, as they may have been experiencing life events (both social and economic) at the same time.

The generations that have come after the Silent Generation and boomers are even more inconsistent. Generation X was originally defined as the baby bust to bring identity to individuals born during the decline of births (Hutchens, 2010) When Generation X became teenagers, it was quite evident that they would behave a bit differently than Baby Boomers and consequently, they were rebranded as Generation X (Hutchens, 2010). Some demographers believe that Generation X arrived in the early 1960's, and that the youngest of the cohort were born in 1981 or 1982 (Espinoza, Ukleja, & Rusch, 2010). Other demographers have chosen a time in the mid-1970's as the date that Generation X were born.

Generation Y is also inconsistently defined in both the starting and stopping birth years (Espinoza et al., 2010), which ranges from the mid-1970's when the oldest were born to the mid-2000's when the youngest were born. Generation Z is even more inconsistently defined as demographers are still attempting to bring identity to this generation (Tang et al., 2010). Some demographers believe they emerged into the world in 2000, while others are adamant that they should be documented as being born in 2001. This again can account for the similarities that were experienced by Generation Y and Generation Z in this study.

The issue that arises with these differing birth year definitions is a very clear observation: either generations overlap, or they cover differing age-spans, which makes

data analyses extremely complicated. Though this may complicate things, it did not pose a threat to the findings in this particular study, as I was able to define the five living generations (see Table 1), in a way that brought value to the study.

Recommendations

This research study has led to significant factors that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices. The study has also confirmed that individuals would appreciate if organizations actually did take into consideration the benefits that would ensure, if there were generation-based volunteer management practices put in place. Consequently, the data analysis also identified some issues and suggestions that require further research beyond the scope of this study. Those issues and suggestions are: (1) experiencing the actual results of the generation-based volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention; (2) developing the additional volunteer management practices of training and orientation; (3) creating multigenerational volunteer programs; and (4) creating intergenerational volunteer programs.

Experience the actual results of generation-based volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention. Though this study discusses the experiences that contribute to the development of the volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention, we are unable to actually see the results of organizations who may actually take the time to develop such practices. Great discussion surrounds what could potentially occur within organizations, if such practices are developed, but the study does not have the benefit of seeing the results of those

developed practices. It is suggested that a further study be conducted, that presents the results of organizations that have actually created and incorporated the volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention.

Create generation-based volunteer management practices of training and orientation. This study only represents a small part of generation-based management practices; though they are important, it does not take into account the two significant practices of training and orientation. These two practices should also be considered when thinking about the overall volunteer experience. Needless to say, there should also be a study that outlines the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based training and orientation volunteer management practices.

Create multigenerational volunteer programs. Multigenerational is a broad term. It entails shared activities among generations, not necessarily in interactions, or influences among them. In other words, of or relating to several generations (Taylor, Passel, Fry, Morin, Wang, Velasco, & Dockterman, 2010). Programs qualify as multigenerational if the overall goal of the program is to address more than one generation, while adapting to specific generational circumstances and needs. Participants in this study all mentioned the desire for organizations to create multigenerational volunteer programs, as it provides the opportunity for all members of their family to volunteer together. There should be a study conducted that outlines what it takes for organizations to create successful multigenerational volunteer programs.

Create intergenerational volunteer programs. Participants in this particular study went one step further and suggested that organizations should also consider

intergenerational programs. Intergenerational proposes that members from two or more generations involved in projects or activities can introduce different generational perspectives. It implies that there will be greater interaction, a genuine interest in achieving common goals, mutual influence, and positive change. In other words, being or occurring between generations. (Corak & Piraino, 2011). Programs qualify as intergenerational if their overall goal is to change generational points of view, perhaps to increase their mutual understanding, or to create collaboration among individuals of varying generations. Intergenerational programs cannot exist, unless a strong multigenerational program already exists. There should be a study conducted that helps organizations to understand the importance of intergenerational volunteer programs, and how it contrasts from a multigenerational volunteer program.

Implications

This specific research revealed many key factors that directly contribute to how generation-based volunteer management practices are developed. It contributes to the body of knowledge about nonprofit organizations, and the potential for increased engagement and retention. This section will discuss the potential impact of positive social change as it relates to volunteers, volunteer resource managers, and the community at large. This section will also discuss how policies can be created to initiate positive social change.

Impact for Social Change

The sole purpose of this study was to discuss the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices. Having generation-

based volunteer management practices in place provides for great benefit for individuals, volunteer resource managers, nonprofit organizations, as well as a community at large. The implications for social change affect four main areas, collectively: (1) bridging the volunteer generation gap, providing opportunities for all five living generation to interact with one another in a multigenerational way; (2) the Volunteer Manager who is seeking ways to increase volunteer engagement and retention, while providing an effective volunteer program within nonprofit organizations; (3) the actual nonprofit organization seeking to make a greater impact in the community via their mission; and (4) the overall community at large, seeking to resolve societal concerns.

Individuals as volunteers. This study revealed that there were several different motivational needs that existed among the generations, outlining why each generation desire to volunteer. Individuals may engage in volunteerism because: it may be a way of life, it could be a way of feeling significant, and it could be a desire to make an impact in the community or globally, or it could be a way to increase skill sets. Whatever the motivation, individuals who give of their time should always feel as though they are not only making an impact, but also feel appreciated. Much of that appreciation is connecting with other individuals who also share a passion to give back. This study revealed an overwhelming passion by the participants to connect with other individuals who were not only part of their age group, but also other generations whether it was for mentor or mentee purposes. Because families are now living further apart from one another and losing the natural intergenerational arrangement. Society is now beginning to be more segregated (by age), which provides very little, to none, interaction between the living

generations. When generations have the opportunity to interact with one another, space is created to provide for regular contact and encourage people from different generations to provide advocacy for one another (George, 2011).

Nonprofit Organization. Nonprofit organizations typically exist to provide a service to others. The majority of nonprofit organizations desire to promote social well-being; develop practices that will create positive social change within their surrounding sphere of influence; and serve as major players in developing, strengthening, and maintaining civil society. Because nonprofit organizations are often leaned upon by society to handle societal issues that often times cannot be resolved by government, many of them are intentionally integrating social change principles (Salahuddin, 2011), activities, and policies into their mission statements. This is in an effort to expand their reach from solely individual-level impact to include resolving larger systemic issues. Policy advocacy nonprofit organizations have also been recruited to respond to emergency needs, especially when crises arise. Wherever an organization falls on the advocacy or service spectrum, nonprofit organizations are beginning to adopt successful organizational strategies that enhance their ability for empowerment, partnerships, and engagement in the community. Organizational strategies such as the development of generation-based volunteer management practices have the capacity to help organizations supersede in their overall mission, as it opens the door to a larger, stronger task force of the wisdom of the older generation, coming together with the energy of the younger generation to get things done.

Community at large. As previously mentioned, communities will often rely on the efforts of nonprofit organizations, before relying on the government. Local nonprofit organizations are an arms-length away, compared to attempting to reach out to government to provide immediate relief when needed. When generation-based volunteer management practices are created within nonprofit organizations, it has the potential to lead to an incredible multigenerational organization where all generations are represented. When all generations are represented, this ultimately leads to a powerful intergenerational program, where generations interact not only with their own age group, but partner with other generational cohorts to make an even greater impact. Research has shown that when generations come together, everyone involved benefits (i.e., – children, youth, young adults, adults, and older adults), to include the community at large (George & Whitehouse, 2010). The case for positive outcomes for all who are involved is strong. Youth are exposed to the older generation’s wisdom, traditions, and values. The older generation expands their social network involvement and stays physically active, creating healthier outcomes. Communities benefit when all generations feel included, and are engaged in things that matter. Bridging generations can address, in a positive way, societal concerns such as health, environmental issues, literacy, crime prevention, and so much more (George, 2011). Public policies have the great capability of supporting intergenerational programs through promoting intergenerational civic engagement, while encouraging intergenerational solutions to community and societal concerns. When generations connect through public policies and programs, it brings strength to the community as a whole (George & Whitehouse, 2010).

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The results of this study consistently revealed that participants sincerely believed that by creating generation-based volunteer management practices, there could actually be potential for each living generation to effectively be engaged and retained within nonprofit organizations. Research has shown that nonprofit organizations desire to engage and retain all ages of individuals; many just do not have the resources to do so, or are unsure of where to begin (Salahuddin, 2011). With the creation of generation-based volunteer management practices, the possibility for nonprofit organizations to have a very strong multigenerational representation within their organization is heightened. When an organization is confident that a strong multigenerational is present, then the organization can consider the incorporation of an impactful intergenerational volunteer program. Intergenerational programs are volunteer programs that invite people from different generations to work together on mutually beneficial projects and activities. Whatever the project may be, the intergenerational program is enriched when various generations join together to contribute and learn different things from one another (Steinig, Feather, Home, & Advantage, 2013). The community benefits, as well as the individuals involved.

Intergenerational programs began in 1963 as the Foster Grandparent Program (Cumming-Potvin & MacCallum, 2010). The program's main role was to give chances to low-wage persons matured 60 and over to give strong one-to-one services to children with exceptional needs while lessening the isolation and poverty that elders experience (Steinig et al., 2013). Since then, intergenerational programs have developed to incorporate individuals of different ages and location a wide show of social concerns.

Topics covered through intergenerational programming include changes in family structure, drug use, violence, and bridging stereotypes and cultural differences.

Intergenerational programs are social vehicles offering young and old generations opportunities to not only interact with one another, but also become engaged in various societal concerns (Steinig et al., 2013). Their programs purposefully engage different generations in mutually beneficial, planned activities in an ongoing basis, with a goal of achieving specific program goals. Through intergenerational programs, people from all walks of life, and ages have the opportunity to share their gifts, resources, and talents by supporting one another in relationships that not only benefit each other, but also their surrounding communities (George & Whitehouse, 2010). A successful program is one that is reciprocated, intentional, sustained, and involves preparation and education for all involved. Both the younger and older generations are viewed as assets to society, and not problems that need resolution (Steinig et al., 2013). I believe intergenerational programs have lost their way, and are not as effective as they once were when they were created in 1963. I further believe this is the case because nonprofit organizations are not well versed on how to engage and retain various generations at one time. It would be remiss if there were not more policies put in place that supports intergenerational programs. Nonprofits, in some way, should be encouraged to incorporate intergenerational volunteer programs within their volunteer program. Though it may be much work, it has the potential to provide value not only to the nonprofit organizations sphere of influence, but in the surrounding community as a whole.

Conclusion

The current make-up of our society is changing at a rapid rate (Gladwell et al., 2010). The older population is living longer, and increasing at an unprecedented rate (DeCampo et al., 2010). The American population over the age of 65 has tripled since 1990. That number will spike even more by the year 2020 because individuals are living longer (Bianchi, 2014)

Characteristics, values, and perceptions of the world can be vastly different for individuals raised during different time periods. These differences bring about difficulties in understanding each other. Research has helped to better identify generational differences (Higgins & O'Gorman, 2014). An individual's generational cohort has the potential to affect several aspects of life (i.e., – values, characteristics, and perspectives). As research is helping us better understand generations, gaps in generations is decreasing as people are living longer and communicating better. These two areas factor into developing healthy relationships between generations.

A generation can span up to twenty years (Higgins & O'Gorman, 2014). Generational traits are developed during the formative years of that specific generation. An individual born in 1975 is influenced by an early 1980's childhood, and a 1990's young adulthood. Those particular influences affect an individual's value system and perspective throughout life. Attempting to understand generations can help individuals discover the value system of each generational cohort of people. This leads to helping different age groups better relate to one another, and share valuable ideas. Though fully understanding another generation will not solve all of the world's problems; but it will

most certainly help to appreciate the issues of each era, and begin to provide resolve with each generation bringing their specific talent to the table.

This gap of understanding between generations leads to the importance of finding links between young and old generations. This can be done by simply helping youth learn how to relate to older adults, and subsequently, helping older adults learn how to relate to youth. One way to foster these relationships is by creating opportunities for older adults and children to work together and develop relationships.

Volunteering is a way to bring different generations together, as it has been meaningful for individuals of all ages. Volunteers (young and old) have a tremendous impact on the well-being of communities (Kearns et al., 2012) by:

- Educating the public on safety and health, as doctors donate time and knowledge to free clinics.
- Providing service and expertise in disaster areas.
- Building houses, wells, schools globally.
- Being a tutor, mentor, coach, or anything to support the well-being of youth.
- Deliver meals to homebound seniors, homeless individuals.
- Manning telephone lines at domestic abuse centers.
- Providing expertise to animal shelters.
- Ensuring that performing arts are run smoothly both on a small scale, or large scale.
- Keeping parks, neighborhoods, streets, and water safe for everyone.

Research has shown that volunteers are the most critical resources that community organizations have (Kearns et al., 2012). When individuals can work together in order to better their community, it is proving to be an invaluable resource. Volunteers provide nonprofit organizations free resources that help to meet the overall goals and mission of the organization. Volunteers are the gap between individual or community resources, and those provided by the government. Nonprofit organizations benefit the most from the hard work of volunteers, as they bring their skills to organizations on a daily basis (George & Whitehouse, 2010). The face of the volunteer has changed over the years. The stereotypical, middle-aged housewife, has now been joined by: the teenager looking to gain skills, the college student looking to collaborate with fellow college students on community projects, the executive looking to share their management skills, and the retiree looking to not only remain active and social, but also to donate their life experience. Individuals, of all ages, find it meaningful to donate their time and energy to deserving organizations (George & Whitehouse, 2010).

Because the face of volunteerism is changing, it is important for nonprofit organizations to take advantage of the numerous amounts of skills that exist among all five current living generations. Engaging and retaining volunteers can be a very daunting and challenging task for nonprofit organizations. Encouraging others to be passionate about the cause of an organization can be extremely difficult if the individual doing the encouraging does not fully understand the demographic in which they seek to acquire (Higgins & O'Gorman, 2014). For volunteer resource managers to actually engage and retain volunteers, they must be willing to fully grasp the knowledge of the volunteer pool

that has become ever-changing (Kearns et al., 2012). In this instance, that means grasping as much knowledge about each living generation, and their specific desire to be engaged and retained in volunteerism.

In my study, there was an overwhelming desire by many of the participants that has suggested creating some type of multigenerational marketing and branding. Participants suggested that nonprofit organizations would have more success of engaging multiple generations within their volunteer programs by adjusting their marketing, or recruitment, strategies accordingly. Each generation, though defined by experiences that may have occurred in their formative years, are beneficial to a non-profit organization. Volunteer resource managers must gain a greater understanding of the five living generations, if they plan to be successful in engaging and retaining each of those generational cohorts. Although a nonprofit organization has the potential to succeed greatly in its mission, when generations come together, they benefit greatly from each other's life experiences.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the experiences that contribute to developing generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. Though I may have had in mind that once the 20 participants were interviewed, the results would only yield in developing generation-based volunteer management practices of recruitment, recognition, and retention; the study yielded a stronger result. Through the conversations of the research participants, the suggestion of organizations having effective multigenerational programs was an eye opener to what happens when participants get a

voice through a qualitative study. The Silent Generation desires to collaborate with the younger generation, in order to bring a greater impact not only to a nonprofit organization, but to the community at large. Interestingly enough, the younger generation had similar desires to partner with the older generation.

Though research has shown that when generations come together, everyone involved benefits (i.e., – children, youth, young adults, adults, and older adults), to include the community at large (George and Whitehouse, 2010), I experienced the desire for this to occur first-hand from the conversations with the research participants. Something can be said for the healthy creation of multigenerational programs within a nonprofit organization, which eventually feed into intergenerational programs. Greater potential for positive outcomes exists for all involved. Youth are exposed to the older generation's wisdom, traditions, and values. The older generation expands their social network involvement and stays physically active, creating healthier outcomes. Communities benefit when all generations feel included, and are engaged in things that matter. Intergenerational programs can address, in a positive way, societal concerns such as health, environmental issues, literacy, crime prevention, and so much more (George, 2011). Public policies have the great capability of supporting intergenerational programs through promoting intergenerational civic engagement, while encouraging intergenerational solutions to community and societal concerns. When generations connect through public policies and programs, this strengthens the community as a whole (George & Whitehouse, 2010), which is the first step to creating much needed positive social change, one community at a time.

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Appendix A: Participant Written Consent Form – Adult

You are invited to take part in a research study investigating the experience of the general practice of the three Rs (i.e., – recruitment, recognition, and retention) of volunteer management among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. I am inviting individuals from age 13 to 89 who have been involved in any type of volunteer capacity (i.e., – ongoing or special event) at a nonprofit organization for at least two years to be in the study. This form is part of a process called ‘informed consent’ to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Tonya Howard, who is a PhD Candidate/doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is for me to describe the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. This may play a vital role in determining how to effectively engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in nonprofit organizations.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study:

- You will be first asked to complete a short background form that will entail describing yourself in two paragraphs.
- You will be invited to participate in a 45 – 60-minute, face-to-face interview at a mutual location between January 1, 2015 – March 31, 2015.
- I will provide all materials needed for completion of this study.
- You will be asked for your permission to audiotape this interview, but if you wish not to be recorded, only notes will be taken by me. **The recording will only be reviewed by the researcher (me), the faculty dissertation committee, and the transcriber (who will transcribe the interview).*
- You will be given follow-up interview procedures (if necessary) for additional questions that need to be asked.
- As part of the follow-up process, you will be asked to meet with me one more time once the transcripts have been transcribed (possibly within a month of the initial interview) to ensure the researcher has captured your exact experience. You will be able to listen to your recorded interview, while following along with the interview transcript, to check for accuracy. **It is my goal to ensure that the transcriber has presented as accurate an account of what you have described as your true experience as a volunteer. This follow-up process will take approximately 60 minutes (in order to listen to the entire playback of the interview).*
- You will be made aware of how the results of the study will be shared, and will be given access to any information re: the study whether hardcopy or online.

Here are some sample questions:

- How did you become interested in volunteering?
- What influences/d you to volunteer?
- What is important that organizations must consider when recruiting volunteers?
- How are you recognized in your volunteer role? Do you feel it is successful?
- What is important that organizations must consider when recognizing volunteers?
- In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can recognize its volunteers?
- In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can retain its volunteers?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your consent to this study is being given voluntarily. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at your nonprofit organization will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop and withdraw at any time.

Risks and/or Discomforts

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue. The probability of harm and discomfort will not be greater than your daily life encounters. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Benefits

You will not directly benefit from participating in this study. Indirect benefits will include: providing volunteer resource managers with detailed information on how to foster enhanced ways of engaging and retaining all generational cohorts in organizations, bridge the volunteer generation gap, and help organizations supersede their missions through volunteerism.

You may find the interview experience enjoyable and reminiscent of your own experience of volunteerism. This information gained from this study may help us better understand the potential influence of generation theory on all five living generations' (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z) experience of volunteer management practices. This information can be used to enhance the experience of volunteers and volunteer resource managers in the nonprofit organizations. Results will be shared with participants.

Payment:

No compensation exists for your participation in this study; I will extend a hearty [verbal] THANKS to you.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Pseudonyms will be used to protect participants' identities. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. Data will be kept secure on a password protected computer where only me and the dissertation chair (Walden faculty) will have access to the information. Although audio recordings and transcripts will be deleted after the completion of the study, data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University. The information obtained in this study may be published in academic journals or presented at academic meetings and/or conferences.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me via telephone at xxx-xxx-6986 or email: Tonya.Howard@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is xxx-xxx-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-05-14-0195652 and it expires on December 4, 2015. I will provide a copy of this form.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. At the time that you sign this consent form, you will receive a copy of it for your records, signed and dated by the investigator.

Printed Name of Participant	Date
Signature of Participant/Parent	Date
Signature of Researcher/Investigator	Date

Appendix B: Child Assent Form

Hello, my name is Tonya Howard and I am doing a research project to learn about improving ways to recruit and keep both children and adults volunteering together in nonprofit organizations. I am inviting you to join my project. I am inviting all children who are currently volunteering their time to nonprofit organizations in the metro Atlanta area to be in the study. I am going to read this form with you. I want you to learn about the project before you decide if you want to be in it.

WHO I AM

I am a student at Walden University. I am working on my doctoral degree.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study:

- You will be first asked to complete a short background form that will entail describing yourself in two paragraphs.
- You will be invited to participate in a 45 – 60-minute, face-to-face interview at a mutual location between January 1, 2015 – March 31, 2015.
- I will provide all materials needed for completion of this study.
- You will be asked for your permission to audiotape this interview, but if you wish not to be recorded, only notes will be taken by me. **The recording will only be reviewed by the researcher (me), the faculty dissertation committee, and the transcriber (who will transcribe the interview).*
- You will be given follow-up interview procedures (if necessary) for additional questions that need to be asked.
- As part of the follow-up process, you will be asked to meet with me one more time once the transcripts have been transcribed (possibly within a month of the initial interview) to ensure I have captured your exact experience. You will be able to listen to your recorded interview, while following along with the interview transcript, to check for accuracy. **It is my goal to ensure that the transcriber has presented as accurate an account of what you have described as your true experience as a volunteer. This follow-up process will take approximately 60 minutes (in order to listen to the entire playback of the interview).*
- You will be made aware of how the results of the study will be shared, and will be given access to any information re: the study whether hardcopy or online.

Here are some sample questions:

- How did you become interested in volunteering?
- What influences/d you to volunteer?
- What is important that organizations must consider when recruiting volunteers?
- How are you recognized in your volunteer role? Do you feel it is successful?
- What is important that organizations must consider when recognizing volunteers?

- In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can recognize its volunteers?
In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can retain its volunteers?

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

You do not have to be in this project if you do not want to. If you decide now that you want to join the project, you can still change your mind later. If you want to stop, you can.

Being in this project might make you tired or stressed, just like when you have to do homework and you may feel fatigued or too tired to do it. But we are hoping this project might help others by understanding how children and adults can better volunteer together.

PAYMENT

No compensation exists for your participation in this study; I will extend a hearty [verbal] THANKS to you.

PRIVACY

Everything you tell me during this project will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what answers you gave. The only time I have to tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt you or someone else.

ASKING QUESTIONS

You can ask me any questions you want now. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can reach me at xxx-xxx-6986 or Tonya.Howard@waldenu.edu. If you or your parents would like to ask my university a question, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. Her phone number is xxx-xxx-1210.

I will give you a copy of this form.

Please sign your name below if you want to join this project.

_____	_____
Printed Name of Child	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Child	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Researcher/Investigator	Date

Appendix C: Parent Consent Form for Child

Your child is invited to take part in a research study investigating the experience of the general practice of the three Rs (i.e., – recruitment, recognition, and retention) of volunteer management among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. I am inviting individuals from age 13 to 89 who have been involved in any type of volunteer capacity (i.e., – ongoing or special event) at a nonprofit organization for at least two years to be in the study. This form is part of a process called ‘informed consent’ to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to allow your child to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Tonya Howard, who is a PhD Candidate/doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is for me to describe the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. This may play a vital role in determining how to effectively engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in nonprofit organizations.

Procedures:

If your child agrees to be in this study:

- Your child will be first asked to complete a short background form that will entail describing him or her in two paragraphs.
- Your child will be invited to participate in a 45 – 60-minute, face-to-face interview at a mutual location between January 1, 2015 – March 31, 2015.
- I will provide all materials needed for completion of this study.
- Your child will be asked for your permission to audiotape this interview, but if your child wishes not to be recorded, only notes will be taken by me. **The recording will only be reviewed by the researcher (me), the faculty dissertation committee, and the transcriber (who will transcribe the interview).*
- Your child will be given follow-up interview procedures (if necessary) for additional questions that need to be asked.
- As part of the follow-up process, your child will be asked to meet with me one more time once the transcripts have been transcribed (possibly within a month of the initial interview) to ensure I have captured your child’s exact experience. Your child will be able to listen to his or her recorded interview, while following along with the interview transcript, to check for accuracy. **My goal to ensure that the transcriber has presented as accurate an account of what your child has described as your true experience as a volunteer. This follow-up process will take approximately 60 minutes (in order to listen to the entire playback of the interview).*

- Your child will be made aware of how the results of the study will be shared, and will be given access to any information re: the study whether hardcopy or online.

Here are some sample questions:

- How did you become interested in volunteering?
- What influences/d you to volunteer?
- What is important that organizations must consider when recruiting volunteers?
- How are you recognized in your volunteer role? Do you feel it is successful?
- What is important that organizations must consider when recognizing volunteers?
- In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can recognize its volunteers?
- In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can retain its volunteers?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your child's consent to this study is being given voluntarily. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want your child to be in the study. Of course, your child's decision is also an important factor. After obtaining parent consent, I will explain the study and let each child decide if they wish to volunteer. No one at the nonprofit organization will treat your child differently if you or your child decide to not be in the study. If you decide to consent now, you and your child can still change your mind later. Any children who feel stressed during the study may withdraw at any time.

Risks and/or Discomforts

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that your child might encounter in daily life, such as fatigue. The probability of harm and discomfort will not be greater than your daily life encounters. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Benefits

Your child will not directly benefit from participating in this study. Indirect benefits will include: providing volunteer resource managers with detailed information on how to foster enhanced ways of engaging and retaining all generational cohorts in organizations, bridge the volunteer generation gap, and help organizations supersede their missions through volunteerism.

Your child may find the interview experience enjoyable and reminiscent of their own experience of volunteerism. This information gained from this study may help us better understand the potential influence of generation theory on all five living generations' (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z) experience of volunteer management practices. This information can be used to enhance the experience of volunteers and volunteer resource managers in the nonprofit organizations. Results will be shared with participants.

Payment:

No compensation exists for your child's participation in this study; I will extend a hearty [verbal] THANKS to him or her.

Privacy:

Any information your child provides will be kept confidential. I will not use your child's personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your child's identity. The transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement. Data will be kept secure on a password protected computer where only me and the dissertation chair (Walden faculty) will have access to the information. Although audio recordings and transcripts will be deleted after the completion of the study, data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University. The information obtained in this study may be published in academic journals or presented at academic meetings and/or conferences.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact me via telephone at xxx-xxx-6986 or email: Tonya.Howard@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your child's rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is xxx-xxx-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-05-14-0195652 and it expires on December 4, 2015. I will provide a copy of this form.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my child's involvement this optional research project. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Tailor the signature section below as needed if using paper consent forms.

Printed Name of Parent

Printed Name of Child

Date of consent

Parent's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix D: Confidentiality Agreement

 Name of Signer (printed)

 Date

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: ***Developing Generation-based Volunteer Management Practices***. 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.

 Participant Signature

 Date

Appendix E: Letter of Cooperation

<Community Research Partner Name>
<Contact Information>

<Date>

Dear Tonya R. Howard,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *Developing Generation-based Volunteer Management Practices* within the <Insert Name of Community Partner>. As part of this study, I authorize you to use our volunteer database as a recruitment tool for potential research participants for your study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Providing names and contact information from our database for potential research participants, as well as a room in our organization ONLY IF it is chosen by the potential research participant to have the interview onsite at our facility. 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.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
<Authorization Official>
<Contact Information>

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

Name: _____ **Date/Time:** _____

Volunteer Position: _____ **Location:** _____

Pseudonym: _____ **Interviewer:** **Tonya Howard**

Generational Cohort: _____

Interviewee has signed consent form Recording device turned on and tested

Introduction

Thank you for taking time to visit with me. I will be recording and transcribing verbatim what we say today. It is important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you've said with an incorrect interpretation. I will also be taking notes during our conversation. This interview is one of one that will be conducted with five living generations (two from each generation) who are experiencing of have experienced volunteerism within the last six months in a metro Atlanta nonprofit organization. Your identity will remain confidential.

Volunteer resource managers are searching for innovative ways to enhance the three Rs (recruitment, recognition, and retention) of volunteer management practices of volunteers from all five living generations within their specific organization. More importantly, nonprofit organizations are looking for ways to engage and retain all living generations in their specific nonprofit organization.

The purpose of this study is for me to describe the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. I really want you to give some thought to the interview questions that I am about to ask you so that I am able to get your full experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention within a nonprofit organization as a volunteer. It is my goal to understand your perspective, so please feel free to be as detailed as possible in your answers. I may ask a few follow-up questions as we proceed to help me understand your responses. Are you ready to begin?

Interview

Thank you for spending time with me today. I will provide you with a copy of the transcript of this interview before we begin to analyze the data and ask that you review it for accuracy. I would ask that you do that review as quickly as possible after you receive it. Upon completion of the study, I will share a summary of the findings with you.

Appendix G: Data Collection Tool – Adults

1. What is/was your reason for interest in volunteering in your current/recent role as a volunteer?
 - a. Probe: Where did you grow up, what has been your history as a volunteer?
 - b. Probe: How did you become interested in volunteering?
 - c. Probe: What influences/d you to volunteer?

2. What is/was being a volunteer like for you?
 - a. Probe: Where do you volunteer?
 - b. Probe: How many volunteer roles have you had at this nonprofit?
 - c. Probe: What do you especially like or dislike about your volunteer experience in these roles?

3. What are your personal and/or professional goals?
 - a. Probe: How do you approach both?
 - b. Probe: Tell me, of the two (personal and professional) which goals are more important to you? Please explain.

4. What do you know about the three Rs (recruitment, recognition, and retention) of volunteer management?
 - a. Probe: What do effective and efficient volunteer practices mean to you?
 - b. Probe: How do you feel about contributing to developing effective and efficient volunteer management practices through your volunteer experience?

5. What have you experienced in terms of recruitment at the nonprofit organization where you volunteer?
 - a. Probe: How were you initially recruited into your volunteer role? Do you feel like it was successful?
 - b. Probe: What is important that organizations must consider when recruiting volunteers?
 - c. Probe: In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can recruit potential volunteers?

6. What have you experienced in terms of recognition at the nonprofit organization where you volunteer?
 - a. Probe: How are/were you recognized in your volunteer role? Do you feel it is successful?
 - b. Probe: What is important that organizations must consider when recognizing volunteers?
 - c. Probe: In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can recognize its volunteers?

7. What have you experienced in terms of retention at the nonprofit organization where you volunteer?

- a. Probe: How are/were you retained in your volunteer role? Do you feel it is successful?
 - b. Probe: What is important that organizations must consider when retaining volunteers?
 - c. Probe: In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can retain its volunteers?
8. What contexts or situations (environments, people, resources, life experiences, etc.) do you believe have influenced or affected your beliefs of effective and efficient recruitment, recognition, and retention experiences?
- a. Probe: What experiences have you encountered that may have influenced how you perceive what effective recruitment, recognition, and retention should resemble?
9. What additional information regarding your experience with recruitment, recognition, and retention would you like to share?

Appendix H: Data Collection Tool – Children

1. What is/was your reason for interest in volunteering?
 - a. Probe: How did you become interested in volunteering?
 - b. Probe: What influences/d you to volunteer?

2. How does volunteering make you feel?
 - a. Probe: Where do you volunteer?
 - b. Probe: What do you especially like or dislike about your volunteer experience in these roles?

3. What are some of your goals in life?
 - a. Probe: Tell me, of the goals you have mentioned, which one is most important to you?

4. What do you know about recruitment, recognition, and retention?
 - b. Probe: How do you feel about contributing to a study that will help to keep all ages of volunteers volunteering together in an organization?

5. What have you experienced in terms of recruitment at the nonprofit organization where you volunteer?
 - a. Probe: How were you recruited/invited to volunteer with this organization? Do you feel like it was a good idea?
 - c. Probe: What do you think is important for organizations to think about when they are looking for volunteers?
 - d. Probe: In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can recruit potential volunteers?

6. What have you experienced in terms of recognition at the nonprofit organization where you volunteer?
 - a. Probe: How are/were you recognized by this organization for your volunteer service? Do you feel like it is/was a good idea?
 - b. Probe: What do you think is important for organizations to think about when they are recognizing/appreciating their volunteers?
 - c. Probe: In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can recognize its volunteers?

7. What have you experienced in terms of retention at the nonprofit organization where you volunteer?
 - a. Probe: How does/did this organization keep you around as a volunteer? Do you feel like what they do is a good idea for keeping volunteers?
 - b. Probe: What is important that organizations must consider when retaining/keeping volunteers?
 - c. Probe: In your opinion, tell me some better practices of how this nonprofit organization can retain/keep its volunteers?

8. What contexts or situations (environments, people, resources, life experiences, etc.) do you believe have influenced or affected your beliefs of good ideas for recruitment, recognition, and retention experiences?
 - a. Probe: What experiences have you encountered that may have influenced how you feel about how good recruitment, recognition, and retention should look like?

9. What additional information regarding your experience with recruitment, recognition, and retention would you like to share?

Appendix I: Initial Participant Solicitations E-mail

Potential Participant's Name,

Adopting successful volunteer management practices to effectively engage and retain all ages of volunteers is a crucial element of a nonprofit organization's advantage. Though the adoption of general volunteer management practices such as recruitment, recognition, and retention in nonprofit organizations has proven to be beneficial, volunteer resource managers are still starving for more ways to improve those practices and make them specific to each generation within their volunteer program.

This study will empower five generations to discuss their lived experience of recruitment, recognition, and retention practices within a nonprofit organization. Given the importance of utilizing all ages of volunteers for the success of delivering a nonprofit's mission, understanding how to successfully engaging and retaining all five living generations will warrant volunteer resource managers to focus on characters, personality, skills, and experiences of each generation.

The purpose of this study is for me to describe the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. The results of this study may play a vital role in determining how to effectively engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in nonprofit organizations.

You have been selected, based upon certain criteria (i.e., - your length of involvement in volunteerism), to participate in this study. The study will include (a) completing an informed consent form, (b) background information form, (c) participating in an interview, and (4) finish with an approved interview transcript (upon your discretion). Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time.

I will call you within a week to confirm your interest to participate. If you agree, we will schedule an interview time at a mutual place. The interview process will take 45 – 60 minutes. Your identity, geographic location and interview responses will remain confidential.

The results of this study will be used to prepare a Ph.D. dissertation. Your participation and cooperation in this study is very important and much appreciated. Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Tonya R. Howard, Graduate Student – tonya.howard@waldenu.edu, xxx-xxx-6986

Appendix J: Participant Telephone Call Follow-up Script

Hi “potential participant’s name,” my name is Tonya Howard. I am a graduate student at Walden University. I am calling today regarding my study: *Developing Generation-based Volunteer Management Practices*. I introduced it to you in an e-mail a few days ago.

The purpose of this study is for me to describe the experiences that contribute to the development of generation-based volunteer management practices among five generations of volunteers in metro Atlanta nonprofit organizations. The study focuses on the effective and efficient practices of the three Rs (recruitment, recognition, and retention) of volunteer management. The results of this study may play a vital role in determining how to effectively engage and retain five generations of volunteers, simultaneously, in nonprofit organizations

You have been selected, based upon certain criteria (i.e.,: your length of involvement in volunteerism), to participate in this study. The study will include completing an informed consent form, background information form, participating in a 45 – 60 minute interview, and finish with an approved interview transcript (upon your discretion).

Please be assured that your responses and identity would be kept confidential. The information collected during the interview will be used to complete my Ph.D. dissertation. All research participants will receive a pseudonym to ensure the confidentiality of their participation. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any time.

Your participation and cooperation in this study would be much appreciated. Do you have any questions regarding this study that I can answer for you now? Are you interested and able to participate in this study?

If participant does not agree to participate:

Thank you for considering this request. Have a nice day.

If participant does agree to participate:

Thank you. When would be a convenient time to meet at your office to conduct the interview?

I’m looking forward to our meeting. Please e-mail (tonya.howard@waldenu.edu) or call (xxx-xxx-6986) if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you!

Appendix K: Email Reminder Letter Prior to Interview

Date

Participant's Name,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study: ***Developing Generation-based Volunteer Management Practices***. Let's plan to meet at [time] at [location]. As mentioned, there are two forms that are crucial to your participation in this study: the informed consent form and background information form; they are both attached within this email. Please complete these forms prior to our scheduled interview time.

I'm looking forward to our meeting. Please e-mail (tonya.howard@waldenu.edu) or call (xxx-xxx-6986) if you have any questions or concerns.

Tonya R. Howard, Graduate Student

Appendix L: Background Information Form

(Completed prior to interview)

Study Name: Developing Generation-based Volunteer Management Practices

Date: _____ **Location:** _____ **Time:** _____

Participant's Name: _____

Pseudonym (First Name): _____

Home Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Cell: _____

Birthdate (MM/D/YYYY): _____ Gender: _____

Time in Current Volunteer Position (years/months): _____

If no longer (Time Spent in Most Recent Volunteer Position (years/months): _____

Describe yourself in 1-2 paragraphs. You may print this description and submit it with the above information the day of the interview or e-mail the description to tonya.howard@waldenu.edu.

Appendix M: Interview Verification Form

Tonya R. Howard, Ph.D. Candidate
 Email: tonya.howard@waldenu.edu

Phone: xxx-xxx-6986

Study Name: Developing Generation-based Volunteer Management Practices

Dear Research Participant,

Please review the enclosed transcript of our recent interview concerning: ***Developing Generation-based Volunteer Management Practices***. Feel free to note any content errors that you find in order to make all information as accurate as possible. Also, please initial the appropriate statement below to indicate your level of approval. Thank you.

Please initial the appropriate statement below:

- _____ I approve the interview transcript without reviewing it.
 _____ I approve the interview transcript without changes.
 _____ I approve the interview transcript with noted changes.
 _____ I do not approve the interview transcript.

 Printed Name of Participant

 Date

 Signature of Participant

 Date

 Signature of Researcher/Investigator

 Date