

GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

Exploring Intergenerational Dynamics: Leveraging HR Practices to Foster Effective
Leadership, Productivity, and Team Collaboration

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Dedication

I sincerely dedicate this thesis to some very special people in my life, who in one way or another, have influenced my journey towards the completion this study. I would first like to acknowledge my father, Norman Malcolm, whose mission in life was to ensure all his children received the highest level of education. Sadly, he passed away in September 2022, and was not able to physically see me complete this other leg of continuous learning that he always insisted on. I know he still guides my journey. His legacy lives on through all of us. The other person who is indeed special to this paper is my wife of over twenty-seven years, who has supported me in all my wild endeavours and throughout the years, has walked step by step with me on this journey. I sincerely dedicate this paper to these two towers of strength who have made the impossible, possible, and the unthinkable, thinkable. I will be the first generation of 'doctor' in my family, and I honour that and hope to inspire the next generation to pursue higher education.

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To my beautiful wife, not only have you stood by my side all these years, but you continue to uplift my spirit, feed my soul, and encourage me through all the difficult times and celebrate the happy times. This is one of them. Even on my wild rides, my crazy ideas, you believed in me. You are my constant supporter. Gratitude goes out to my mom, whose light shines so bright, and always has my back. To all my professors, who saw something special in me, I salute you all. To all the participants in this study, who took time out of their schedule to discuss the research, this could not have been possible without your input, and I truly thank you. To the person who I do everything in celebration of, my son, my miracle, Zachary Alexander Malcolm. This paper goes to show you that anything is possible, as your dad is the first in our family to climb such heights and continue to demonstrate that you can do anything you want in this life. It is truly possible.

ABSTRACT

GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

Exploring Intergenerational Dynamics: Leveraging HR Practices to Foster Effective Leadership, Productivity, and Team Collaboration

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The utility industry faces significant leadership challenges due to demographic shifts and the changing expectations of a multi-generational workforce. As Baby Boomers remain in the workplace and younger generations assume leadership roles, understanding generational differences in leadership styles becomes crucial. This doctoral thesis explores how human resource practitioners assist leaders in the utility industry by identifying factors that contribute to effective multi-generational leadership.

Studies indicate that leaders struggle to manage the diverse generational workforce. Issues such as misconceptions, communication barriers, and high employee turnover have compelled HR practitioners to rethink strategies. Existing literature lacks focus on generational leadership in utility companies in developing countries like Jamaica, leading to a deficiency in effective leadership practices.

This study employed a qualitative research design, including face-to-face interviews with business executives and HR practitioners, focus groups with different age groups, and observation techniques, involving 30 participants. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data. Key findings reveal that misconceptions, miscommunication, and unconscious biases significantly hinder productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce. Leaders' ineffectiveness in addressing these issues exacerbates the negative impacts.

The research underscores the need for HR practitioners to better equip leaders to manage a multi-generational workforce. The study provides strategies to enhance leadership capacity, improve communication methods, and address demographic differences. It also highlights the correlation between generational diversity and organizational performance, offering recommendations for building capacity and competence.

This paper contributes to the body of knowledge on how HR practitioners can help leaders in Jamaica's utility industry understand and effectively lead a multi-generational workforce. By improving communication and individualizing leadership approaches, leaders can increase productivity, enhance team collaboration, and improve retention. The findings advocate for judicious business practices, enabling utility companies to address generational differences holistically, thus fostering a more productive and collaborative work environment.

Directed by: Dr Iva Buljbasic

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ER	Employee Relations
EU	European Union
Gen X	Generation X
Gen Z	Generation Z
HOD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
HRBP	Human Resource Business Partner
HRM	Human Resources Management
JPS	Jamaica Public Service
SVP	Senior Vice President
VP	Vice President

1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

A better understanding and a more effective handling of age diversity in the workplace have become key success factors for organizations around the world (Field et al. 2013). There is increased discussion concerning the generational gap that exist in the workplace today, and discussions on retaining employees and maintaining intellectual capital issues are of great importance and are ongoing (Field et al. 2013). “According to Eurostat (2015), it is estimated that people aged 65 and older will make up 28.7 percent of the EU population by 2080, which is a substantial increase from the 2014 figure of 18.5 percent (Parry & McCarthy, 2017, p. 586).” Concurrently, the working age population (15-64) is expected to decrease from its peak of 67 percent in 2010 to 56.2 percent in 2080. These trends pose both challenges and opportunities for both employees and employers, Employers must adapt to the concept that retirement does not necessarily have a fixed, age dependent date (Parry & McCarthy, 2017). “Consequently, they will need to revisit their HR policies and practices, ensuring these policies are more inclusive of a multi-generational workforce. This task is further complicated by the fact that research on age -diversity in the workplace is underdeveloped and often presents mixed evidence (Parry & McCarthy, 2017, p. 586).” According to Posner (2002), leadership is a relationship. We exist in a diverse world and with that comes a diverse workforce and with a diverse workforce comes the need for a more customized approach to working with the different people (Posner, 2002). Leaders are being called upon to embrace the differences that exist in the workplace and customize their approach to individuals’ uniqueness. Whether or not a leader fails or succeeds is directly correlated to the capacity of

the organization to support them (Russ, 2002). People have begun to wonder if what was true about leadership twenty, fifteen and even seven years ago still applies and in fact, whether at all, leadership even matters (Posner, 2002). Posner (2002) contends that the research shows that the fundamentals of leadership have not changed, it is the context within which we exist that has changed, and, in some cases, the context, has changed dramatically. I purposely chose the utility industry in Jamaica as my research subject, as having worked in this industry in HR roles, I have firsthand experience with the challenges that leaders face in implementing effective strategies to effectively lead a multi-generational workforce. It is also well known that employees in these industries traditionally spend upwards of 15 years working in these industries, but over the years, this has been decreasing. It is important that leaders effectively lead the different generations in these industries as institutional knowledge is of utmost importance to this industry, and therefore, employee retention is critical to long term success for these organizations.

Having worked in HR roles for a number of years and consulted with different companies on the subject of how leaders effectively lead a multi-generational workplace, I have observed that there are several challenges that leaders face in implementing strategies to lead in this new paradigm. Organizations have changed dramatically over the years, with the advent of the different generations and the shift from the traditional hierarchical structure to flatter organizations. The newer generations in the organization are also demanding that their voices be heard. Organizations have begun the effort of developing a more empowered workforce designed with the team in mind and changing the nature of leadership (Horner, 1997).

The current context within which we operate sees four, and in some cases, five different generations in the workplace which makes for a very diverse workplace. Every generation has

its own expectations, habits, motivation, attitudes and behavioural patterns and human resource practitioners can help to mitigate the negative outcomes that can stem from generational differences (Windon & Henzi Plaza, 2020). Most leaders have not figured out how to deal with the many challenges of integrating the different generations in the workplace and their respective belief systems that come along with them (Myatt, 2022). (Warner & Sandberg, 2010, p. 2) stressed the importance of recognizing and valuing the generational differences that exist in the workplace as these differences may contribute to the organization in a positive way

It is important that HR practitioners and leaders understand the different generations as effective intergenerational cohesion enables leaders to empower the people they lead and recognize the differences in the generations to display empathy and appreciate the strengths that each brings to the table, rather than pointing fingers (McCrinkle, 2021). It is simply not enough to observe and to describe the different generations, but also important to develop theories that can identify the unique character of each generation that points to the real differences between them (Saba, 2013).

“Leadership studies have spanned cultures, decades, theoretical beliefs, and have evolved from theories like Great Man Theory, where the thought was leaders were born and not made and that they possessed certain innate characteristics and had a certain look (Horner, 1997, p. 270).” “Other theories evolved, where behaviours were observed to determine what successful leaders did, and not how they looked and furthered the idea that leadership effectiveness was not necessarily innate but could be taught (Horner, 1997, p. 270).” Theories went even further to explore the idea of contingency theory where the situation determined how a leader behaved and assumed that the effects of one variable on leadership are contingent on other

variables (Horner, 1997). There have been numerous studies conducted on leadership and many definitions given to the field of leadership. US Supreme Court Justice, Potter Stewart expounded that although leadership might be difficult to define, “we know it when we see it” (Daft, 2023). The judge went on to state that leadership was very distinct in people like Abraham Lincoln, however, nowadays, many are having a hard time recognizing leadership in our current leaders. Despite the difficulty in defining leadership, Daft (2023), offers that leadership is an influence relationship between leaders and followers whose intention is for outcomes and real changes that reflect a shared purpose.

The study of leadership continues in earnest and to date, is still of great interest. In recent times, we have seen theories of transactional leadership and transformational leadership emerge, where transactional stems from the traditional view of workers and organizations and involves a position of power, versus transformational leadership where leaders search for ways to help motivate employees by satisfying higher order needs and engaging employees in the work processes (Horner, 1997). Regardless of the many different theories of leadership and the different styles of leadership that exist in the workplace, the one thing that has remained constant is the ever-changing workplace dynamics through diversity, culture, and age differences, with the four different generations represented in the workplace.

Never has there been such a wide gap in age groups working side by side and this new paradigm presents a real challenge to leaders (Warner & Sandberg, 2010). The general issue that exists is, with all the research that has been conducted, the environment within which we currently operate in, is ever changing and will continue to change, which beckons leaders to remain agile and constantly flexible towards the changes occurring in the organization.

Leaders are at a crossroad with how to effectively lead the many different generations that are

in the workplace, operating in the same space, and the role of human resources becomes more crucial in leading the way in equipping leaders to deal with these changing dynamics. The different generations being represented in the workplace becomes even more complex with the diversity being represented, and the traditional way of leadership might have become null and void in this present context. “Because of the significant changes taking place in the workplace, the nature of work and the structures that exist in the workplace, it is therefore crucial to re-evaluate the concept of leadership in this present context, since different skills and behaviours are needed (Horner, 1997, p. 270).”

The literature review will seek to examine the existing literature that has been presented on generational leadership, explore the different literature to see where synergies exist amongst the research, where there are agreements and disagreements and find where potential gaps exist. The intention of the literature review is to identify where additional exploration about generational leadership is warranted, contribute to existing research, and further expand the research into new ideas and content. Further, the literature review seeks to contribute to the field of leadership in the utility industry in Jamaica and assist human resource practitioners in their pursuit to develop leaders in effectively leading the different generations in the organization.

1.2. Definition of the Problem

According to Ernst & Young, in a study they completed in 2013, in the U.S. workplace, surveying 1200 cross-company professionals, 75% of managers say that managing a multigenerational team is a challenge, while 25% state that they manage a mostly even mix of employees from three distinct generations: Baby boomers, Generation X and Millennials

(MBA@UNC, 2021). Today's workplace arguably has the most age-diverse workforce than ever before (Cara-Lynn, 2017). With the removal of mandatory retirement, life expectancy increases, and the economic conditions that exist and require older workers to delay retirement, the issue of age-diversity becomes an ever-present challenge in organizations today (Cara-Lynn, 2017). According to Ng and Parry (2016), the differences in ages, sometimes spans 50 years, all working alongside each other, and from the standpoint of Kearney and Gebert, 2009, van Knippenberg, De Dreu, and Homan, 2004, these different age groups bring with them unique skillsets, experiences, and perspectives (Cara-Lynn, 2017). For most organizations, this translates into the potential of having at least four generations in the workplace, working alongside each other, with their unique idiosyncrasies and nuances. According to Cara-Lynn (2017, p. 6), "the effects of age-diversity have become even more pronounced as a result of changes in the design of contemporary work units and organizations needing to meet the demands of today's volatile and complex business environment." These needs have resulted in organizations adapting more team-based structures whereby tasks are no longer completed by one person, but instead, being completed in a more collaborative effort by project teams and task forces, bringing together a workforce with more age-diversity. "The limited understanding of the dynamics of age-diverse work groups have contributed to organizations experiencing the negative effects of have a multi-generational workforce, such as absenteeism, high employee turnover, a general feeling of job dissatisfaction, negative conflict, reduced productivity, and communication breakdown within the different demographics (Cara-Lynn, 2017, p. 6)." According to Milliken and Martins (1996), the divergent outcomes resulting from diverse work groups are why this phenomenon is often referred to as a 'double-edged sword (Cara-Lynn, 2017). Kapoor and Solomon, 2011,

argues that this is also the reason why work group age-diversity has become such a pressing concern for contemporary organization (Cara-Lynn, 2017).

Age diversity has the potential of offering significant advantages in organizations, however many organizations fail to recognize these benefits, which might partially be due to the lack of understanding the underlying processes taking place in age-diverse work groups, as well as the role of leadership in this dynamic setting (Cara-Lynn, 2017). The literature shows that there are limited studies on how leaders can effectively lead a multi-generational workforce, especially in the utility industry, and more particularly in developing countries like Jamaica. Workforce diversity creates many advantages as well as many challenges (Bashir et al. 2021). According to Harrison et al. (2007), age diversity reflects the variations among an organization's workforce concerning age and can therefore be hypothesized as inconsistencies or disparities based on different characteristics (Bashir et al. 2021).

According to Hertel et al. (2013), another aspect of work group age-diversity that has been problematic for organizations are the challenges associated with the leadership of these groups, and Buengeler, 2013, posits that, currently there is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the leadership approaches that leaders should employ when dealing with an age-diverse workforce (Cara-Lynn, 2017). Organizations need to modify human resource management policies in order to motivate and inspire the workforce (Bashir et al. 2021). Bal and Smit, 2012, posit that former scholars have contended that employees of various age group behave differently in a working relationship (Bashir et al. 2021). More and more, leaders are finding it increasingly challenging to lead the different generations that are represented in the workforce. Human Resource Management has come a far way over the years and has now gained further accreditation as a science and as a discipline worthy of the

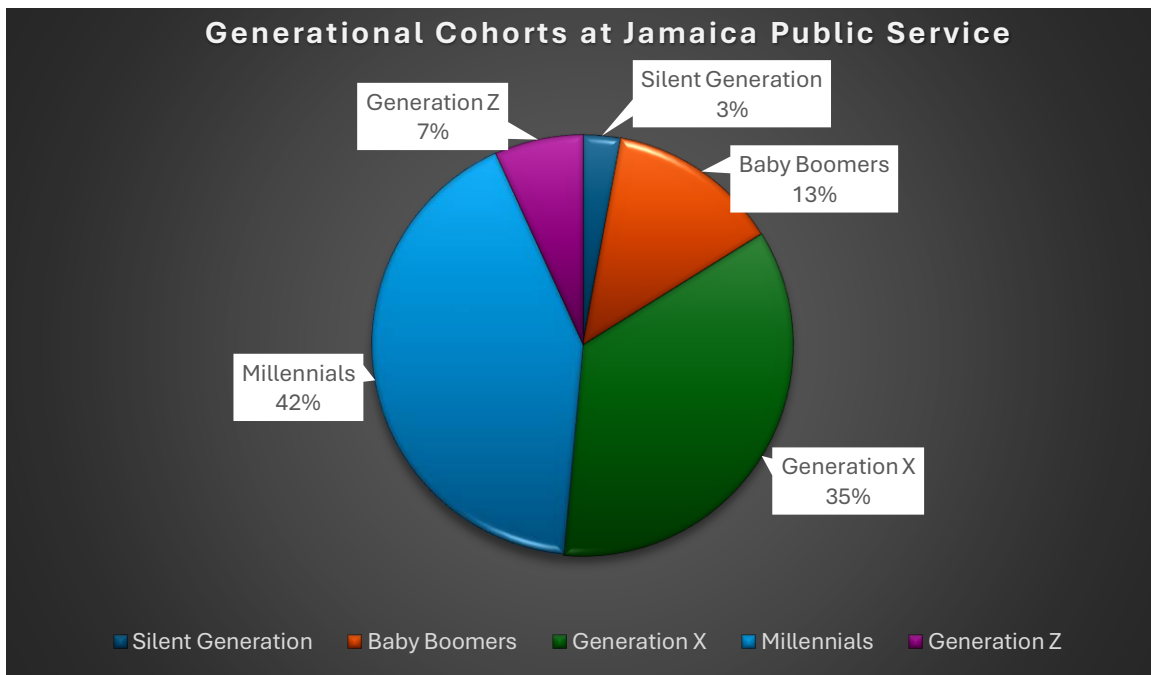
function it performs. At one point, in my HR career, I made a speech to a company group of over 1600 employees, that if HR did its job effectively and from a place of true leadership, there would be no need for union representation. In retrospect, I would have framed this differently so that it wouldn't be offensive to any group, and that the different generations of employees in the room would all receive the same intended meaning. Additionally, I would be mindful that this can be construed differently, not only by different generations, but also by differences in culture, backgrounds, and their lived experiences. It has become increasingly more important to be mindful of the different needs of the different generations represented in the workplace and observe the different nuances of leading in an age-diverse reality.

Recent studies in the EU point to the fact that the population is aging and demographic forecasts in the EU and other western countries point to there being a large gap in employment because of Baby Boomers staying longer in the workplace (Ropes & Ypsilanti, 2016). As people stay longer in the workplace, it poses major challenges to leaders of organizations, as diversity increases and that comes with its own sets of challenges, as, for the first time ever, we have at least four generations working in the same workspace (Ropes & Ypsilanti, 2016). As posited by Ropes and Ypsilanti (2016), managing diversity of any type is important, as on one hand it may add value to the organization, having a diverse set of skills and institution knowledge, but on the other hand, it can be problematic, having a negative impact on social structures within the organization. According to Bashir et al. (2021), drawing on social categorization theory, age diversity affects diversely due to intergroup biases of the workforce and this diversity can lead to either positive, negative, or zero effects on an organization's outcomes. Employers have been quite slow in reacting to the diversity in age in the workplace, which might be due to the fact that they do not know how to do this

effectively (Parry & McCarthy, 2017). Despite the evidence contradicting the stereotypes of older workers, there are indications that such stereotypes can lead to discrimination and unfair treatment (Parry & McCarthy, 2017).

The objective of an organization is to improve and sustain its performance, and in order to achieve this goal, a competent and motivated workforce is critical to achieving this goal (Bashir et al. 2021). Studies show the need to understand the different generations represented in the workplace for leaders to lead effectively and increase productivity and team collaboration. According to the World Bank in its labour market assessment, Jamaica has been identified as having widespread low productivity and that this is the primary factor behind the country's poor economic performance (fhi360, 2017). The Country's newspaper, Jamaica Observer, reported that the country is experiencing a demographic transition, with a rapidly ageing population and that this ageing population can have a significant impact on the labour market (Mcewan, 2023). This is compounded by the presence of a multigenerational workforce working together in the same space. According to Tania McDonald Tomlinson, HR Director at the Jamaica Public Service, the organization has 1652 employees. There are five generational cohort represented in the organization. Silent Generation numbers 48 employees and accounts for approximately 3% of the organization, while Baby Boomers numbers 219 employees and accounts for just over 13% of the organization's workforce. Generation X is the second largest employee set, numbering 583 employees, and accounts for just over 35% of the organizations' workforce. The Gen Z cohort is growing and numbers 112 employees, accounting for almost 7% of the workforce. The millennial generation is the largest employee set, numbering 690 employees, and accounts for approximately 42% of the organization's workforce.

See Figure 1 for a graphical representation of the makeup of the Jamaica Public Service (the company under study) in terms of generational cohorts that are represented in the organization. The article goes on to emphasize the need to diversifying the workforce and that Jamaica must take a multifaceted approach to addressing these issues and must focus on retaining and attracting skilled professionals.



Source: Jamaica Public Service Company Limited – HR Department

(Tania Tomlinson-McDonald)

Figure 1- Generational Cohort at Jamaica Public Service (JPS)

“The underlying argument is that members of different generational cohorts require, and in fact are demanding a different style of leadership to realize high levels of productivity (Rudolph et al. 2017, p. 13).” Poor generational leadership, or a lack of leadership that focuses on the nuances of the different generation could have an adverse effect on key organizational

procedures such as innovation, knowledge transfer, and communication amongst the different cohorts in the workplace, which in turn can negatively affect organizational performance (Ropes & Ypsilanti, 2016). It is crucial to highlight that intergenerational exchanges are of critical importance to the transfer of not only institutional, but additionally, job knowledge (Rudolph et al. 2017). This is particularly evident in utility industries where institutional knowledge and the transfer of this knowledge through on-the-job training is of central importance. Organizations are increasingly affected by the complexity of a multigenerational workforce and will depend on human resource management for creative solutions to lead the employment relationship amongst the different generations in the workplace (Tonks et al. 2009). This becomes even more critical in organizations where several generations exist and where age stereotypes emerge. “According to Dietz and Fasbender (2021, p. 163), friendships can also help to bridge the differences between people, such as between age-diverse employees, and oftentimes, age diversity in employee interactions cultivates interpersonal tensions.” “Multi-generational workplace friendship, that is, a relationship between co-workers of different ages, who have a liking for each other and who become engaged in a balanced social exchange can help to overcome interpersonal tensions, since having something in common can help to de-escalate age related challenges and help to reduce negative feelings between age-diverse individuals (Dietz & Fasbender, 2021, p. 163).” Despite the relevance on the topic of age-diversity in the workplace, literature focusing on the topic has been limited.

The overarching aim of this study was to be able to provide HR practitioners with practical strategies to assist business executives and team leaders, in the largest utility company in the Caribbean, located in the developing island nation of Jamaica on how to

effectively increase productivity and enhance team collaboration of a multi-generational workforce and lead this new age and culture diverse paradigm sustainably. “The financial and non-financial performance of an organization determines its competitiveness in the market, and human resource policies should help to increase employees’ performance and also decrease absenteeism and satisfy the employees of different ages with lower turnover intentions (Bashir et al. 2021, p. 2).” The rationale is that leaders face several challenges like divisional conflicts, team conflicts, miscommunications, high employee turnover, and low productivity due to failure to recognize and implement strategies to effectively lead a multi-generational workforce.

Generational Leadership and how a leader leads and motivates a workforce has become especially critical in these times, as the workforce has expanded to include, not only two or three generation, but potentially four or five different generation working in the same space. Research has shown that it is the first time that five different generations will be represented in the workforce, as the older generations are staying longer at their jobs. This has created quite a challenge to HR leaders in preparing the organization and leaders in understanding how to effectively lead the different cohorts in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

This research sought to explore how human resource practitioners can assist leaders in the utility industry in Jamaica lead the different generations residing in the workplace and provide support to enable job enrichment, which lead to high levels of productivity, increased team collaboration and retention. There has been a lot of research done on leading millennials, and building relationships with Baby Boomers, but there is a lack of sufficient research on building relationships with several different generations, activating enablement and improving

retention in the utility industry in Jamaica. This research seeks to add further knowledge and continue to build on what has already been explored and close the gap that now exists in the utility industry in Jamaica.

This research is important as it will identify strategies to build a harmonious relationship amongst the different generations in the utility industry in Jamaica, improving productivity and retention in an industry that traditionally has long term employees, but who are demotivated, in cases, non-productive and have been seeking new employment. This research is crucial and well timed, as more and more, we are seeing employees leave this industry in Jamaica, seeking out new opportunities, in an industry where institutional knowledge is crucial for long-term sustainability.

1.3. Purpose of Research

The ever-changing employment demographic has presented several workplace challenges involving multigenerational diversity occupying the workspace at the same time. To further expand on what the research seeks to achieve, it will be meaningful to define the different generations that are now represented in the workplace and present the characteristics that distinguish each of these different generations. There are currently five generations that make up the society and play an active or semi-active role in the workforce; the Silent Generation or the Traditionalist, born just before 1945, Baby Boomers, born between 1946-1964, Generation X, born between 1965-1976, Millennials, who are born approximately between 1977-1995, and Gen Z who are born between 1996-2015 (Villa, 2021). The oldest generation represented in the workplace would be folks that are in their seventies with the youngest

employees being approximately eighteen years of age. It then means that there are three generations separating the oldest and the youngest generation.

The Silent Generation or the Builders as they have also been called, 'built so much of what society looks like today and have displayed resilience having seen some very tough times, starting life after a depression and hearing stories about World War I and living through World War II (McCrindle, 2021). According to four of these folks that I recently spoke with, they are considered to have strong values and believe in working hard for what they have. The Baby Boomers generation saw a rise in the economy and grew up in a time when the fertility rate for women was 3.5 babies per woman (McCrindle, 2021). The Boomers participated heavily in political protests, saw the rise in feminism and had some amount of desire for equality. They were also considered to be the social justice warriors of their time and brought about massive social changes and are often described as the lending hand to the next generation (McCrindle, 2021). Generation X were the first to start pushing back on authority figures and benefited from being born in a time of economic prosperity and therefore have experienced the opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures (Dimock, 2019).

Millennials are considered to be the most racially and ethnically diverse adult generation, with Gen Z considered to be even more diverse (Dimock, 2019). Millennials also entered the workforce at the height of an economic recession and research has shown that millennials' life choices and ways of being have been shaped by the recession (Dimock, 2019). Gen Z were born in a time of the Covid-19 pandemic and would have seen the devastating effects of a negative economy and have learnt how to be adaptable (Dimock, 2019). They are very conscious of what they want to achieve in their lives, pride themselves on high volunteerism, focus heavily on values, fulfilment of their dreams and making a difference in what they do

(Dimock, 2019). This all makes for an interesting and challenging workforce replete with many differences and opportunities for human resource practitioners to enhance the capacity for leaders to lead this workforce. Several scholars have investigated the relationship between age-diverse workforce and an organization's financial and non-financial performance; however, outcomes are still unstable. This research is contributing to filling the gap that presently exists on the subject.

1.4. Significance of the Study

1.4.1. Contribution to Business Practice

The challenges with the differences with a multi-generational workforce are plentiful despite the positive impact this could have on the organization. With the different generations represented in the workplace, and the different characteristics, ideologies and idiosyncrasies, HR practitioners are increasingly being called upon to provide support, training, and solutions to leaders to effectively lead their age diverse teams. There has been significant research done on the millennial generation and how to lead them, but there is a significant gap in leading the other generations and how to lead them, especially the newest generation. More and more HR is becoming a crucial part of an organization's success and sustainability in recruiting, training, motivating, and retaining their talent, and this has become increasingly challenging with the different generations. Organizational demography has undergone a significant shift in the number of employees from multiple generations and the differences are viewed as important in understanding the diversity in employees' values, behaviours, and attitudes (Benson et al. 2013). Research suggests that numerous advantages can be gained from having

a multigenerational workforce, including occupational stability and loyalty from the older workers, to flexibility, the ability to learn new skills and willingness to change from younger workers (Tonks et al. 2009). “However, while workplaces today generally encourage diversity, age prejudice remains deeply entrenched and still affects organizational productivity (Tonks et al. 2009, p. 39).” “Negative stereotyping has been exposed as a serious issue and engendered behaviours which threaten organizational and personal performance (Tonks et al. 2009, p. 40).”

Additionally, we now have millennials who are leading Baby Boomers, so not only are we faced with Baby Boomers having the responsibility of leading different generations, but we also now have the younger generation leading the older generation (Lasten, 2016). This presents its own sets of challenges that this research will seek to contribute a solution to. The workplace still has Baby Boomers in the working industry, and recall, they are in their sixties and seventies (Brooks, 2020). In addition, we have employees in their seventies as well, working in the workplace. It therefore means that we have employees who are in their seventies, working with people who are in their early twenties. My research aims to identify ways that HR can provide ways to help leaders lead the different generations represented in the workplace, and to be able to maintain a working environment that everyone feels accepted and recognized, regardless of the generation they were born into.

It is also important to recognize that the findings of this research will not only contribute to the academic field but will also contribute to the body of knowledge by providing organizational leaders with strategies that they can implement in their organizations in effectively leading age diverse employees. The framework provided will become the process for generational competence and provide leaders with a deeper insight into the various

generations that they lead in their respective organizations. This will serve to address the gap that presently exists in the area of study. The findings also aim to show the significance of leadership development in leading multi-generational work teams and offers advice in the form of recommendation to executive leaders, members of the management team and HR practitioners on how to implement strategies to effectively lead an age-diverse workforce.

1.4.2. Implications for Social Change

“Multigenerational diversity is a universal fact in sustainability and today’s work environment, yet, the development of the internet, data analysis, the abundance of information, globalization, the growing interest in diversity, all represent deep changes which are affecting people and organizations to a great extent (Sobrino-De Toro et al. 2019, p. 1).” Many researchers have suggested that failure to recognize differences in the different generations may result in adverse organizational consequences, including; conflicts between different generations, misunderstanding and miscommunication breakdown, strained working relationships, diminished employee productivity, compromised employee well-being, decreased innovation, and a decline in organizational citizenship behaviour (Becton et al. 2014). “Therefore, the human resource function has many aspects of the organization to manage which were not present in past decades, and people management in organizations needs to adopt new tools and/or review existing ones in order to continue adding value to the organization (Sobrino-De Toro et al. 2019, p. 1).”

Organizations are now requiring greater social interaction between employees at a time when workforce diversity is increasing, and with changing employee attitudes, values, and behaviours due to environmental influences, organizations must learn how to effectively

utilize diverse workforce in order to survive and prosper. “Additionally, according to Guerrero, et al., (2020, p. 47), organizations are facing an interesting phenomenon in the composition of their workforce, the concurrence of multiple age generations that demand suitable strategies regarding work design, job satisfaction, and incentives.” Implications for social change from this research also include the likelihood to contribute to a greater understanding of the different generations represented in the workplace, their distinct values, beliefs, and their attitudes towards work and to each other. This will in turn lead to empathy amongst the different generational cohorts in the workplace, general overall improvement in team collaboration and cohesiveness, and improved working relationships amongst the cohorts. Additionally, this research aims to contribute to the cultivation of a more cohesive and accepting society at large.

1.5. Nature of the Study

For this study, I purposely chose a qualitative method to carry out my research. This study aimed to explore how HR practitioners can support business leaders in managing a multi-generational workforce, making a qualitative approach most suitable. “With a qualitative method, the researcher can elicit deeper insights into designing, administering, and interpreting assessment and testing, also exploring the participants’ behaviour, perceptions, feelings and understanding (Rahman, 2018, p. 102).” The quantitative method was not suitable for this study, as my aim was to explore strategies rather than to analyze statistical relationships and differences. Employing a mixed method integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection and analysis. (Wilson, 2013).

I did not use a mixed method approach as my research was not examining statistical relationships, and therefore the quantitative approach would not be appropriate.

I also determined that a case study design was suitable for my investigation. Case study is a research strategy that allows the researcher to use a variety of methods that suits his objective, provided the approach is practical and ethical (Priya, 2021). Case studies are some of the most commonly used methodologies of social research and have garnered significant traction over the years and is being used in several disciplines of social sciences, such as management, sociology, anthropology, and psychology (Priya, 2021). Yin, 2014, describes case study research as a ‘craftwork’ because of the rigor and the sharp design that it is constructed within which ultimately determines the efficacy, reliability, and validity of the final study outcome (Priya, 2021). Sampling is extremely important in case study as Miles and Huberman, 1994, posits, ‘you cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything’ (Priya, 2021). “Much of what we know today about the empirical world has been produced by case study research (Starman, 2013, p. 29).”

“Qualitative research is characterized by an interpretive paradigm, which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they have for an individual (Starman, 2013, p. 29).” It therefore extends that the subjective views of the researcher on a particular subject play a vital role in the study results. “Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, organization, or system in real life (Starman, 2013, p. 31).” “Case studies can analyze qualitative complex events and take into account numerous variables precisely because they do not require many cases or a limited number of variables (Starman, 2013, p. 38).” “According to Starman (2013, p. 38), the use of case studies in qualitative research has some advantages with its

connectedness to everyday life and case studies' abundance of individual elements and details are important for researchers from two viewpoints." "Firstly, a case study is important for developing different views of reality, which includes the awareness that human behaviour cannot be merely understood as an act that is driven by a rule or a theory. Secondly, case studies can contribute to the professional development of a researcher, as case studies can provide concrete, context-dependent experience that increases the researcher's skills (Starman, 2013, p. 38)." One of my main reasons for choosing case study as a research method, is not only its applicability to my research, but also the potential for personal growth and increase knowledge that comes with adapting this method of study.

1.6. Research Aim and Questions

The aim of this research was to explore strategies that HR practitioners can implement and use to support, mentor, and coach leaders in effectively leading the different generations existing in the same workspace. The research aims at obtaining knowledge and insight into how leaders of a multi-generational workplace can understand the challenges of generational differences and develop strategies that can be implemented to increase productivity and enhance team collaboration. The central research question that will be used to guide the research is: What strategies can HR practitioners implement with leaders to increase productivity and enhance team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce? This research has a long-term aim of providing HR practitioners in the utility industry in Jamaica a framework with which they can use to prepare leaders to effectively lead a multi-generational workforce. In other words, identifying strategies that can contribute to effectively leading a

multi-generational workforce in order to increase the retention rates, enhance team collaboration and ultimately productivity in the utility industry in Jamaica.

The model and theory of leadership of multi-generational organizational teams are considered for this research because leadership roles in managing the problems of a multi-generational workforce have become quite debatable. Researchers have long struggled in putting HR and leadership in the proper context in multigenerational teams, and this provides the chance for this study to scrutinize the extent of leadership roles in addressing the differences of a multi-generational workforce.

Interview Questions

More specifically, the following research questions will be addressed in an interview and focus group setting:

1. How does the co-existence of different generations in the workplace affect team collaboration and productivity?
2. What strategies would you say work best to improve team collaboration amongst employees from different generations?
3. What strategies would you say work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations?
4. What barriers did you encounter when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity amongst the different age groups?
5. How did you address these barriers you encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity amongst the different generations?
6. How can HR Managers lead the charge in mentoring leaders for the different

generations?

7. What additional information can you provide to HR leaders in the utility industry in coaching and supporting leaders to effectively manage an age-diverse workforce?

Additionally, the research has the following sub-objectives:

1. To develop a better understanding of the different generations now working in the utility industry.
2. To identify differences and similarities in the way in which the different generations prefer to be led.
3. To implement strategies to increase retention and improve productivity.

The outcome of this research will be beneficial to the long-term sustainability of one of the most essential services in Jamaica, (the supply of electricity), as well as the utility industry in general. If HR practitioners can gain a better understanding of the age-diverse population, then they can help leaders understand how to best lead the different generations, by implementing strategies to enhance team collaboration, reduce turnover and increase productivity, and thereby, securing the long-term sustainability of the industry.

1.7. Structure of the thesis

The paper is structured into six chapters, and the following depicts the activities in each section. Chapter one will introduce the study and contains a background to the study and the scope of the project. This section will define the research problem, including the motivation for the study. The chapter also demonstrates the significance of the study, including the aims and the objectives of the study and how it can be used further.

Additionally, chapter one demonstrates the conceptual framework that guides the research and

further discusses the research questions that will guide the research. In this chapter, I also present some operational definitions that will appear in the research. Chapter one presents the assumptions, limitations and delimitations that shows up in the research.

Chapter two will examine the theoretical framework within which the study was carried out, by reviewing the methods, aims, processes, findings and underpinning theoretical constructs of previous research within the context of the study. The section examines the different literature on the subject and identifies the gaps and the differences and similarities of opinions with different research that has been conducted on the subjected area. The chapter starts off with an introduction to the literature review and then provides a summary of the findings from the literature.

Chapter three goes further to provide the methodological approach by analyzing the interpretative qualitative approach leading to the qualitative research design. This chapter goes on to discuss the techniques to data generation with the semi structured interviews, the focus group discussions, and the observation process. The section closes out with the five distinct phases of the thematic data analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006) that was applied to generate the main findings of the research and ends with the examination of the reliability and validity of the study.

Chapter four will demonstrate the overarching qualitative conceptual findings on how HR practitioners can help leaders in developing effective strategies for working with and leading a multi-generational workforce. The chapter also details the discussions of the results as well, and how the study adds, contributes, and contrasts the findings of other researchers.

Chapter five discusses the results of each research question and goes further to discuss the final findings for the theoretical framework, the methodology and design, and the answers

to the research questions based on the results and their analysis. Chapter six concludes with implications of the study, a further discussion on the limitations of the study, examines the practical implications, and finally the chapter concludes with suggestions for possible future studies and a closing conclusion of the study.

1.8. Conceptual Framework

A Conceptual framework is central to an empirical study and serves as a guide to research (Sage Publications, 2023). “The framework acts as an integrating ecosystem that helps researchers cohesively bring all the aspects of the study by elucidating their connections, identifying the disjunctions that exist, where overlaps exist, the tensions and the contexts shaping research setting and the study of phenomena in that setting (Sage Publications, 2023, p. 32).” A conceptual framework makes the case for the significance and relevance of the study and also how the study design which includes data collection, and methods of analysis rigorously and appropriately answers the research question.

“The conceptual framework for this study composed of Mannheim, 1952 generational theory. In his seminal work, Mannheim presents a multi-factorial view of generations, with stratification based on birthdate and societal roles (Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017, p. 105).” A generation, according to Mannheim, is firstly a biological group, defined by place in time, birth and death dates. “Their individual and collective consciousness and experiences as a generation are impacted by societal events (Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017, p. 105).” “Mannheim’s theory also postulates a method of cultural transmission and change, and this change occurs when groups of varying social groups come into contact with one another, such as the mixing of different age groups (Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017, p. 106).”

Imperative for leaders is the understanding of the reasons for particular behaviours and recognizing areas of potential conflicts within the workplace. It is important that leaders think through their particular workplace needs, especially with a multi-generational workforce. Critical areas for attention are how leaders assess the workplace in paying attention to employee age, personal priorities, and professions, since these factors can have a huge impact on workplace values (Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017). “Mannheim has introduced sociological and psychological constructs that may be useful in understanding these differences in the workplace and identifying differentiation of various interpersonal factors related to generational placement can again be useful for predicting workforce stability, improving cross-generational communication and educating future employers and employees (Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017, p. 106).”

Perceptions of generational characteristics are universal and very common in popular discourse, and while these perceptions may merely be stereotypes, this can still sometimes result in shared and mutual resentment and damaged communication between the different generations. It is therefore imperative that leaders take a keen interest and have a good understanding of the many different beliefs, value systems, and general attitude towards work from the different generations existing in the workplace, and Mannheim’s generational theory can help in this accord and create understanding.

1.9. Operational Definitions

Age-diversity: According to Kunze et al. (2014), age diversity is used to describe the make-up of an organization or the make-up of work groups within an organization and is defined as the variations in the age distribution among the workforces.

Constructivism: understanding the meaning of human experience and how people learn out of a theoretical foundation (Given, 2008).

Generational cohort: Generation cohorts are groups of individuals who were born during the same time period and who experienced similar events during their formative years (Lyon et al., 2006).

Developing countries: The World Trade Organization (WTO) lists Jamaica as a member and categorizes the island nation as a developing country (World Trade Organization, n.d.). The World Bank has for many years referred to low- and middle-income countries as ‘developing countries’ (Khokhar & Serajuddin, 2015).

Epistemology: “The branch of philosophy that addresses questions involving our ideal aims and achievements, which include knowledge, justification, explanation, understanding and wisdom” (Buckland & Chinn, 2015, p. 398)

Generational Leadership: A network within an organization where an awareness exists regarding generational differences and the respective roles, contributions and responsibilities of intergenerational leaders are clearly defined and mutually respected (Edhill-Walden et al. 2023)

Generational cohesion: defined as a complex social activity where people from different generations collaborate to achieve shared goals (Nelsey & Brownie, 2012)

Data triangulation: “refers to using multiple data sources to produce a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon being studied” (Sargeant, 2012, p. 2).

Host Country: a host country is when companies host other people outside of their country, in other words, those who do not come from said foreign country (CliffsNotes, 2023)

Large company: According to Eurostat (2016), the most common way to in a statistical context is the number of persons employed by the organization. A large enterprise employees more than 250 employees.

Personality: “Personality is defined as an individual’s preferred or typical way of behaving, thinking, and feeling” (Wong et al. 2008, p. 880).

Raw data: “Raw data refers to observations or comments as they are captured on the note-taking forms or recording media” (Kanther et al. 2005, p. 6).

Summary data: “refers to the usability of the researcher’s interpretations of what the raw data means; for example, statements about behaviour or emerging patterns” (Kanther et al. 2005, p. 6).

Utility Company: a company that typically supplies something such as electricity, gas, or water to the public (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

1.10. Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In the pursuit of generating new knowledge around a subject, every doctoral thesis embarks on a journey that is guided by vigorous research and critical inquiry. While at times, you feel empowered in conducting research and amassing large amount of information that informs your study, at the same time, it can be quite humbling to realize that you are restricted by variables outside of your control when conducting scholarly research. The availability of resources to conduct research and sometimes even the researchers own reasoning processes and biases, and human failings are considered deficiencies in conducting research. It is therefore important to acknowledge the boundaries and parameters that shape the study, ensuring transparency and integrity in the research process. As I delved deeper into the

domain of generational leadership, there were several inherent complexities and uncertainties, which were important to identify and articulate. Empowerment comes from the self-awareness of recognizing these shortcomings and adjusting these shortcomings in the best way possible in order to maintain validity in your research. This section of the paper seeks to illuminate the vital components of assumptions, limitations delimitations that provide the framework for the research endeavour.

1.10.1. Assumptions

Assumptions in the study are things that are relatively out of your control but are considered to be true (Simon, 2011). In conducting this research, I assumed that participants would offer honest and unbiased answers and that my chosen approach and the data sources that were used would yield enough data that would satisfy my central research questions. For example, in carrying out my research, I am assuming that the utility industry will continue to have a multi-generational workforce and if this does not continue to be true, then this would mean the research would not continue to be valid. I was also under the assumption that my research findings would be a benefit to the employees and the leaders of the organization and to a larger extent make a positive social impact on society. My responsibility as a researcher is to notify that my study findings are based on these assumptions. Importantly though, as the author writes, it is not enough to just say you are making an assumption, but instead justify that each assumption is probably true. To assume that study participants will answer in a honest manner, it is necessary to elaborate how information will be kept confidential and that identities will be anonymized. It is also equally important that the participants recognize that

they are volunteers in the study who may withdraw from the study at any time and with no ramifications or repercussions.

1.10.2. Limitations

“Limitations are potential weaknesses in the study and are outside of the researcher’s purview and we find limitations in almost everything we do” (Simon, 2011, p. 2). For instance, if you employ a convenience sample rather than a random sample, the findings of the study may not be broadly applicable to a larger population, only suggested. “Additionally, a study conducted over a certain interval of time is a snapshot dependent on conditions occurring within that time period” (Simon, 2011, p. 2). This study had some limitations in terms of the small sample size. Six (6) top level executives and business leaders, four (4) senior and middle level HR practitioners were used in the study. Additionally, twenty (20) company employees were used to form the focus groups. Because such a small sample size was used, it was difficult to generalize my findings statistically to the broader population of business leaders. I also observed that another limitation is that I was not able to get all business leaders and senior executives to participate in the study and that the study might not reflect the experiences of all business executives and team leaders in the organization.

However, having a small sample size allowed me, as the researcher, to be able to have a more in-depth conversation and gain participants real and lived experience with the open-ended questions that were asked. I was able to gain valuable insights from this small sample size, which provided initial evidence and I was able to generate hypotheses for further

investigation. This allowed me to dedicate more time and attention, allowing for rich and detailed data collection and analysis.

1.10.3. Delimitations

“Delimitations are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study. (Simon, 2011, p. 4).” Delimitations, unlike limitations, are within the purview of the researcher. Delimiting factors include the choice of objectives, the research questions, and the population that I chose to investigate. Regarding the scope of my study, I chose to focus on ways human resource practitioners can help leaders lead a multi-generational workforce in utility companies in Jamaica, in order to increase productivity. I am aware that having multi-generational workforce creates many other challenges for organizations and that potentially low productivity is just one of the many issues that business leaders face when leading a multigenerational workforce. In regard to my research design, I chose a qualitative study, with a small sample size that included specific business leaders from a large company in Jamaica.

In choosing to have these delimitations, I was able to have focus and clarity and ensure that the study was manageable and well defined. This prevented the study from becoming too broad and unfocused and enabled more meaningful findings. By narrowing the scope of the research, this also allowed the study to be more feasible and allowed for successful completion of the research with the allotted constraints. As a researcher, ethical considerations are always top of mind, and by delimiting the research, ethics can be maintained more easily by ensuring confidentiality and privacy of participants and still allow for pursuing valuable research objectives. Importantly also, delimitation enables researchers to make focused and

meaningful contributions to the existing body of knowledge which is one of the main objectives of carrying out the study.

Generational leadership is a multifaceted and dynamic field of study, exploring the intricacies of leadership across several generational cohorts in the workplace. As a researcher, it is important to clearly articulate the assumptions that underpin the study, the limitations that have the potential to constrain the scope of the study and the delimitations that define its boundaries. By addressing the elements above, I was able to navigate the study with transparency, which enhanced the credibility and validity of the findings in the study. It was important for me, as the researcher, as I embarked on this journey into the realm of generational leadership, that I embraced the assumptions, limitations and delimitations that shape the research, since it is within these boundaries that we can unravel the complexities of leadership across generations in order to make a meaningful contribution to the body of knowledge in this field.

2. Chapter II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction to Literature Review

According to Posner (2002), leadership is a relationship. We exist in a diverse world and with that comes a diverse workforce and with a diverse workforce comes the need for a more customized approach to working with the different people (Posner, 2002). Leaders are being called upon to embrace the differences that exist in the workplace and customize their approach to an individual's uniqueness. Whether or not a leader fails or succeeds is directly correlated to the capacity of the organization to support them (Russ, 2002). People have begun

to wonder if what was true about leadership twenty, fifteen and even seven years ago still applies and in fact, whether at all, leadership even matters (Posner, 2002). Posner (2002) contends that the research shows that the fundamentals of leadership have not changed, it is the context within which we exist that has changed, and, in some cases, the context, has changed dramatically.

Organizations have changed dramatically over the years, with the advent of the different generations and the shift from the traditional hierarchical structure to flatter organizations. The newer generations in the organization are also demanding that their voices be heard. Organizations have begun the effort of developing a more empowered workforce designed with the team in mind and changing the nature of leadership (Horner, 1997). The current context within which we operate sees four, and in some cases, five different generations in the workplace which makes for a very diverse generation. Every generation has its own expectations, habits, motivation, attitudes and behavioural patterns and human resource practitioners can help to mitigate the negative outcomes that can stem from generational differences (Windon & Henzi Plaza, 2020). Most leaders have not figured out how to deal with the many challenges of integrating the different generations in the workplace and their respective belief systems that come along with them (Myatt, 2022). (Warner & Sandberg, 2010) and (Arsenault, 2004) stressed the importance of recognizing and valuing the generational differences that exist in the workplace with employees who are from different generations as they can contribute to the organization in a positive way.

It is therefore important that HR and leaders understand the different generations as effective multi-generational cohesiveness will enable leaders to empower the people they lead and recognize the differences in the generations to display empathy and appreciate the

strengths that each brings to the table, rather than pointing fingers (McCrinkle, 2021). Merely observing and describing the different generations is insufficient, but it is also important to develop theories that can identify the unique character of each generation that points to the real differences between them (Saba, 2013).

Leadership studies have spanned cultures, decades, theoretical beliefs, and have evolved from theories like Great Man Theory, where the thought was leaders were born and not made and they possessed certain innate characteristics and had a certain look (Horner, 1997). Other theories evolved, where behaviours were observed to determine what successful leaders did and not how they looked and furthered the idea that leadership effectiveness was not necessarily innate but could be taught (Horner, 1997). Theories went even further to explore the idea of contingency theory where the situation determined how a leader behaved and it was assumed that the effects of one variable on leadership are contingent on other variables (Horner, 1997). There have been several studies conducted on leadership and many definitions given to the field of leadership. US Supreme Court Justice, Potter Stewart expounded that although leadership might be difficult to define, “we know it when we see it” (Daft, 2023). The judge went on to state that leadership was very distinct in people like Abraham Lincoln, however, nowadays, many are having a hard time in recognizing leadership in our current leaders. Despite the difficulty in defining leadership, Daft (2023), offers that leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers whose intention is for real outcomes and changes that reflect a shared purpose.

The study of leadership continues in earnest and is, today, still of great interest. In recent times, we have seen theories of transactional leadership and transformational leadership emerge where transactional originates from the traditional view of employees and

organizations and involves a position of power versus transformational leadership where leaders pursue ways to help motivate employees by satisfying higher order needs and engaging employees in the work processes (Horner, 1997). Regardless of the many different theories of leadership and the different styles of leadership that exist in the workplace, the one thing that has remained constant is the ever-changing workplace dynamics through diversity, culture, and age differences with the four different generations represented in the workplace.

Never has there been such a wide gap in age groups working side by side and this new paradigm presents a real challenge to leaders (Warner & Sandberg, 2010). The general issue that exists is, with all the research that has been conducted, the environment within which we currently operate in is ever changing and will continue to change, which beckons leaders to remain agile and constantly flexible towards the changes occurring in the organization.

Leaders are at a crossroad with how to effectively lead the different generations that are present in the workplace, and the role of human resources becomes more crucial in leading the way in equipping leaders to deal with these changing dynamics. The different generations being represented in the workplace becomes even more complex with the diversity being represented and the traditional way of leadership might have become null and void in this present context. Because of the significant changes taking place in the workplace, the nature of work and the structures that exist in the workplace, it becomes increasingly critical to re-evaluate the idea of leadership in this present context, since different skills and behaviours are needed (Horner, 1997).

This literature review will seek to examine the existing literature that has been presented on generational leadership, explore the different literature to see where synergies exist amongst the research, where there are agreements and disagreements and find where

potential gaps exist. The literature review also provides a comprehensive overview of the literature on the topic having a multi-generational workforce. Additionally, the literature review also plays an important role in addressing the central research question and explore strategies that human resource practitioners can implement in the workplace to assist leaders in leading an age-diverse workplace, with the aim of improving team collaboration and productivity. The sources used by me in this review of professional and academic literature consisted of peer-reviewed journals, book, and government websites. The majority of my sources came mostly from access to Royal Roads University Library database and the Swiss School of Business and Management access to sources such as Research Gate, Sage Journals, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, among others. By searching these respective databases, I was able to find a broad range of academic peer-reviewed sources that had been published within a timeframe of 15 years. There were a few articles that went back further than twenty years, but which I thought were still relevant in today's context, and provided useful and important information that was a positive contribution to the study. Specific search terms that were used to conduct the search included: multi-generational workforce, ageism, team collaboration, leading in an age-diverse world, engagement, job satisfaction, productivity, employee performance, baby boomers, millennials, generation z, generation x, workplace conflict, workplace culture, workplace diversity, silent generation, generational cohort, old vs young in the workplace, and workforce aging. By using these search words in different search engines, I was able to find a broad range of academic peer-reviewed sources that were useful to the study.

This review of professional and academic literature includes three subsections. The review begins with a discussion on the different leadership paradigms and gives an account of

the history of leadership and its importance to organization success. The next subsection on generational cohorts goes into detailed description of the different generations represented in the workplace and gives an account of the differences and similarities in the different generations. This section also examines certain traits and motivations that characterize the different generations. The literature review concludes with some of the challenges that are present in the utility industry having to lead a multigenerational workforce.

The intention of this literature review was to identify where additional exploration about generational leadership is warranted, contribute to existing research, and further expand the research into new ideas and content. Further, the literature review seeks to contribute to the field of leadership in the utility industry in Jamaica and assist human resource practitioners in their pursuit to develop leaders to effectively lead the different generations in the organization.

2.2. Background

To further expand on what the literature review seeks to achieve, it will be meaningful to define the different generations that are now represented in the workplace and present the characteristics that distinguish each of these different generations. There are currently five generations that make up the society and play an active role in the workforce; the Silent generation or Traditionalist, born just before 1945, Baby Boomers, born between 1946 – 1964, Generation X, born between 1965 – 1976, Millennials, who are born approximately between 1977 – 1995, and Gen Z who are born between 1996 – 2015 (Villa, 2021). The oldest generation represented in the workplace would be folks that are in their seventies with the

youngest employees being approximately eighteen years of age. It then means that there are three generations separating the oldest and the youngest generation.

The Silent Generation or The Builders as they have also been called, 'built so much of what society looks like today and have displayed resilience having seen some very tough times, starting life after a depression and hearing stories about World War I and living through World War II (McCrindle, 2021). According to four of these folks that I recently spoke with, they are considered to have strong values and believe in working hard for what they have. The Baby Boomers generation saw a rise in the economy and grew up in a time when the fertility rate for women was 3.5 babies per woman (McCrindle, 2021). The Boomers participated heavily in political protests, saw the rise in feminism and had some amount of desire for equality. They were also considered to be the social justice warriors of their time and brought about massive social changes and often described as the lending hand to the next generation (McCrindle, 2021).

Generation X were the first to start pushing back on authority figures and benefited from being born in a time of economic prosperity and therefore have experienced the opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures (Dimock, 2019).

Millennials are considered to be the most racially and ethnically diverse adult generation, with Gen Z considered to be even more diverse (Dimock, 2019). Millennials also entered the workforce at the height of an economic recession and research has shown that millennials' life choices and ways of being have been shaped by the recession (Dimock, 2019). Gen Z were born in a time of the Covid-19 pandemic and would have seen the devastating effects of a negative economy and have learnt how to be adaptable (Dimock, 2019). They are very conscious of what they want to achieve in their lives, pride themselves

on high volunteerism, focus heavily on values, fulfilment of their dreams and making a difference in what they do (Dimock, 2019). This all makes for an interesting and challenging workforce replete with many differences and opportunities for human resource practitioners to enhance the capacity for leaders to lead this workforce.

2.3. Literature Review

2.3.1. Leadership: The Past, The Present, and The Future

Organizations have made dramatic changes to their style of leadership over the years, and according to Horner (1997), given the current development in organizations, a call for change is presented in the context of teams and team leadership. The author further posits that because of the massive changes taking place in the workforce, the nature of work, the structure of most organizations, it becomes necessary to re-evaluate the concept of leadership, as what made leaders successful 15 – 20 years ago may not be relevant in today's context (Horner, 1997). Saba (2013), however states that employees from different generations have always worked together and wonders why this is a rising challenge for human resource management. Saba, however, states that the first challenge is that different generations are said to have different values and expectations when it comes to work, and these are not always compatible (Saba, 2013). Secondly, employees from different generations are staying in jobs for a longer period of time than they did in the past (Saba, 2013). The two authors differ in terms of how they view the challenges that exist in the workplace. Saba (2013) also goes on to state that the difficulties are extenuated by management practices of the companies themselves and that employees can no longer secure the funds needed to retire successfully. The author argues and still believes that generational differences are a myth.

Horner (1997) however, examined the different research conducted on leadership and the history of leadership, from Great Man theory, trait theory, situational and contingency theories, and explored the Michigan and Ohio studies of initiation and consideration. The author went on to explore further research that examined the leader-member exchange which is where generational leadership, and what I am most interested in, becomes integral and forms the basis for this research. The research examines the relationship between the leader and the follower and how the leader goes about making decisions to be most effective. The very different views and work on leadership suggests that there are many appropriate ways to lead or the different styles in which to lead (Horner, 1997). The context in which we work today presents generational leadership with the opportunity to explore different styles to effectively lead the different generations in the workplace.

The author further states, and I agree that little research has been conducted on team leadership, in part due to the intrinsic nature and qualities of successful team leadership and that leaders are now required to think and act differently. The author also reiterates that rather than depending on textbook solutions, leaders should rely on personal values and innovation to guide their actions. This is where there is a potential disagreement with the author, as there might be space for a combination of both and might still be useful, and that if the personal value of the leader is not in congruence with the personal values of the people they lead, then there will be misalignment. Horner also examined the importance of followers in the leadership journey through the path goal theory that suggests that leaders are responsible for helping followers develop behaviours that will enable them to reach their goals or desired outcomes. Further examination will seek to explore whether this is still relevant in today's context.

Horner (1997) also examines the importance of culture and defines culture management as the ability of leaders to know and understand what the organization culture is and modifying that culture to meet the needs of the organization as it progresses. Would that still be relevant in today's context, where several different cultures exist in the organization with the advent of diversity? Would it be useful to examine a new paradigm shift where the different generations represented in the workplace form a part of shaping the culture, rather than this being a leader initiative? The work of Gardner 1998, as examined by Horner, explores the idea that the role of leadership extends beyond one person, and that it is multiple groups of people that achieve the desired goals. The author does admit that the idea of culture management is difficult for the leader since the specificity of culture is difficult to define given the different cultural factors in the organization.

The article concludes, and again, we agree, that different skills and behaviours are needed in today's context as organizations and individuals change, so do training processes and the role of HR needs to evolve in today's context. The article identified various perspectives and theories on leadership, however, failed to adequately distinguish which, if any, would be most appropriate in leading in past, present and future. The author played it 'safe' in only discussing the various ways to lead and how leadership has emerged and changed over the years, without fully committing to any real solution to the dichotomy within which leaders find themselves in today's context.

2.3.2. Leadership Style and Organizational Success

Organizational success can be affected by many factors, however, one factor that is essential to any organization achieving success, is effective leadership (Salahuddin, 2010).

The author asserts that research has shown that there are differences in leadership style among generations. Salahuddin states that in the past, many organizational challenges were resolved by focusing on issues of gender and ethnic differences, but little has been done to tackle the issue of generational differences. The author goes on to examine transformational leadership and the ability of leaders to influence and inspire their followers by painting the vision, goals, and actions. Additionally, Salahuddin identified participative leadership as leaders who focused more on consensus from the organization to meet organizational goals. The author asserts that there are both positive and conflicting outcomes to a participative style leadership.

Is a particular leadership style suited or preferred by the different generations? The author posits that it is important that we look at the characteristics and behaviours of generations that may influence leadership style. Salahuddin asks the question as to whether the failure to look at generational differences has been a function of the erroneous belief that people change their values, attitudes, and preferences as a function of age? The author stated that research has concluded that it is vital that leaders understand the impact that generational differences have on the organization to create an environment of harmony, mutual respect, and joint effort that may lead to the success of the organization. However, Arsenault (2004) asserts that not enough research has been done on generational leadership for any meaningful conclusion to be had on how to address which characteristics correlates with which preferred leadership style. The research concluded that generational differences are a real issue that organizations must address to develop effective leaders.

2.3.3. Understanding Generational Differences to inform Leadership

It is important that we understand the different generations that are in the workplace, and recognize that from a sociological perspective, people who belong to the same generation are those, who in their formative years, were marked by the same historical events and cultural phenomena (Saba, 2013). The author puts forward that these historical, social, and cultural effects, when experienced in a shared context, can influence the way people develop the attitudes, values, and personality traits of those who experience them. Saba (2013) identifies that amongst the four generations represented in the workplace: the Silent generation, the Baby Boomers, Gen X, and the Millennials, the only event of great significance for human resource practitioners in North America would be both World Wars. The author recognizes that the economic recession has had a profound effect on the labour market and employment relations and may have led to an emergence in new values among the younger generations.

The author also begs to question whether we should be concerned about the co-existence of the different generations in the workplace? Important to note, in recent times, 61% of employees who have retired from the workplace, returned to work one year after retirement, compared to 47% returning to work hours later in prior years (Saba, 2013). Organizations have been making a deliberate effort in retaining older talent, being conscious of population decline and the risk of losing institutional knowledge and crucial skills (Saba, 2013). The literature on what is causing the conundrum on generational differences is abundant, but contradictory, and the descriptions of differences in values, needs and attitudes seem to be entangled and based on opinions and speculative findings (Saba, 2013).

Saba (2013) contends that despite the popularity of generational differences, and the strong convictions, researchers who have used theoretical frameworks to explain the basis for

the existence of generational differences, have had difficulty identifying any marked differences. The few differences that were found have been of low magnitude, have not necessarily distinguished any particular generation, and have sometimes been contradictory (Saba, 2013). This reinforces the need for further research on generational leadership. Some of the differences that were revealed in the research are: younger workers tend to show higher expectations regarding working conditions, employability, and work-life balance than with those of the older generations (Saba, 2013). Expectations for job stability, autonomy and recognition are however the same in the generations, according to the study (Saba, 2013). The older generations seem to be slightly more satisfied with their jobs than the younger generations and tend to be less likely to leave their jobs than the younger generations (Saba, 2013).

Saba (2013) asserts that research has shown that as far as organizational commitment is concerned, there is no real difference between the older workers and the younger workers. The author however confesses that studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between age and organizational commitment. Saba goes on to state that research has shown that, overall, workers in all generations have fairly the same work values and contends that the so-called 'clash of generations' predicted in the speculative literature is therefore unfounded. Saba concludes by positing that; by focusing on individualizing the employment relationship by human resource management for several years now, we have underscored the importance of understanding the differences between individuals. The author further states that segmenting the population of workers into age groups has proven to be a risky practice, and that the idea of treating the different age groups differently is disturbing and that there is no basis for varying leadership in accordance with this conviction.

2.3.4. Generational differences and similarities

Menci and Lester (2014), contends that today's multigenerational workforce presents both opportunities and challenges to today's leaders and agree with Saba (2013) that there are four generational cohorts that are now working simultaneously in the workplace. Menci and Lester, however, point out that three of the four generations; Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials have had the opportunity to work with each other for a decade or more. This is important to note, as we will explore how these relationships differ (if they do) when it comes to generations that have not worked with each other for that amount of time. Menci and Lester seem to disagree with Saba who contends that human resource management has concentrated too heavily on individualizing the employment relationship, rather than focusing on the individuals themselves. Menci and Lester (2014), instead put forward that the diversity of the different generations' present real complexities for human resource management to meet individual needs if the generations that exist in the workplace desire different things.

There is a general consensus that there has not been enough research done in the area of generational differences amongst authors on various literature. Over the last ten years, there has been much speculation and some amount of empirical research on generational differences, however, there is still a lot to be learnt on the subject (Menci & Lester, 2014). Menci and Lester and Saba disagree that individuals who grew up in the same period are shaped by social and historic events and contexts in a way that differentiates them from other generations. Menci and Lester contend that academic evidence is mixed and with much research showing that the generations are more alike than different. This is contrary to what Menci and Lester have asserted, that not enough research has been conducted, which therefore

concludes that without further research, a conclusion cannot be made, and this is all conjecture.

Generation X, and more so Generation Y grew up in a time with greater diversity with a rate of 78% being more comfortable with diversity, compared to Baby Boomers at a considerably lower comfort level of 27% of respondents being comfortable with diversity (Menci & Lester, 2014). It can therefore be deduced from this finding that Generation Y will place a greater importance on a diverse workplace, and Baby Boomers placing the least importance on diversity. Because of their need for instant gratification, Generation Y is sometimes referred to as the 'me generation' and also growing up in a time where everyone received a prize, requiring immediate feedback, having grown up in a technological era where access to information is instant (Menci & Lester, 2014). In contrast to the younger generations, Baby Boomers do not generally share the same desire for instant or constant feedback. How then do human resource managers prepare leaders to handle these idiosyncrasies for each of the different generations?

The younger generations have an increased focus on achieving work-life balance and want to maintain schedules that fall outside of the traditional 9-5 arrangement, and although Baby Boomers place a strong emphasis on work ethics and placing priority on work, they share a similar need for work-life balance as they face nonwork demands such as elder care responsibilities (Menci & Lester, 2014). Regardless of the generations, there is a strong need for employees to have colleagues who they get along with and who will support them, and although research has shown a significant perceived difference in the value each generation placed on teamwork, there are no actual differences identified (Menci & Lester, 2014).

“According to Menci and Lester (2014, p. 259), the only differences found in the research

included career advancement opportunities, diversity climate, and the need for immediate recognition and feedback.”

2.3.5. Generational Cohorts

Who are they and what are the implications for management? (Lyon et al. 2006).

“Members of a generation are linked together through shared life experiences which creates a bond tying members together in what has been termed ‘cohorts’ (Lyon et al. 2006, p. 89).”

“Mannheim (1952) however, posited that belonging to the same generational unit, generational location, and generational actuality shapes the beliefs, values, and attitudes of members of a generational cohort” (Lasten 2016, p. 21). The concept framework for this study was grounded in generational theory. “Mannheim (1952) argued that although generational cohorts do not hold observable, structural, and organizational character, such as concept of family, belonging to a generational cohort shapes an individual’s beliefs, values, and attitudes.” Mannheim (1952) also stressed and agrees with Lyon et al. (2006), that birth year, in and of itself alone was not enough to place a person in a specific generation, and that rather, the person needed to experience and participate in the defining events of the generation.

Spitzer (1973) argues that the term generation refers to familial succession and has traditionally been viewed as the time period it takes for children to be ready to take the place of their parents (Lyon et al. 2006). Determining the length of a generational cohort is more problematic than determining the length of a familial generation, according to the authors.

Figure two presents a graphical demonstration of generational cohorts.

Both Mannheim (1952) and Ryder (1965) dismissed the idea that generations materialize at regularly spaced intervals, noting that the rhythm of generations depends on the

timing of historical, social, and cultural events that affect people's experiences (National Academies of Sciences, 2020). Strauss and How (1991), however define a generation as the totality of people born in the same period of 20 years (in one phase of life), while the most famous Russian researchers of generations Shamis and Nikonov (2017) note posit that a generation is a group of people with the same values, born during a certain period, having experienced the same external even sin childhood and having received similar upbringing (Karashchuk et al. 2020).

Lyon et al. (2006) argue that people who were born in the same period of time and who share events that are during their formative years are able to create cohesiveness in values, attitudes, and beliefs. The authors further posit that because of these life experiences that create this togetherness, in social characters distinct to each generational cohort, organizations are increasingly required to address these needs by adapting organizational structures and implementing new strategies that acknowledge the distinct values, attitudes, and beliefs of different generational cohorts. Enhancing our understanding of generational differences will equip organizations with the necessary skills to understand the different cohorts and minimize areas of conflicts and mismatching of expectations (Lyon et al. 2006). Importantly, learning to value generational cohort diversity will go a far way in helping organizations create a more productive and motivated workforce.

“Mannheim combined the positivist view and the romantic-historical view to develop his generational theory” (Lasten, 2016, p. 21). “He asserts that when viewed from a positivistic lens, generation is a pure measurable and quantitative concept. To expand on this further, Mannheim, 1952 explains that when taken from a positivistic perspective, two individuals born in the same year belong to the same generation.” “When viewed from the

romantic-historical lens, this uses a more qualitative approach and when combined with the positivistic view, it provides a more comprehensive lens to the generational phenomenon” (Lasten 2016, p. 21).

We are operating with a more diverse workforce than ever before, that consist of a broader mix of workers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Lyon et al. 2006). Rogers (1982) also suggests that the age distribution of workers within organizations is also increasing as people live longer and work to an older age (Lyon et al. 2006). According to Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields (2002), a fundamental redefinition of the nature of work has also occurred, along with the way it is structured and the social context in which it is performed.

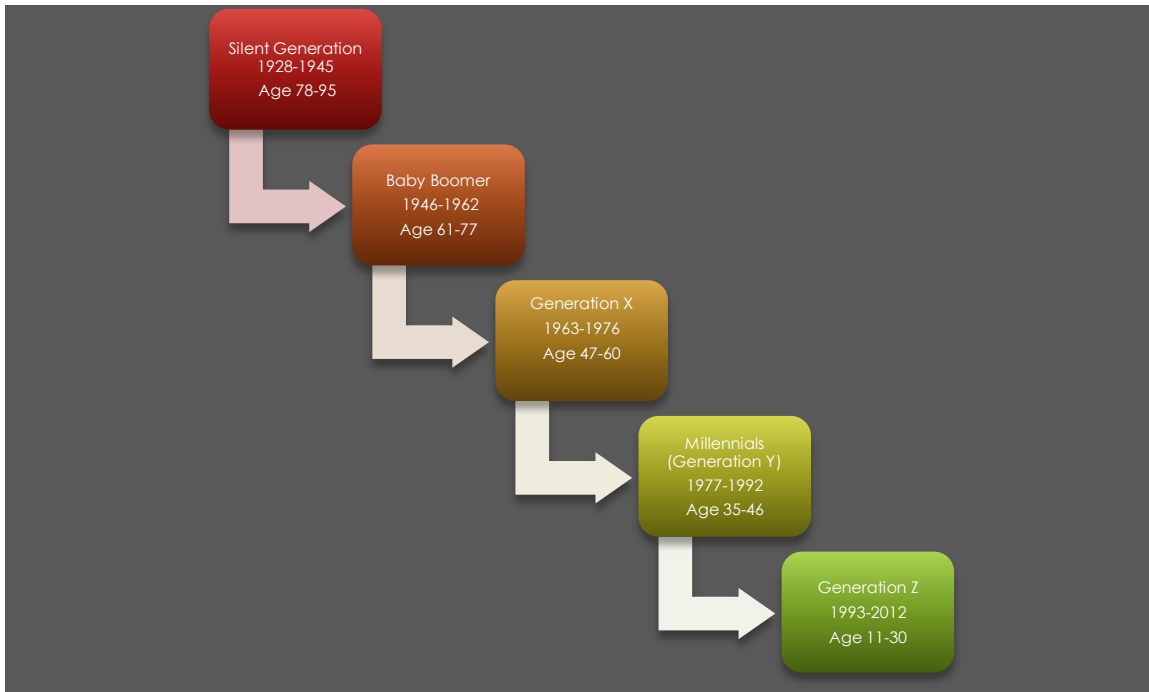


Figure 2 Generational Cohorts
Retrieved from: (Hoonpongsimanont et al., 2018)

The Silent Generation 1928-1945

The Silent Generation consists of individuals born during World War II and the Great Depression and reached adulthood in the comparatively prosperous 1950s and 1960s (Hoonpongsimanont et al. 2018). The consequence of having survived significant event of the Great Depression and World War II, significant has made this generation pragmatic, patient, and conservative in their views (Lissita et al. 2022). The literature generally tends to render this generation as a homogenous group of technology-resistant, non-internet users (Lissita et al. 2022). The authors contend that in keeping with the old adage of how old dogs fare with new tricks, the perception is that this older generation trying to use and understand new technologies face many more difficulties and barriers than their younger counterparts. According to the socio-emotional selectivity theory, the feeling that the clock is running down becomes stronger as people get older and as such, with less time available overall, they see time spent on learning new technology as a waste of time and thus, becomes less desirable and would rather spend this quality time with partners who provide validation and love (Lissita et al. 2022).

This generation generally, is perceived as tending to work hard, not voice their opinions, and generally conforms to societal expectations. This generation would be around 78 years of age and represent the oldest set of employees in the workplace. They are perceived to have a fear of being ridiculed for not being able to grasp something new, and therefore learning new skills like technology may become very stressful for this generation (Lissita et al. 2022). The weakness in the study conducted by Lissita et al., (2022) is the small number of respondents from the Silent Generation and it would be useful to have a larger sample size from the Silent Generation that could produce a more well-founded conclusion or their research.

Baby Boomers 1946 -1962

Members of the Baby Boomer cohort are predominantly in senior positions in most well-established organizations, and they have been the primary prevailing influence for the last decade (Jorgensen, 2003). Baby Boomers have been the employees who have worked with their organizations but are said to be having second thoughts about this, as they re-evaluate their positions, in the expectation of large-scale retrenchments, stock market fluctuations and an ever-changing environment that is operating at an accelerating pace (Jorgensen, 2003). The Baby Boomers generation is characterized by; having a high sense of value for teamwork, group discussions and view work from a process-oriented perspective (Jorgensen, 2003). The author also puts forward that the baby boomer generation also believe that achievement comes after ‘paying your dues’ and have a high sense of value for company commitment and sincere loyalty for the organization. According to Jorgensen (2003), this generation believe in sacrifice in order to achieve success and seek long-term employment. They are also involved in elder care and have older children at home.

“Delli Carpini (2014) states that members of the Baby Boomer generation grew up in a period of significant economic growth and a shared social, cultural, and political turmoil” (Lasten, 2016, p. 26). They were born in an era of unprecedented birth rates, and this makes them the largest generational cohort. While some are already retired from the working environment, we still have a large number of Boomers in the workplace. Lasten (2016, p. 26), “asserts that baby boomers often work long hours at the expense of family time to ensure that they have long-term job stability.” The author in their research also states that this generation are very goal oriented and are willing to go the extra mile and enjoy competition. This generation is also said to not be keen on working in teams and are also not comfortable with

technology. This generation also places a high emphasis on giving respect to, and valuing hierarchy structures and ranks, which often results in the baby boomer generation striving and holding positions of high authority. Communication is also very important to the baby boomer generation, and they require constant feedback to validate their views and opinions. “Kasabov and Hain, 2014, argued that because the baby boomer strives to always be in control, they possess a demanding style of communicating with the workforce and the efficiency of a communication method is more important than the communication method itself“ (Lasten, 2016, p. 27). Baby Boomers prefer face-to-face communication rather than impersonal communication an in contrast to other generational cohorts, prefer traditional communication tools instead of social networks (Lasten, 2016).

Generation X (GenX or GenXers) 1963-1976

Generation X is considered as the generation that followed the Baby Boomers Generation. The Generation X cohort is considered to be smaller in contrast to Baby Boomers, in terms of numbers and are children of Baby Boomers and often grew up in broken families or with absent parents (Lasten, 2016). Gen X cohort, in contrast focus more on family values and parenting and they grew up in a period of major economic recessions and unemployment (Lasten, 2016).

“GenXers are characterized by having a high sense of independence and value autonomy, they work best on open communication and view work from an action-orientation perspective” (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 42). They are also considered to be the ‘whys’ generation, always seeking out the ‘why’ in issues and do not believe in ‘paying dues.’ They are always seeking to acquire new skills and expertise and do not have long-term loyalty to a company but are loyal to individuals instead (Lasten, 2016). The author states that this generation are

big believers in balancing work and life having work-life balance and look for shared crusade and are reluctant to take on leadership roles.

“Generation X cohort regard personal values and goals as more important than goals related to work and are more likely than any other generation to leave for a more challenging job, a higher salary and/or improved benefits, such as flexible work schedules (Jorgensen, 2003, p. 42).” Tenure for the Generation X cohort first time jobs in the USA is thought to be just one year and it is said that by the age of 32, members of this generation in the USA would have held on to average nine jobs (Jorgensen, 2003).

Another big characteristic of the Generation X cohort is that financial compensation is highly important since they have mortgages to pay and a family to take care of (Lasten, 2016). Lasten (2016) agrees with Jorgensen (2003) with the fact that this generation are not loyal to any one organization because they grew up in a time where commitment to work was not a guarantee job security. They also expect that they will receive opportunities to develop their skills and receive promotions. There are some stereotypical characteristics of GenXers related to work that believes that the cohort stand up for what they believe in, and they dislike being micromanaged (Lasten, 2016). Again, both Lasten and Jorgensen agree that GenXers put the quality of life and their preferences before work. Having been born in an era of significant technological developments, GenXers seem to have a preference for alternative forms of communication, rather than face to face communication. GenXers dislike small talk and prefer short, to the point discussions during meetings and they are also more inclined to use social networking tools as the main communication method.

Generation Y (GenY or Millennials) 1977-1988

Millennials are no longer the most recent cohort in the workforce today. This generation is also commonly known as the Net generation and is said to have unique generational characteristics. Millennials are said to be very tech and media savvy and are the first generation to be highly exposed to technology in its various forms. They are said to have strong work ethics, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a strong sense of responsibility (Jorgensen, 2003). They are also characterized as having a strong ability to be change adaptive and is also believed to be paving the way to a more open and tolerant society (Jorgensen, 2003).

This generation cohort also appreciates collaboration, networking, and values interdependence in working towards goals and objectives. Jorgensen (2003), also states that millennials are optimistic about the future, has high self-confidence and places emphasis on skills development and thrives on mentoring and coaching. They are also said to be well educated. Generation Y cohort grew up using computers and are also adept with e-learning. They place a high value on being trained, enjoy the challenge of new opportunities, and they are also highly interested in work-life balance. According to Wong et al. (2008), this generation are less inclined to prioritize job security as a significant factor in organizations. Wong et al. (2008) disagree with Jorgensen, (2003) in that they think that the millennial cohort are less optimistic about the future. They however agree that the generation prefers a collaborative effort, and Wong et al. (2008) posits that the generation is also highly socialized. “Additionally, according to McCrindle and Hooper, 2006, the millennial generation are seen to have a high regard for having responsibility and having an input to decisions and actions (Wong et al. 2008, p. 880).”

Generation Z, Gen Z 1995 – 2010

Generation Z is the newest generation to enter the workplace and are considered the most technologically adept generation (Mahapatra et al. 2022). They are highly connected to social media and are now being considered as being highly critical to the effective functioning of organizations and being part of this emerging phenomenon (Mahapatra et al. 2022). Understandably, existing literature on Generation Z in the workplace is limited, as they have been in the working space for a limited time. There has however been an increase in literature being added to the studies, shedding some light on this generation's work values and their attitudes towards hierarchy, expression, diversity, technology, orientation, and communication (Mahapatra et al. 2022).

According to Mahapatra et al. (2022), Generation Z place a high value on diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Schroth, 2019, found that 91% of Gen Z believed in equality within the workplace and according to a report by McKinsey & Company, Gen Z is characterized differentially by an urge to seek the truth (Mahapatra et al. 2022). Francis and Hoefel, 2018 posit that Gen Z's behaviour is about expressing individual truths, connecting through different truths, understanding different truths, and unveiling the truths behind all things (Mahapatra et al. 2022). The authors also out forward that this generation is more open than other generations to accepting and understanding diverse perspectives and there is a greater freedom in expressing ideologies, which is reflected in the strongly supported expression of gender fluidity. They network heavily through online (development) should be employed for this generation. The research indicates that business leaders are likely to encounter a continuously high turnover of Gen Z unless some innovative talent management strategies are implemented within the organization with the support of HR. Overall, according

to Mahapatra et al. (2022), strategic HR and talent management have to be significantly different, innovative, and exploratory.

It is important to establish that a review of the existing literature on the different generational cohort on the workplace, and even though previous research has explored the variations in work values among different generations, research findings examining generational differences in personality and motivational drivers in the workplace have been limited. “According to Jorgensen (2003, p. 42), the mix of the various generations represented in the workplace and the different likes and dislikes of each generation, have the potential to interrupt planning strategies for the workforce, eat up resources and contribute to the erosion of generational solidarity.” If generational differences are the new reality, then it is imperative that leaders develop an understanding of the mind-set of each of the generations in the workplace in order to develop effective leadership strategies for generational diversities.

Demographic Challenges and Opportunities

The average workforce age is increasing, mostly because of the shortage of labour, and this presents both challenges and opportunities to human resources and leaders, as companies are being pressured in becoming more flexible and effective with age-specific initiatives and leadership practices (Kunisch et al. 2011). The authors argue that the average workforce will not only rise, but the workforce will also become more age-diverse with having approximately four generations in the same organization. This again can have both positive and negative ramifications. On a positive note, people of different ages can have complementary skills and experiences which can increase productivity, while age-diverse organizations can suffer from certain forms of discrimination which can affect the organization negatively (Kunisch et al. 2011).

Kunisch et al (2011, p. 15) describe employees “as primary company stakeholders and to successfully manage demographic changes, organizations are required, through human resource and leadership, develop a sound understanding of how demographic developments affect their workforce.” To effectively lead age-diverse employees, leaders must learn and respond to the specific leadership preferences, work values and communication patterns, amongst the different generations (Kunisch et al. 2011). This is quite a conundrum that leaders find themselves in, having to tailor their leadership style to the different nuances of the different generations. The authors assert that if leaders can meet their subordinates age-specific leadership expectations, this can result in building positive relationships with them.

The authors also contend, with which I agree, that organizations should, when designing HR systems, implement institutional innovative human resource practices within the specific sector that they exist in. Conversely, the authors examine the differing works of Billhuber Galli, 2011, and criticizes unidimensional age-based initiatives, asserting that age alone does not determine productivity or lack thereof. In her view, individuals within a single age group may have few commonalities. “Instead, she recommends that organizations adopt a comprehensive organizational learning strategy that equally engages all age groups (Kunisch et al. 2011, p. 15).” “The article continues by asserting that by incorporating generation-specific leadership activities and non-discriminatory HR management practices, companies can retain employees from the different generations as motivated and productive workers (Kunisch et al. 2011, p. 16).”

2.3.6. Generational Traits and Motivations

Understanding the motivations and traits that characterize the different generations is key to shaping the human resources strategy of an organization.

Murray (2011) acknowledges the fact that generational descriptors are commonly broad statements that do not always apply to every individual. However, the author also points out that while there are different perspectives on the parameters defining a generation, the one element that many studies into generational differences hold in common is the notion that social events that impacted a society's outlook have influenced generational attitudes and perspectives. For example, the Veterans or Silent Generation lived through World War II and the Great Depression. These events shaped their behaviour to sacrifice for the greater good. Members of this generation exhibit loyalty to their employers and are used to 'top-down' decision making (Murray, 2011).

Baby Boomers were born after World War II. The great number of Baby Boomers made this generation more competitive. Members of this generation were involved in social reform and activism, taking part in Woodstock and the Vietnam War. In the workplace, this generation tends to be idealistic and involved (Murray, 2011). High divorce rates, the rise of AIDS, and multiple environmental disasters such as Chernobyl were the events shaping the behaviours of Gen X. According to Murray (2011), this generation is commonly accused of cynicism, scepticism, and lack of loyalty.

Murray refers to the attacks of 9/11 and shootings in schools as crucial social events impacting the behaviours of Millennials. He also reminds us that members of this generation have had access to computers for all, or most of their lives. The author mentions that this generation shares common traits with the Baby Boomers, being sometimes called 'Echo Boomers'. However, members of this cohort tend to be less competitive and more

collaborative. They also tend to be multitaskers due to their relationship with technology (Murray, 2011).

The youngest generation in the workforce is Gen Z. This generation has grown up in a world shaped by the prominent use of the Internet, smartphones, and social media (Schroth, 2019). They have witnessed multiple social justice movements and more recently a global pandemic. Gen Zs are more highly educated and ethnically diverse, therefore, it is no surprise that inclusion and equality are some of their key values (Schroth, 2019). Additionally, this generation has been found to be extremely achievement oriented. As opposed to previous generations, who worked in their teens, Gen Zs are entering adulthood with very few or no work experience. This lack of experience can lead to unrealistic expectations and frustration in the workplace (Schroth, 2019). Moreover, this cohort has the highest rate of diagnosed depression and anxiety (Schroth, 2019). As this generation enters the workforce, it is crucial to study closely its leadership traits to help them transition into leadership roles as smoothly as possible.

2.3.7. Millennial Leaders

Considering that Millennial workers are expected to dominate the global workforce by 2025 (Alcantara et al. 2020), it is worth dedicating a section to analyzing more in depth the leadership characteristics of this generation. One of the leadership challenges faced by this cohort is having to lead employees that are older than them as they can find a clash in values and work styles (Alcantara et al. 2020). This section compares three studies conducted among Millennial leaders with older reports.

Alcantara et al. (2020) conducted a participant observation study with four millennial managers from the National Food Authority in the Philippines to examine the leadership styles of Millennial leaders as they interact and manage older staff. Similarly, Haeger and Lingham (2013), conducted interviews with Millennial leaders among different industries with direct reports at least 20 years older. Finally, Murray (2011), explored the challenges faced by Millennial leaders managing older staff specifically in the library workforce. The comparison of these three studies can help us find patterns and anticipate generational conflict in the workplace.

Alcantara et al., (2020), position collaboration as one of the most important leadership attributes in Millennials. According to the authors, Millennial leaders try to be team-minded, and employee centered. This resonates with the findings from previous research conducted by Murray (2011), suggesting that Millennial leaders prefer to work and play in groups. According to Murray (2011), while a collaborative approach can inspire a more integrated team, it can also require adaptation skills from older generations who are used to hierarchical structures. Moreover, Murray (2011) points out that this need of Millennial leaders for constant collaboration can result in difficulty with decision making and refusal of personal accountability.

According to Alcantara et al. (2020), another relevant competency of Millennial leaders is the heavy adoption of technology. Technology provides millennials with the advantage to undertake reverse mentoring by teaching older generations how to apply digital knowledge in the workplace (Alcantara et al. 2020). Alcantara et al., (2020) highlight how this reverse mentoring serves as a foundation of authority towards subordinates. Murray (2011), supports the advantages of introducing new technologies to older generations. However, the

author also emphasizes the importance of having traditional ways of communication available to enhance communication among all members.

Another key leadership attribute examined in the different studies was the ability to manage conflict resolution. The study conducted by Alcantara et al. (2020) concluded that most Millennials face uncertainty and struggle to handle conflicts that involve their older subordinates. The leaders interviewed by Alcantara et al., (2020) would try to avoid the issue or immediately escalate it to their superior. This conclusion was also reached by Haeger and Lingham (2013), in the study conducted by these authors, older subordinates complained about Millennial leaders not being supportive and ignoring conflicts unless these directly affected getting the work done. This is an important skill to reinforce among emerging leaders, as the inability to manage conflict adequately can affect the whole team's morale and productivity.

The research conducted by Alcantara et al. (2020, p. 2) concludes that as Millennial leaders gain experience, there is an ongoing necessity for research to deepen our understanding of their leadership competencies and attributes and maximize the strengths of each generation. The authors suggest further exploring how a specific culture, values, and history, in this case Filipino, can shape the leadership traits. Haeger and Lingham (2013), also conclude that an ongoing focus on this group of leaders would be beneficial to allow for a longitudinal reference point that can inform human resources and top management teams. According to the authors, further research should include gender as an additional variable, analyzing younger women who lead older men and vice versa.

2.3.8. Workforce Challenges in the Utility Industry

Brown (2017), identifies several current challenges affecting the utility industry such as generational differences, technical difficulties, compliance and governance, and talent management. Considering that utility services are essential for society's daily lives, leaving these issues unattended could have catastrophic impacts. During the 1990s and 2000s, there was a big hiring reduction in the utility industry in the U.S. (Brown, 2017). This employment decline particularly affected the electric utility but also other service organizations such as natural gas, water supply, sewer, and waste. As the Baby Boomers begin to leave the industry, so too does the accumulated experience and technical expertise (Brown, 2017).

As of 2015, the trend of graduating engineers has faced a decline (Brown, 2017). As a consequence, the number of workers entering the utility industry is disproportionate to the number of people leaving. This presents a significant challenge to the utility industry manager, and human resource teams who struggle to find qualified workers to fill the gaps that the retiring Baby Boomers leave (Brown, 2017). This quick transition also requires utility industries to build an effective succession plan program and handover processes for the transferring of knowledge.

Taking the current utility industry issues into account, Brown (2017) conducted a quantitative study comparing the perception of authentic leadership, across three generations of nonsupervisory employees in public utility companies in the south-eastern part of the United States. The generations studied were Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. To better understand Brown's (2017) study, it is important to outline the concept of 'authentic leadership'. Authentic leadership is closely connected to personal growth and self-

development. Authentic leaders are defined as “confident, optimistic, and moral people who give emphasis to developing new leaders” (Brown, 2017).

The concept of authentic leadership considers four key components: self- awareness, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, and balanced processing (Brown, 2017). The first component, self- awareness, is related to the acknowledgement of our own strengths and weaknesses and the potential impact that one can have on others. Internalized moral perspective refers to the leader having well- defined values and morale to guide his or her decisions. Relational transparency involves the open sharing of information. Finally, balanced processing refers to the capability of a leader to make objective decisions (Brown, 2017).

Brown (2017), used the four components mentioned above to compare the perception of authentic leadership among Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennial employees in the utility industry. Contrary to what was expected, there was no notable differences in how the three generations perceive their leaders. For example, previous research suggests that trust is highly valued by Baby Boomers and not as much by Gen Xers or Millennials (Brown, 2017). However, according to the study conducted by Brown (2017) all generations valued this characteristic of authentic leadership to the same degree. Brown (2017), suggests that these results may be due to efforts within the utility industry to develop processes designed to build trust between leaders and employees.

These results could also be linked with the theory by Ciutiene & Railaite, (Lasten, 2016) which suggest that generational cohorts can also exist within a workforce. Similar to one’s national culture, workforce generational cohorts can share distinct traits regarding beliefs, values, attitudes, and leadership preferences associated with a particular industry.

These findings suggest that workers from different generations can share an organizational culture regardless of their generational differences.

2.3.9. Cultural and Generational Drivers

Throughout this paper, we have analyzed diverse studies exploring the concept of intergenerational leadership and how the social events that impacted a society's outlook have influenced the attitudes and perspectives of each generation. However, there are other factors, such as culture, that can influence the work attitudes and motivations of an individual. Susaeta et al. (2013) performed a study to determine what shapes work motivation values, whether it is culture, generation, or both. This is particularly relevant for this paper as it intends to advance the field of leadership within the utility industry in Jamaica. Therefore, it is interesting to explore the similarities and differences among generations in different countries.

As a preamble to their study, Susaeta et al. (2013) argue that the characteristics of different generations are not necessarily homogeneous throughout the world. Many of the main traits assigned to each generation are based on studies conducted in the USA and it can be challenging to apply them to cross-cultural studies. For example, in Europe, every country has a unique history. Generational comparability between European countries can be particularly difficult given that the political, historical, and social context of a region influences a generation's attitudes (Susaeta et al. 2013).

To further illustrate this challenge, the authors compare the diverse names given to 'Generation X' in various regions. In continental Europe, Generation X is often known as the Nineties Generation. In France, it is known as "Génération Bof", translating to "the whatever generation". In the Communist bloc, this generational group is referred as the "Glasnost-

Perestroika and Generation” as they were among the first to buy into the ideas of Glasnost and Perestroika, while in Latin America they are named the “Crisis Generation” as a reference to the financial crisis that hit the region during those years (Susaeta et al. 2013).

When studying the different names and characteristics assigned to Generation Y or Millennials around the world, Susaeta et al. (2013) found more similarities. The authors attribute these commonalities to the globalization and international mobility that has shaped this generation. As a matter of fact, Susaeta et al. (2013) reference a study conducted by Ralston et al. (1999), which concluded that the new generation of Chinese managers are more similar to western managers than the previous generation.

“During their study, Susaeta et al. (2013, p. 11) conducted a comparative analysis of Generation X and Generation Y individuals in diverse countries, with the intention of identifying the differences and similarities between them.” “A large-scale survey was conducted among participants from Latin America (Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Chile), Europe (Spain and Ireland) and North America. The authors focused on five work attitudes: life project, professional ethics, attitude towards authority, leadership, and commitment to the company.”

When comparing Ibero-American countries vs Anglo-Saxon countries in all the attitudes mentioned above, four out of the five dimensions showed significant differences. This suggests that cultural traits have a strong influence on attitudes towards work. The dimensions that had more differences and more distinctions were life project and work ethics. Contrary to workers in Anglo-Saxon countries, participants from Ibero-American countries highly value working with people and social initiatives from the company. They also like to identify with the company and feel like it is part of their family (Susaeta et al. 2013).

A multivariate analysis of variance was also performed to evaluate how belonging to the different generations, Generation X or Generation Y, impacted the attitudes towards work among cultures. The analysis showed that the consequence of belonging to each generation differed among the different cultural groups. These results suggest that Generation X and Generation Y do not maintain a homogeneous pattern of behaviour worldwide. As Saba (2013) mentioned, individuals from the same generation are those who, during their formative years, experienced the same historical events and cultural phenomena. Therefore, it is no surprise that culture has a strong relationship with generation, as one's generation is shaped by one's culture.

The findings reached by Susaeta et al. (2013) resonate with the cohort theory proposed by Mannheim (1952), which argues that researchers should take cultural, social, and historical effects into account when describing and defining boundaries to generational cohorts. Human resource teams need to adapt to the changing circumstances and consider not only generational traits but also cultural traits in their policies and strategies.

2.4.1 Intricacies of a Multi-generational Workforce

This section will discuss the challenges of leading a multi-generational workforce in the construction industry in India based on the literature review performed by (Satpathy et al. 2018). For this study, the authors discuss how the different generations interact in construction sectors, the challenges managers are facing while leading their teams, and what strategies can help tackle these challenges.

According to the U.S Bureau of Labour Statistics (2023), “the utilities sector comprises establishments engaged in the provision of the following services: electric power,

natural gas, steam supply, water supply and sewage removal” (Statistics, 2023). While the construction industry doesn’t fall into this definition, it is closely related to the utilities sector. As a matter of fact, the Canadian Industry Statistics (2023) includes a classification named “construction utility” referring to the industry engaged in the construction of distribution lines and related structures for utilities (Government of Canada, 2023). Therefore, the results of an analysis of a multi-generational workforce in the construction industry are indeed relevant for this paper.

One of the main challenges in the construction industry is the shortage of labour and the difficulties to recruit qualified workers for important positions (Satpathy et al. 2018). This makes the workforce very age diverse, which can result in an additional challenge. However, the authors state that leaders in the construction industry have to value each generational group along with their unique ideologies and qualities and take generational diversity as an opportunity to gain multiple sources of talent.

To build a sustainable workforce, it is important for the organizational leaders to study and understand the characteristics of each generation. Satpathy et al.(2018) refer to a case study conducted in the construction industry that states the importance of workers learning from one another through the wisdom of maturity, creativity, technology, and reverse mentoring. Moreover, the authors invite human resources managers to consider the different generational traits when designing motivation systems, reward, and leadership programs.

2.4.2 Managing a Multi-Generational Workforce

As discussed in the previous sections, the current labour force has become more age and generationally diverse, with as many as five different generations interacting in the

workplace. Business leaders are increasingly focusing on recognizing the implications and challenges that this multi-generational workforce entails. Failure from leaders to assess the generational differences could result in segregation of individuals and generational conflicts (Lasten, 2016).

With these challenges in mind, Lasten (2016) performed a qualitative, single case study to explore the strategies that business leaders require to enhance productivity of members of a multi-generational workforce. This study was conducted among business leaders in a large company in Curaçao. Like Jamaica, Curaçao is an island in the Caribbean, while Jamaica has British heritage and Curaçao Dutch heritage, both islands share geographical and historical similarities. Therefore, this study can be especially relevant to inform Jamaica's strategy to manage intergenerational leadership.

Having different generations interacting in the workplace can bring several challenges. Therefore, understanding the implications of, and managing an age-diverse workforce effectively are key to achieving organizational wellness. Lasten (2016), highlights some of the common issues among age-diverse work groups.

“Interpersonal conflict can arise when people with a set of values and beliefs interact with people with contrasting attitudes and values. However, by assessing these potential risks, business leaders can reduce conflicts and even use them as a vehicle to shape organizational change (Lasten, 2016, p. 14).” Another common conflict when leading diverse cohorts is communication. New technologies can require members to adapt the way they communicate. Communication can be more effective when it is planned, interactive and goal oriented.

Another potential issue highlighted in diverse studies, Lasten (2016) and Burke and Ng (2006) is skill transfer and knowledge sharing. It is recommended that leaders draft a clear

procedure to transfer knowledge and skills among the different generations. Some other authors have suggested that having a generationally diverse workforce can affect productivity. Therefore, leaders should promote an environment where all generations can feel welcome and can coexist in harmony.

The study conducted by Lasten (2016) aimed to explore the strategies that business leaders need to enhance productivity of members of a multi-generational workforce. The findings of this study can be summarized into five key recommendations. The first recommendation is to create training programs that build awareness among the organization regarding beliefs, values, attitudes, and leadership preferences of the different cohorts. Secondly, it is crucial to create an organizational culture that promotes inclusion and equal treatment for everyone.

Thirdly, the author suggests that leaders should promote efficient and effective communication among the different cohorts. An authentic leadership style in which interpersonal relationships are fostered, while encouraging feedback and active participation from the followers can be helpful to enhance the organization's communication. The fourth recommendation focuses on fostering skill transfer and knowledge sharing among the different cohorts to avoid negative effects in productivity. The final recommendation is for the leaders and Human Resources team to develop a structured organizational policy on how to manage a multi-generational workforce. The implementation of these recommendations can help business leaders to better manage a multi-generational workforce and increase productivity in the workplace.

2.4.3 Generational differences – Do they exist and what are the implications?

According to Wong et al. (2008, p. 880), leaders must be ready to lead a team of progressively pessimistic and potentially cynical employees, as each generation tends to report lower levels of optimism optimistic than the one before. In their seminal work, which is supported by Twenge (2004), the authors conclude younger individuals tend to exhibit a higher external locus of control. Therefore, when managing a younger workforce, it may be advantageous to meet their preferences for a more collaborative and supportive work environment. “Their work explores the notion that key differences exist in the work values and beliefs of employees from different generations and that failure to address these differences can lead to conflict in the workplace, resulting in decreased productivity.” They also identify that in contrast to this notion, Jorgensen (2003) questions whether the combination of Baby Boomers, Generation Xs’ and Generation Ys’ and the values, likes and dislikes which characterize these generations have the capacity to disturb common workplace strategies, consume resources and contribute to the deterioration of ‘generational cohesion’ in the workplace.

The authors reference Kupperschmidt’s (2000) definition of a generation as a distinct group sharing birth years and significant life events during key developmental stages. “Conversely, Smola and Sutton (2002) posit that the social context in which a generational group evolves influences their personality and a person’s feelings towards’ authority, their values, and their beliefs about the organization (Wong et al., 2008, p. 879).” “Kupperschmidt (2000) suggests that each generation is likely to develop distinct preferences or traits that

distinguish their feelings toward work and what they desire from work (Wong et al. 2008, p. 879).”

“According to Wong et al. (2008, p. 879), Baby Boomers are more diligent, loyal, attached to the organization, and are idealistic and driven. They also value a high degree of power in the organization.” In contrast, are the millennial generation (Generation Y) who the author describes as having a high level of confidence and enjoy collective action and want to be part of the decision-making process. They have a high change capacity and are less likely to see job security as important in the workplace. They are not as optimistic as the Baby Boomers Generation. Generation X are the generation caught between the Baby “Boomers and the Millennials and are often characterized as cynical, pessimistic, and individualistic, according to Kopperschmidt, 2000; Smola and Sutton, 2002 (Wong et al. 2008, p. 880).” Similar to the millennial generation, they too are comfortable with change and are less inclined to exhibit loyalty to any particular organization and are significantly more independent than previous generations.

“Wong et al. (2008, p. 882) identified some key differences in the personal preferences of the different generations as follows: Generation X will be more pessimistic, while Baby Boomers will be more optimistic. Generation X will be less affiliative than Baby Boomers and Generation Y and Baby Boomers and Generation Y will be more career-driven than Generation X.” “From a motivational driver perspective, Baby Boomers are more likely to be more strongly motivated by job security than Generation X and Generation Y. In addition, Generation Y and Baby Boomers will be more strongly motivated by having responsibility and power within the organization than Generation X and, Generation X are less likely to be

motivated than Baby Boomers and Generation Y by work that requires their commitment beyond ‘normal’ working hours.”

The limitation of this study is that it concentrated largely on three generations, and further research is needed in order to capture the fourth generations, and in some cases, the fifth generation occupying the same workspace. The authors acknowledge that research findings on generational differences in motivational drivers and personality in the workplace have been sparse. Additionally, even though the authors referenced social factors, they were limited in the demographic dispersion of the participants since the disclosure of demographic variables was optional. This would have given the research more depth if the researchers were able to get this information more holistically.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review shows that researchers have conceptualized age-diversity in different and many ways, due to its importance to organizations. The various academic backgrounds of the researchers have also greatly contributed to the diverse conceptualization, and some key concepts of age-diversity which provides significant contributions to the study. Through the literature review we can conclude that there is much work to be done around the area of generational leadership, especially in the utility context in Jamaica and the broader Caribbean community. The topic of generational leadership has been attracting a lot of attention recently and research has been gaining more traction in this area. Human resources practitioners are becoming more alert to the idea that organizational leaders need help with navigating the new workplace dynamics. Daft (2023) although offering a definition of leadership, still admits that leadership, has, over the years, been defined in many ways and is

still being defined today. Leadership is difficult and is considered to be a people activity and an influence relationship (Daft, 2023).

Leadership has taken on many shapes and forms over the years and have emerged from the concept of ‘great man theory’ where leaders were thought to be born and not made, to more recent leadership paradigms of situational, contingency, and transformational leadership, to name a few. The study of leadership continues in earnest as organizations seek new ways to motivate and inspire their employees. HR practitioners have become more needed and hold an importance space in assisting leaders to navigate the new landscape within which organizations now find themselves.

Never has there been a more diverse workplace, having at least four different generations, and in some cases, five generations represented in the workplace. From the Baby Boomers generation to Generation Z employees, leaders are finding it increasingly challenging to lead such a diverse workplace. In addition to the generation gap, there is also the issue of different cultures, and new ways of inclusivity and diversity, which places additional challenges within the workplace. It is crucial that leaders understand the different generations within the organization and are equipped with the necessary skills to lead in this new paradigm.

Within the utility industry, leaders are experiencing four generational cohorts, and in the case of the company under study, five generational cohorts, within the workplace and are consistently finding it increasingly challenging to lead this diverse workforce. Although there has been research on the area of generational leadership, there is a distinct gap in research in the utility industry, and more particularly within Caribbean islands such as Jamaica. Research has focused largely on the US and some European countries, and although some of the

research is applicable to the Jamaican context, the research also shows that conducting additional research from a third world perspective and gearing the research more specifically to the Jamaican context may have real and tangible benefits for leaders within this country. It is essential to note that the literature gaps provide implications for leaders in age-diverse settings in Jamaica. Subsequently, I have been motivated to conduct this study to understand the differences and similarities in an age-diverse workforce and obtain knowledge and insight into how best HR practitioners can implement strategies to assist leaders develop competencies to lead a multi-generational workforce that inspires team collaboration, better working relationships and increased productivity in a utility company in Jamaica.

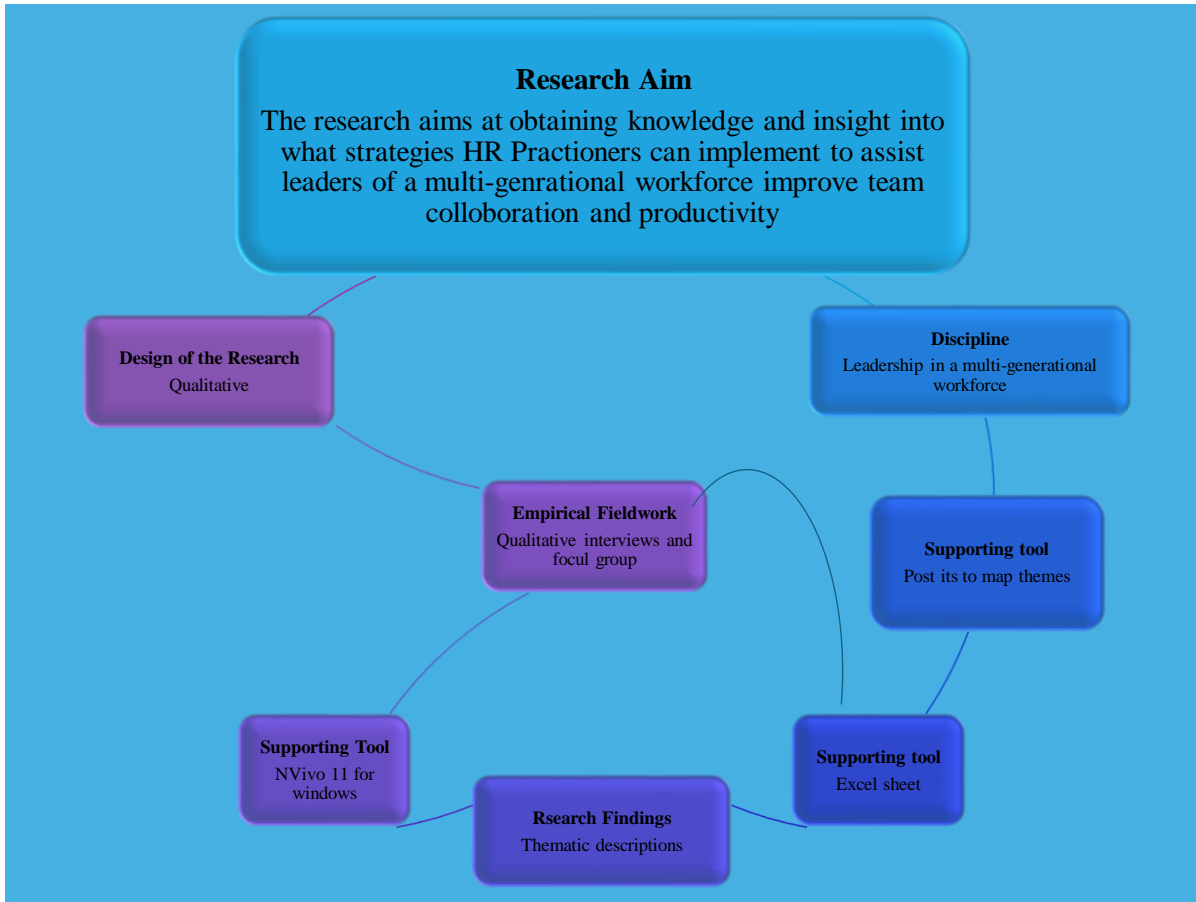
Transition

I sought to separate the research into different sections in order to provide a better reading experience and for appropriate breaks in the paper. Chapter One presented an introduction to the study, the research problem, the nature of the study, the importance of the study and the rationale for using a qualitative study using a case study, interview, and focus group as the means of gathering data. The chapter also included the research question and sub questions, interview questions, and the conceptual framework that informed the study, operational definitions used in the study. Chapter one concluded with the assumptions that were made in the study, the limitations, and the delimitations of the study. Chapter one set the tone and segued nicely into Chapter Two with a review of academic and professional literature which provided a comprehensive review of the literature on the topic of having an age-diverse workforce. The literature review also demonstrated the characteristics of the different generations that are represented in the workforce and the challenges that leaders face

in attempting to lead an age-diverse workforce and concluded with a summary of the academic and professional literature.

Chapter three presents a restatement of the purpose of the research, the role of the researcher, the selected participants, a description of the research method and design, the population and sampling, data collection instruments technique, ethical consideration, and demonstrates reliability and validity. Chapter four presents the research results from the research questions findings of the study, summary of the findings and a conclusion. Chapter five presents a discussion on the findings for each research question and application of business practice and the implication for social change. Chapter six concludes with recommendations for action and further research. The chapter also presents a reflection of my experience throughout the research, and finally concludes with a summary and conclusion of the study.

3 Chapter III: Methodology



Source: Giovanni Malcolm Mind Map for Research

Figure 3 - The Framework of the Method and Research Design for the Study

The framework defines the method and design for the study and provides the research objectives, applying a qualitative inquiry method and displaying that the nature of this qualitative study is examining age diversity and leadership. The framework further shows that the empirical fieldwork is qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. The method used for data analysis is thematic, with the support of Post it notes, excel spreadsheet and the NVivo 11 pro for windows software to eventually arrive at the research findings for the study. Additionally, this section provides the rationale for using the qualitative approach and

demonstrates the ethical considerations that were observed during the research process throughout the interviews and focus group discussions. The section also explores the thematic data analysis process, it discusses the reliability and validity of the research project, the role of the researcher and discusses the difference between primary data and secondary data. Additionally, the section discusses instrumentation and gives a graphical representation of coding and how coding is used in qualitative research. The following sub-sections detail the entire methodological process for the study.

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

The presence of the different generations that have taken space in the workplace and the proliferation of demographic changes have presented significant problems for HR practitioners and business leaders. Business leaders in developing countries are experiencing an influx of workers from all backgrounds and all ages occupying the same space. According to Boehm et al. 2014; Hendricks & Cape, 2013; Rabl & Triana, 2014, a critical factor for managing a multi-generational workforce includes understanding the interactions of the different generations that are present in the workforce (Lasten, 2016).

In these modern times, organizations are faced with an unprecedented convergence of diverse generations working side by side in the same space. This includes Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and the newest entry in the workspace, Generation Z. This is further compounded by the fact that, in some cases, we still have who we refer to as the Silent Generation. The Silent Generation is the generation that immediately precedes the Baby Boomers. They consist of individuals born from 1928 to 1945 and is usually perceived as hard workers, they do not tend to speak out, and they conform to societal expectations

(Hoonpongsimanont et al. 2018). The complexity of having this diverse workforce in the organization has challenged business leaders, and they are constantly seeking new ways to engage and motivate the people whom they have stewardship of, with the aim of increasing productivity, improving team collaboration, and increasing retention. Human resource practitioners are therefore being charged with coming up with solutions and putting strategies in place to solve this dichotomy within which leaders and organizations find themselves.

3.2 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore strategies that HR practitioners can implement to help business leaders lead a multi-generational workforce in a utility company in the developing nation of Jamaica. The targeted population for this study consisted of top-level business executives who were leading organizations that had more than three generations represented in the workplace, team leaders in a large company in Jamaica, and HR Business Partners/Practitioners in a large organization in Jamaica. Selected employees from each of the different generations were involved in one-on-one face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Business leaders and HR Practitioners were selected because of their past experience at developing, implementing, and deploying successful strategies to engage employees in a multi-generational environment.

The potential benefits from this research include having a positive social change through having a better understanding and appreciation of the distinct beliefs, values, attitudes, likes and dislikes of the different generational cohorts represented in the workplace. This contributes to the different generations having more empathy for each other in the

organization and can potentially improve relationships and promote a more productive and cohesive workplace, and ultimately a more united society.

3.3 Role of the Researcher

“In qualitative research the researcher’s role is to strive to understand the thoughts and emotions of the study participants (Austin & Sutton, 2015, p. 226).” This is a daunting task, as it involves asking individuals to talk about things that may be very personal to them and sometimes, the experiences being explored are very fresh in the participants’ mind, while some participants may have to dig deep to awake past experiences that may be difficult (Austin & Sutton, 2015). As such, the researcher plays a central and important role since he becomes the main data collection instrument. One of the primary roles of the research is to protect the identity of the participants and to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and to ensure that proper mechanisms are in place to safeguard data that is collected. The researcher should also clearly articulate the process of the research to the participants and maintain a high level of ethical conscientiousness throughout the process.

I was acutely aware of my personal biases and was quick to recognize this prior to proceeding with data collection and remained aware of these biases throughout the data analysis process. As someone who has worked as a Senior HR Business Partner and also Head of Change Management for a large utility company, I was intimately aware of the challenges that organizations face with a multi-generational workforce. In order to minimize research bias, I was conscious to maintain awareness of my experience with working with a multi-generational workforce. In a recent address at a forum in Jamaica, Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) Senior Director, Social Policy, Planning and Research, Easton Williams,

noted that, as the country navigated an era of rapid demographic change, it is important for policy makers and planners to understand the complex relationship between demography and the labour market (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2023).

“Ethical consideration must be maintained in research and the protection of human subjects through the application of appropriate ethical principles are of critical importance (Arifin, 2018, p. 32).” It was important to recognize the importance of maintaining an awareness that qualitative research exposes participants to a closer association, especially in face-to-face interviews where the study becomes more personal and more in-depth at that level. I was careful to conform to basic ethical guidelines and principles as it pertained to conducting research involving human participants. I was careful to observe the principles of research ethics and took careful note to observe the five basic principles of research ethics. According to Laerd dissertation (2023), the five principles of research ethics are: the researcher must minimize any potential risk or harm to participants, must also receive informed consent from potential research participants, the protection and the anonymity and confidentiality of research participants, must also avoid deceptive practices, and provide the right to withdraw from the research. In conducting research, as the main data instrument, I was careful to observe the tenants of always ‘do good’ (known as beneficence) and ‘do no harm’ (known as non-maleficence). I was also careful in ensuring that participants were treated fairly through the research process and treated all participants with an equal level of respect.

I was also aware that my experience working in HR and having led a multi-generational workforce and being motivated to finding a solution to working with a multi-generational workforce, had the potential to lead the research in a certain direction. I therefore

remained staunch and vigilant not to let my motivation for a solution influence the direction of the research and potentially introduce researcher bias into the study. I was also careful not to conduct the research at my main place of work and chose to conduct the research at a large utility company in Jamaica instead. This significantly helped in reducing researcher bias.

To uphold the quality and rigor of the research, I implemented two strategies as purported by (Sargeant, 2012). According to Sargeant (2012) ensuring the authenticity of the data and the trustworthiness of the analysis are crucial. Data authenticity pertains to the quality of the data collection methods, encompassing considerations such as; the sampling approach, participant selection, data triangulation, using the appropriate methods to answer the research inquiry and the use of unbiased and non-leading interview and guidance techniques (Sargeant, 2012). “Trustworthiness of the analysis refers to the quality of data analysis, and elements to consider are; ensuring that the analysis process is clearly described, procedures for resolving differences in findings are clearly defined, and the process for addressing the potential influence of the researcher’s views may have on the analysis are also defined and resolved (Sargeant, 2012, p. 2).”

I also employed an interview protocol to carry out the interviews and therefore a certain level of consistency was maintained throughout the process. I was careful throughout the interview process in ensuring that the participants were able to answer questions in an unbiased manner and that they were able to describe in detail their understanding of their personal experience regarding the subject that I was investigating. The interview protocol incorporated the procedure to follow when conducting interviews as well as the interview questions. The interview protocol gives direction for conducting the data gathering process and the subsequent analysis of the data (Protocols, 2012).

3.4 Participants

The target audience for this study consisted of senior level business executives and other high level team leaders in a large company in Jamaica. I also interviewed two senior level executives in Canada. I selected six senior executives in Jamaica, two HR practitioners and two senior level executives in Canada, who worked for large organizations with an employee count of over one thousand, and who had a multi-generational workforce. I was also deliberate in my choice of companies, as I wanted to ensure that they were companies who had experience in implementing strategies to motivate a multi-generational diverse workforce in an effort to enhance team collaboration and increase productivity.

“As opposed to quantitative research, where the study requires standardized procedures and random selection of participants to mitigate potential influence of external variables and to ensure generalization of results, qualitative research is purposeful and participants are selected deliberately (Sargeant, 2012, p. 2).” “Qualitative research requires the researcher to focus on understanding the intervention or phenomenon and exploring questions like ‘why was this effective or not?’ (Sargeant, 2012, p. 2).” It was therefore important that I, as the researcher, selected participants who could best answer the questions under study. The participants sampled must be able to inform important perspectives related to the phenomenon under study. It was also important to note that the researcher could alter the sample size and this is not usually predetermined, as the sample size is sufficient when additional interviews or focus groups do not result in the identification of any new concepts, an end point referred to as data saturation (Sargeant, 2012).

Understandably, access to the right participants can sometimes be difficult and daunting to the researcher. In my careful selection of the study participants, I was keen to seek approval from the different business leaders and utilized my network connections to gain access to the respective organizations and individuals who were considered to be the right 'fit' for the study. In qualitative business and management research, selecting research participants entails identifying and accessing a small subgroup or sample from a much larger target population. and sometimes gaining access to these participants is fraught with problems and challenges (Saunders & Townsend, 2012).

It is important to gain not only physical access, but also a cognitive access as the researcher must develop a close working relationship with study participants and ensure that there is a level of comfort during the face-to-face interviews (Saunders & Townsend, 2012). In order to form a bond and break the ice in engendering a close working relationship, I made sure to share my intentions regarding the interview and was careful to encourage participants to share their own perspectives. I addressed each participant by name and looked each person in the eye to ensure that they knew I was actively listening to them and that they were an important part of the study. I also ensured that each person got their chance to talk during the focus groups and that their perspectives were being taken seriously. I was also keen to ensure that the interview space was comfortable for each participant and observed ergonomic comfort for each participant to ensure that they were set as ease during the interview. Every participant in the study was given equal attention, regard, and respect.

3.5 Research Method and Design

“Research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Sage Publications, 2023, p. 38).” According to Sage Publications (2023, p. 38), “the overall decision of which method to choose to carry out your research include the philosophical assumptions the researcher brings to the study; procedures of inquiry (called research design); and specific research methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.” It is also important to acknowledge the issue being addressed in choosing the appropriate research approach. The purpose of this study was to explore strategies HR practitioners can implement into an organization to help business leaders enhance team collaboration and increase productivity in order to effectively lead a multi-generational workforce. The following section contains the rationale for selecting a qualitative method with a descriptive, single case study design as the most appropriate research method and design for my study.

“The three most commonly research approaches are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, along with the various research designs commonly used when conducting the study within the framework of each approach (Williams, 2007, p. 65).” “According to Creswell (2002), qualitative research is a holistic approach centred on discovery. It unfolds naturally, enabling the researcher to gain detailed insights through deep involvement in real-life experiences (Williams, 2007, p. 67).” Quantitative research, on the other hand posited by Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, is the need to quantify data and used as the research method to create meaning and new knowledge (Williams, 2007). “Quantitative research entails the collection of data so that information can be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment so that the researcher can either support or refute ‘alternate knowledge claims (Williams, 2007, p. 67).” Leedy & Ormrod argues as well, that the quantitative approach is specific in its surveying and

experimentation, as it builds upon existing theories and the study itself is independent of the researcher and the data is used to objectively measure reality (Williams, 2007). This is enough justification for the rationale to using the qualitative method to conduct the study as the researcher himself is integral to this study and therefore a qualitative approach was most appropriate.

The research design for this study is a qualitative exploratory case study. Case studies were one of the first type of research to be used in the field of qualitative methodology and account for a large proportion of the research presented in books and articles (Starman, 2013). Qualitative research is characterized by an interpretive paradigm, which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings they hold for an individual, therefore the subjective views of the researcher on a particular situation plays a pivotal role in the study results. (Starman, 2013). Qualitative research yields mainly unstructured text-based data and could include interview transcripts, observation notes, dairy entries (Wong, 2008). Although case study methods remain a controversial approach in data collection, they are widely recognized in many social science studies, especially as it pertains to in-depth explanation of when a social behaviour is being sought (Zainal, 2007). This is especially important for this study as it will focus on the direct lived experiences of the study participants.

Aristotle once said “All men by nature desire knowledge” (Tumele, 2015). This is indeed true as people are always in search of, and desire to know how things are and why they are the way they are. Case study research is increasingly seen as a favoured research method, particularly in social science, and one reason for this is that there exists no commonsensical definition and consequently in practice a broad variety of different research studies is called case study research (Tumele, 2015). This research method has been used in many disciplines

to build on, or produce new theory, to dispute or challenge theory, to explain a situation, to provide a basis to apply solutions, to explore, or to describe a phenomenon (Tumele, 2015). This study is being carried out in order to describe the phenomenon of leading a multi-generational workforce.

Narrative research design uses stories as research instruments to conduct investigations on people, for example, President Barrack Obama is well known for using stories skilfully in his speeches and uses personal stories to convey important aspects of policy and to mobilize activists (Squire et al. 2014). Narrative research was not an appropriate design for this study as the purpose for this research was to explore strategies to lead a multi-generational workforce and not an investigation on the personal life experiences of the top-level business executives and the other participants in the study. Grounded theory is a research method concerned with the generation of theory which is grounded in data that has been systematically collected and analyzed in order to develop a conceptual framework out of which a theory can emerge (Noble & Mitchell, 2016). Grounded theory was not the best fit for this study since the purpose was not to develop a theory. Ethnography is an elusive and complicated question and is becoming a much-discussed area in education. Its use is centered on cultural groups in their natural setting and is associated with the study of people, not ourselves, and with the use of methods other than those of experimental design and quantitative measurement (Hymns, 1977). Since no specific group was being used in this study, an ethnographic design was not the appropriate method to carry out this study. In using a phenomenological method, researchers seek to understand, describe, and interpret human behaviour from the perspective of the person being studied (Finlay, 1999). Phenomenology was not appropriate for this study as the focus of the study was how HR practitioners can

implement strategies to help business leaders lead a multi-generational, and not on understanding the experiences and perceptions of the business leaders, and study participants themselves.

3.6 Population and Sampling

Research would not be possible without study participants and the relationship between the researcher and the participants is very important (Halcomb & Peters, 2016). The population for this study consisted of executive leaders, senior managers, HR business partners, supervisors, and various front line and back of office staff, all ranging in different age groups across the different generations. Purposive sampling or judgement sampling is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Etikan et al. 2016). This is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants, as the researcher decides what needs to be known and identifies the people who can and are willing to participate and provide the information needed (Etikan et al. 2016). This is by virtue of the knowledge that these potential participants have or their lived experiences. The use of purposive sampling is typically seen in carrying out qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases in order to make the best use of available resources.

Defining the target population is an important part of the research process and ensuring that the study participants are well suited to the research question (Capili, 2021). The target group is the entire group of people who share common characteristics and whom the researcher is interested in studying (Capili, 2021). Selection criteria for participating in this study included: participants had to be older than 18 years of age, the main interview

participants had to be working for the targeted company, and the participants must have lived-experience, knowledge of the area of study or have experience developing strategies for working with a multi-generational workforce. The sample consisted of executive leaders, senior HR practitioners and 20 members from different generational cohorts who were deliberately chosen. These leaders were chosen from a large organization in Jamaica, and one in British Columbia, Canada. The large organization in Canada was chosen for comparison purposes, and only featured two senior leaders to gain their perspective on the study and discussed strategies they implemented within their organization to lead a multi-generational workforce. Yin, 2014, suggested that case study researchers use a sample size of 10 participants (Lasten, 2016). The additional use of company documents and focus groups were adequate in carrying out this research.

According to Clearly et al. (2014), the number and eligibility of participants depend on the research question under study (Lasten, 2016). It was also important that in addition to the knowledge and importance that these participants brought to the study, equally important was the availability and the willingness of the participants to take part in the study. The participants were also purposely chosen based on their ability to effectively articulate their experiences and opinions in an expressive and reflective manner.

Data gathering is crucial in research, as the data gathered, is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework (Etikan et al. 2016). It therefore becomes especially important the manner in which we obtain the data, and from whom the data will be acquired. Sample is a portion of a population or universe, and while many consider population to be people only, population also refers to the total quantity of the things or cases which are the subject of our research (Etikan et al. 2016).

Ethical Considerations

The word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek work, 'ethos' which means character or disposition (Rogelberg, 2004). Today ethics refer to a branch of philosophy concerned with how people should act, judgements about those actions and developing rules for justifying actions (Rogelberg, 2004). Most people think of ethics as rules for distinguishing right and wrong or the code of professional conduct, and the most common way of defining ethics is the norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Resnik, 2015). It is important that before conducting a study, researchers must evaluate their competence to conduct the research, their knowledge of ethical guidelines, soundness of the research design and ethical acceptability of their study (Rogelberg, 2004). I was careful to undergo an intense ethics course to ensure that I was fully ofay with the ethical considerations and the guidelines to be observed, and that I had the capacity to carry out the research. These guidelines ensured that the design of the study was ethically sound.

Another way to define ethics is as a method, procedure, or perspective for deciding how to act and for analyzing complex problems and issues (Resnik, 2015). It is important as a researcher that high ethical standards are observed, especially since there is a great deal of collaboration and coordination that occurs during the research process. It is important that trust, mutual respect, and fairness are observed in carrying out the research. Adherence to ethics also promotes the aims of the research, such as increasing knowledge, truth, and the avoidance of error (Resnik, 2015). A general summary of some ethical principles that should be observed in carrying out research include; always striving for honesty, and not fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting data, always strive to be objective and avoid biases in the

design, analysis, and interpretation of the findings. Other principles to be observed are; having integrity and keeping promises, for instance, if you say the participants' information will be kept private, then it should be kept private, avoid careless errors or negligence in carrying out the research, and critically examine the work by keeping good records. Additionally, always be open and share data, results, ideas and be open to new ideas. It is important to always give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to the research, never plagiarize and keep the highest level of confidentiality where it is appropriate. It is important to promote social good and avoid discrimination against study participants.

3.7 Instrumentation

Research methods in social science research are a critical part of any research project as the methods chosen determines the research's success, validity, and reliability (Alshenqeeti, 2014). In qualitative research the researcher becomes the main data collection instrument (Xu & Storr, 2012). As the researcher I was the main data collection instrument, and company documentation was used, and semi structured interviews were carried, and focus groups as sources for collecting data. "It doesn't matter what philosophical standpoint the research is taking and what method of data collection the researcher takes, be it focus group or one-on-one interviews, the process will invariably involve the generation of large amounts of data (Sutton & Austin, 2015, p. 227)." "Interviews are powerful in eliciting narrative data, enabling researchers to explore people's perspectives in greater depth and are considered to be a valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiating of meanings in a natural setting (Alshenqeeti, 2014, p. 39)."

Semi-structured interviews were one of the main data instruments used in carrying out this study. According to Kakilla (2021), semi-structured interviews (SSI), is an indispensable tool in qualitative research. This form of interview helps to uncover knowledge through the different interactions, conversations, and subjects from different life experiences. Semi-structured interviews are practical for undertaking in-depth conversation, and the researcher is able to critically scrutinize the conversations and the various initially superficial responses during the interview in order to arrive at multilayered conclusions (Kakilla, 2021). Semi-structured interviews are considered to offer greater potential than other interview types, as they are highly adept in their power to engage in deep conversations, flexibility, and generative nature, and therefore stimulate new ideas (Kakilla, 2021). “Semi-structured interview is perceived to have more potential than other types of interviews, because it allows researchers to acquire in-depth information and evidence from interviewees while seriously considering the focus of the study (Kakilla, 2021, p. 1).”

The other types of interviews are structured and unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews use a process in which questions asked are not systemized across candidates, and the interviewer focus on open discussion to evaluate candidates (Dept. of Psych EDI committee, 2023). Unstructured interviews lack a set of pre-determined questions and topic guidelines. Structured interviews use a process where questions are pre-determined and consistently asked across all candidates, in which a ranking scale is associated with a candidate’s answer (Dept. of Psych EDI committee, 2023). I deliberately used semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions for this study as in semi-structured interviews, the researcher maintains the flexibility to elaborate on the questions to seek clarity. According to Doody & Noonan (2013), when compared to unstructured interviews,

semi-structured interviews are considered to be more efficient in terms of time, they reduce bias and subjectivity, and the researcher's job is made more easy in controlling the topic and format of the interview (Dept. of Psych EDI committee, 2023).

As a qualitative method of data gathering, focus groups bring together participants to discuss a topic that is considered to be of mutual interest to themselves and the researcher (Morgan & Spanish, 1984). Focus groups are an established method of collecting research data in the social sciences, where we bring people together who have similar interests and characteristics that they can offer, both from an individual and collective perspective on particular topics (Moore et al. 2015). "Focus groups are useful as they help to explore, develop, and refine initial research questions and offer a collective set of values, experiences and observations of participants that are later interpreted in context (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013, p. 131)." "Focus groups can be both online or in person, synchronous, involving real-time live chat comparable to conversational interaction of face-to-face focus groups or asynchronous, using static text-based communication such as forums and email lists (Moore et al. 2015, p. 23)." I chose to use an in person face-to-face method in carrying out my focus group discussions. Focus group share similar epistemological concerns when compared to other qualitative methods, in that, they are concerned with the depth meaning of participant's experiences but are different based on certain attributes (Moore et al. 2015).

Supporters of the use of focus groups argue that focus groups are reflexive and empowering experiences for the participants in the study, as the researcher encourages the participants to share their views and their lived experiences through group conversations (Moore et al., 2015). "According to Moore et al. (2015, p. 18), the collaborative nature of focus groups is thought to better reflect the socially constructed nature of knowledge, since

participants are encouraged to question and explain their viewpoints through group interaction, which encourages a lively discussion of both complimentary and argumentative interpretations of the research topic.” It is the interaction between the focus group participants that generates the data, and the researcher should be a skilled facilitator in order to encourage this discourse. Discussions take place for over an hour or two and the participants are probed by the researcher in order to stimulate responses and discussions regarding their perceptions, experiences, and beliefs.

Arbiters and advocates of focus groups argue that focus groups have the potential of being an excellent source of data and that focus groups allow the researcher the opportunity to see the process in action and also affords the researcher the chance to observe transactions between, and amongst the participants, how they respond and react to each other (Byers & Wilcox, 1991). “The authors, Byers & Wilcox (1991, p. 64), contend that focus groups provide the researcher with the opportunity to obtain data which is not necessarily pertinent to any particular group or setting and may expose underlying attitudes, opinions, and behaviour patterns.” Focus groups have the potential to close the gap between the interview’s initial perceptions of the topic and the final report that is produced through what the research has seen and the eventual findings. Lederman, 1989, suggests that five fundamental assumptions exist upon which the method relies; (1) the participants are a valuable source of information; (2) the participants can report on and about themselves, and that they are articulate enough to verbalize their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours; (3) the facilitator who ‘focuses the interview can assist the participants retrieve forgotten information; (4) the dynamics in the group can be used to generate genuine information, rather than the group think phenomenon

and (5) that interviewing a group is better than interviewing an individual (Byers & Wilcox, 1991).

I was careful to observe Axelrod's, 1975 ten essential ingredients for a successful focus group:

Retrieved from: Sage Journals: Focus Groups: A Qualitative Opportunity for Researchers, written by; Peggy Yuhas Byers and James R. Wilcox, 1991

1. A clearly understood objective: Is the focus group part of an ongoing research project or is it self-contained? Does the research team have a clearly defined subject of study?
2. Homogeneity within the group: The participants should be homogenous in relation to the topic under discussion (i.e., all should either have or have not been exposed to the topic of study).
3. Good recruiting: Recruiting should be done to ensure homogeneity and a sufficient number of participants.
4. A relaxed atmosphere: The moderator should ensure confidentiality and promote openness.
5. A moderator who listens: The moderator must ensure that the discussion does not stray too far from the point of interest yet must not rule out things that may seem unrelated.
6. A well-prepared moderator: The moderator typically follows an unstructured interview guide.
7. Free-flowing dialogue: The moderator should begin the discussion by inviting honest and open dialogue and guiding the discussion only when necessary.

8. Restrained group influence: The moderator should refrain from contributing to the discussion unless necessary.
9. Skilled analysis: The data can be analyzed by a qualitative summary.
10. Competent researchers: The researcher should ensure that all necessary details are controlled.

A successful focus group is one in which a variety of responses are generated which are germane to the topic of study and that all participants feel free to express opinions and thoughts regarding the topic at hand. I was careful that I maintained a focus on this as the researcher and facilitator of the focus groups.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures and Technique

The process of data collection is directly related to sampling and is best viewed as complementary to it, as data is collected directly from the selected sample population (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). For this study, I collected data through semi-structured face-to-face interviews guided by open-ended questions. This is called direct data (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). According to Lopez & Whitehead (2013), whatever can be observed or communicated are considered to be potential or actual data, since you are considering the feelings, thoughts, experiences, meaning of experiences, responses, actions, interactions, language and processes of individuals and groups within their social or cultural setting. It is this type of data that sets the context for qualitative studies (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). I also used company relevant documents and focus groups as part of my methods to collect data for this study. Indirect data are generated, in the first instance, by someone or something else, such as with documents or photographs (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). I started collecting data after receiving approval

from Swiss School of Business and Management, through my thesis supervisor. After receiving approval to proceed with carrying out my data collection, I contacted the participants whom I thought would contribute best to the study and who had an interest in participating in the study. Firstly, I contacted a Senior Vice President of the large company that I was conducting the study on, and who would be providing access to most of the study participants for both one and one interviews and focus groups. I also contacted the president and the vice-president of a large company in British Columbia, Canada, where I presently work. I wanted to hear their perspective as well, as they too worked in a multigenerational workforce and have been implementing strategies to lead a multi-generational workforce. In addition to setting up the interview date and time with each candidate, I made sure to contact them two days before as a courtesy reminder about their upcoming participation. I emailed each candidate the consent form in advance to ensure that they had a sound understanding of the form, and the language, and I followed up with a telephone call to ask if they had any questions regarding the research. I also emailed the sample research questions, to get them in the right frame of mind for the interview. I made sure that I was also prepared for the interview and was able to observe all interview protocols without having to refer to the guide itself. According to Aultman Health Sciences Library (2022), it's expected that the researcher will be knowledgeable on the topic of the interview, which requires some background research so that the researcher is able to structure and guide the interview to keep it relevant, but flexible. The article also states that the researcher should be able to remember and interpret the information garnered in the interview, and that they are sensitive to the interviewee's position and rights (Aultman Health Sciences Library, 2022).

Some quick tips for preparing for the interview are as follows:¹

- Do preliminary research on the topic and the interviewee, so that you enter the interview with an understanding of what will be discussed.
- Reflect on the goals of the research. What do you want to accomplish through the interview? What should be recorded and why it was important to be recorded?
- How can you make the process as seamless as possible for the interviewee?
- Build a rapport with the interviewee before the actual interview so that you both become comfortable with each other.
- Choose and thoroughly familiarize yourself with the recording equipment you will use in order to minimize any potential issues that may arise during the actual interview.
- Choose an interview location and space that is relaxed, comfortable, and quiet. Keep in mind that the interview should feel more like a conversation, rather than an interrogation.
- If you are new to interviewing, feel free to practice with friends, family, or peers to get more comfortable for the actual interview.

I recorded the interviews on two separate devices as a precautionary measure, and also took notes where applicable. All interviews included place, date, and time on both digital recordings and in a notebook used in the interview. Both phone and a digital recorder were used to do the recording of the interviews. I also went to the different locations where we were going to conduct the interviews to do a walk through and get a ‘feel’ for the atmosphere

¹ Retrieved from: Aultman Health Sciences Library, Conducting Research Interviews, 2022.

before the interview day, and also showed up extra early on the actual day of the interview to do any advance preparation. I did a personal introduction, and ‘broke the ice’ by offering a fun story of a personal experience. ‘Ice breakers’ can be an effective method in research to begin engaging participants and encourage participants to bond (Kilanowski, 2012). I then gave a summary of the research topic, explained the consent form again, and asked if they had any questions or concerns about the form. After explaining the consent form and the process for the interview, I asked for the participant’s consent to start the recording and began the official interview process. I started to ask the interview questions, and follow up questions, and ended the process by scheduling a follow-up meeting to summarize the interview and facilitate a feedback session with each interviewee.

One of the main considerations in conducting interviews and facilitating focus group discussions are the needs of the participants in terms of; accessibility and comfort (Ecker, 2017). The selection of an interview location affects both the researcher and participants, as certain settings can influence participant’s responses and their overall contribution to the research (Ecker, 2017). Location choice also has an impact on the power dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee (Ecker, 2017). I was careful to choose a location that made the interviewee feel comfortable. The quality of the transcript is influenced by the quality of the recording and as such, location played a key role in where the interview was conducted. Recording in a noisy location is susceptible to background noises which can affect the quality of the recording. I made sure that the location was comfortable and offered a quiet space. Additionally, recruitment of participants also plays an important role in research, and enrolment of participants in the research can be quite challenging (Negrin et al. 2022). Kristensen & Ravn, 2015, also stress that being acquainted with the study population is also

crucial in ascertaining the inclusion/exclusion criteria of participants who will address the research question (Negrin et al. 2022). “Inclusion criteria are specific characteristics that the potential participants or population must possess in order to effectively support the research question, while exclusion criteria identify characteristics that would deem a likely participant as inappropriate for inclusion in the study (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013, p. 126).”

Participants motivations to volunteer for the research is also important and, if they are interested in the research topic under consideration, they are more inclined to enrol and contribute positively to the research, while conversely, if they are coerced or not really interested in the topic, they might not have anything significant to add (Negrin et al. 2022). I was also careful to exclude participants that could be considered a conflict of interest or people who I considered that would have an immediate bias to the research. Although I was familiar with the senior executives of these companies, I hold no authority over them, and as such, they were not influenced in anyway by me as the researcher and they felt no pressure in allowing employees from the organization in participating in the study. Participants were also not compensated for their contribution to the research, and further, they did not incur any cost in participating in the research.

There have been constant discussions and debates over the years about whether or not to compensate research participants and these discussions and debates are ongoing. There have also been debates about the ethical considerations as it relates to compensating research participants. The issue of undue influence or coercion did not affect my research as none of the participants were financially compensated nor were any of the participants under my direction or influence as a supervisor. Undue influence involves the use of persuasion, authority figures, or the offering of excessive or inappropriate rewards to compel research

participants to comply with the researcher's requests (MyResearch LifeCycle, 2023).

“Coercion happens when a blatant or indirect threat of harm, such as loss of services or access to which the potential participants would have otherwise had access to is purposely presented from one person to another in order to receive agreement or research participation, often confused with undue influence (MyResearch LifeCycle, 2023).”

Data is a set of values of qualitative or quantitative variables and or facts or figures from which conclusions can be drawn (Ajayi, 2017). Before one can present and interpret information, there must be a process for gathering and sorting data. Data collection is pivotal in statistical analysis. There are two types of data collection that will be used in the study:

1. Primary data is an original data collection procedure, which is directly collected by the researcher from a source such as observations, questionnaires, case studies, surveys, according to the researcher's needs (Ajayi, 2017). The primary source of information for this study are the participants through conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews. Interviews produce data in the form of notes, summary of the interview or word for word transcripts. Interviews will be recorded for word-for-word analysis. Focus group will also be used to capture primary data and will involve capturing notes by the researcher or moderator. This involves full transcripts and notes taken.
2. Secondary data is considered to come from literature review and all relevant studies through textbooks, published academic articles, government publications, websites, and internal records (Ajayi, 2017). Secondary data is not considered to be as pure as primary data as they have undergone many statistical treatments, however, are easier

to access (Ajayi, 2017). A case study done on the organization will also be analyzed as a part of capturing secondary data for this study.

“The most important difference between primary data and secondary data is, primary data is factual and original, while secondary data is the analysis and interpretation of the primary data (Ajayi, 2017, p. 1).” The fundamental differences between primary and secondary data are primary data originates from the researcher for the first time, whereas secondary data is the already existing data collected by the investigator and other researchers earlier. Primary data is real-time, and secondary data is in the past.

Basis for Comparison	Primary Data	Secondary Data
Meaning	Primary data refers to the firsthand data gathered by the researcher himself.	Secondary data means data collected by someone else earlier.
Data	Real time data	Past data
Process	Very involved	Quick and easy
Sources	Surveys, personal interviews, observations, questionnaires	Government publications, websites, books, journal articles, internal records
Cost effectiveness	Expensive	Economical
Collection time	Long	Short
Specific	Always specific to the researcher’s needs	May or may not be specific to the researcher’s needs
Available	Crude form	Refined form
Accuracy and Reliability	More	Relativeness

Taken from: (Ajayi, 2017)

Table 1- Comparison between Primary Data and Secondary Data

“Interviews and focus groups are the most common methods of data collection used in qualitative research (Gill et al. 2008, p. 295).” There are three types of research interviews: structured, semi structured, and unstructured. “Structured interviews are, generally conducted verbally, following a list of predetermined questions with minimal or no variation, and without the possibility for follow-up questions to delve deeper into the responses (Gill et al.

2008, p. 291).” The authors further state that these interviews are relatively easy to administer, but by their very nature allow for limited participants’ responses. “Conversely though, unstructured interviews do not reflect any preconceived theories or ideas and are usually performed with little or no organization.” These types of interviews may simply start with an opening question such as ‘can you tell me about your experience working with a multi-generational workforce?’ The interview then progress based primarily on that first response, and can be highly time consuming, challenging to oversee, and to engage in (Gill et al. 2008, p. 291). This is because there are no predetermined interview questions and therefore there is a lack of proper guidance on what to talk about. This sometimes causes confusion and is generally unhelpful in my experience. The use of unstructured interviews sees more benefit where significant depth is required and there is virtually nothing known about the subject area (Gill et al., 2008).

“Semi-structured interviews consist of several fundamental questions that assists in defining the areas to be explored and allows the interviewer or the interviewee to deviate a bit to pursue an idea or seek to provide more detail (Gill et al. 2008, p. 291).” The flexibility of this approach allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that might be important to participants but may not have initially been thought of by the research team or did not seem pertinent to them at the time (Gill et al. 2008). Semi structured interviews are the data collection method that were used in this study. “The purpose of the research interview was to explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individuals on specific subject areas that influence their behaviours. Qualitative methods such as interviews are believed to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods such as questionnaires (Gill et al. 2008, p. 292).” Interviews are also

helpful in creating a safe space when exploring sensitive topics where participants may want to talk about their experiences more privately.

Focus groups are employed to gather collective perspectives and to uncover the underlying meanings behind those perspectives (Gill et al. 2008). “The authors also state that focus groups are especially useful when trying to generate a rich understanding of participants’ experiences and beliefs. Focus groups share many common features with semi-structured interviews, but there is more to them than just collecting similar data from many participants all at once. Focus groups are organized as a group discussion on a particular topic organized for research purposes and are guided, monitored, and recorded by the researcher. Focus group was the other data collection method used in carrying out this study.” (Gill et al. 2008, p. 292)

In this research, various levels of staff were used in the focus groups and in the face-to-face interviews, mostly employees from the upper level and executive level category were used. I conducted each interview and facilitated the focus groups myself. The levels of staff included: front line staff, entry level staff, junior level supervisors, senior level supervisors, junior level managers, senior level managers, and executives. As the techniques and the interview questions are critical factors for collecting valid data from the participants, a predetermined list of interview questions was prepared in advance, and a walkthrough of the questions as well as a mock interview were rehearsed beforehand.

After the interviews and focus groups were completed, I transcribed both of them verbatim, and this exercise was completed within five days after the interviews and focus group discussions. After the transcription, I emailed the summary of the participant’s responses to each question, to each of the participants who agreed to participate in the

member checking process, thereby allowing them to check that the information captured their responses accurately. It is essential to ensure validity in any research, and one common technique used to ensure validity is through member checking (McKim, 2023). Member-checking is the process by which the researcher allows participants in the study to check the interview and focus group transcripts for accuracy, as a strategy in enhancing validity (McKim, 2023). This process was relatively easy for me and was considered to be a valuable tool in my research, and proved useful in engaging the study participants, and to create camaraderie between the participants and myself. The process of member-checking helps to eliminate misrepresentation of the data during the data analysis process, and also allows the participants to eliminate any information they do not want included in the study. (McKim, 2023). One of the benefits that I derived from this exercise, and what the participants acknowledged that they were highly appreciative of, was the trust and transparency that this exercise enabled. According to Carlson (2010), member-checking, although widely used and recognized does have its weaknesses (McKim, 2023). Having to re-live some of the lived experiences that were shared through the interview process can be hard for some participants, and this also takes time for the participants to go through the information again. I overcame this obstacle by asking at the outset who would be interested in reviewing the notes, recognizing the extra time and effort this would take, and perhaps, even the emotional burden. Over ninety percent of participants were interested in going through the notes, and only those who were willing to participate were sent the summary. As suggested by McKim (2023), the following guiding questions were used, (which was modified slightly to suit my own purposes) to assist the participants through the member-checking process:

- After reading through the summary, what are your general thoughts?

- How accurately do you feel that the findings captured your thoughts or experiences?
- What could be added to the summary to capture your thoughts or experiences better?
- Is there anything you would like to be removed from the summary, and if so, what is it and may I ask why you would like it removed?

All participants who took part in the member-checking process confirmed that my summary of the participant's responses to each question accurately reflected the participant's views.

3.9.1 Demonstration of Coding

“Coding is essential, and is the beginning point for most forms of qualitative data analysis and refers to the process by which researchers define what the data are about, and it is the first step in data analysis (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 134).” “Coding is the first step for the researcher to move from tangible data in order to make analytical interpretations. Coding is an integral part of qualitative research for many scholars that use interview or focus group data (Parameswaran et al. 2020, p. 630).” Analyzing qualitative data can sometimes be challenging and frustrating and findings do not originate from transcripts and documents themselves. “It requires deliberate work to identify the most important elements and write them up into a coherent and convincing story that answers the research questions and provides insights that are loyal to the data (Linneberg & Korsgard, 2019, p. 259).” “Saldana, 2016, posits that a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (Parameswaran et al. 2020, p. 259).” “Coding offers ‘slices of

social life recorded in the data, participants' activities, their perceptions, and the tangible documents and artifacts produced by them (Parameswaran et al. 2020, p. 261).”

Coding involves the labelling and organizing of qualitative data in order to determine different themes and the relationships amongst them (Medelyan, 2023). “Current practices in coding require transcription of audio/visual data prior to coding and transcription before the coding process is an essential process for data analysis (Parameswaran et al. 2020, p. 260).” “According to Saldana (2016), coding is not merely naming themes, but is connecting themes back to the data and the data to the themes (Parameswaran et al. 2020, p. 260).” “Coding in its most basic form is the simple operation of identifying segments of meaning and labelling them with a code, which can be defined as a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient essence-capturing and evocative attribute for a portion of language - based or visual data (Linneberg & Korsgard, 2019, p. 260).” In carrying out my research, I gave a chunk of data a name with a label, which is referred to as a code. I performed my coding in a very simple way, by using mostly different colour post its to represent the data:

- One colour for each code
- Assign a unique identifier to each participant
- Copy and paste portions of texts or images from the data documents into new documents – e.g., interview #5, making sure it's visible
- I also used a software (Microsoft Word NVivo and Microsoft Excel to organize the data to ensure better data analysis
- Mostly, post its and markers were used to represent each data set and then be able to create a theme

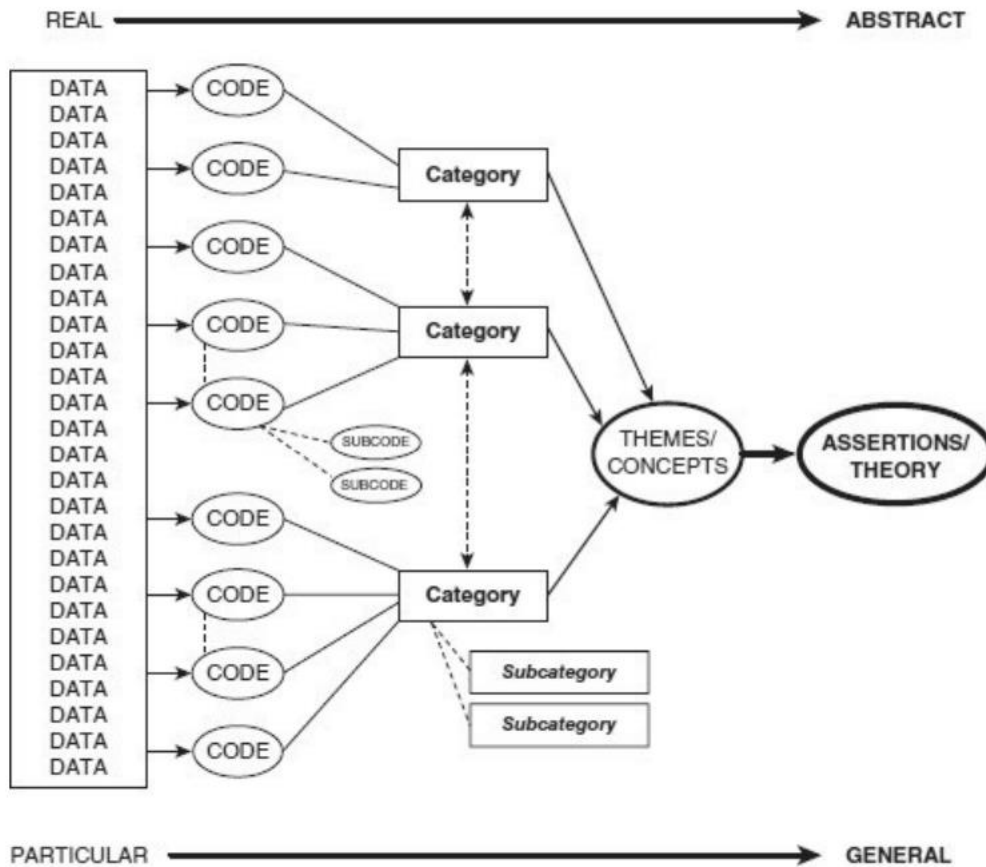
I read through my data in order to get a sense of what the data looked like and started to assign my first set of codes. I subsequently went through the data line by line to code as much as possible and at this point the codes became more detailed. I carefully reviewed the interview and focus group transcripts from the research participants to identify all related topics of the key organizational events and the respondents' recollection of how the strategies unfolded. I then categorized the codes in order to figure out how they fit into the coding frame and then identify which themes come up the most and take actions on those. I chose to do both a manual process of coding and an automated process of coding in order to not only practice the methods, but also to examine how closely related the findings were. I made use of inductive coding for the research process.

“At first, coding might seem like it is an unnecessary and time-consuming step between data collection and coming up with findings, but there are several good reasons for spending this time for coding (Linneberg & Korsgard, 2019, p. 7).” “The acquisition of deep, comprehensive, and thorough insights into the data, making the data easily accessible and retrievable, sorting, and structuring the data and ensuring transparency are some of the advantages of coding (Linneberg & Korsgard, 2019, p. 7).” Coding also ensures validity, gives a voice to the participants, and creates a means to understanding the phenomenon and the participant's perspectives (Linneberg & Korsgard, 2019). Through this dynamic process of the development of coding, the researcher begins to understand the participant's views and actions from their own perspective and lived experience. I also the use of the NVivo software to organize and code the collected data. I then imported the transcription from Microsoft Word into NVivo and began coding the transcribed data. “According to Miles et al. (2014), coding identifies keywords grouped to find phrases or common themes reoccurring in the data

and assists in identifying repeated themes (Jackson, 2021, p. 362).” I interpreted and reported the results of the data via the coded themes.

Coding and interpretations are not two different phases, but they are processes that are interrelated that co-evolve, although still having different characteristics. Researchers describe analytical memos as an ongoing reflection that occurs during the coding process, the phenomenon, also the participant’s and how they are interrelated. (Saldana, 2013). Visual display eases the readings and increases the understating of scientific texts and can be illustrated more effectively than longer texts (Linneberg & Korsgard, 2019). This is where the use of coloured post its will be useful and well represented. I followed the advice of Saldana, 2009, and kept asking myself, ‘what strikes me?’ (Liamputtong, 2009).

Qualitative codes capture the core elements of the research narrative and, when grouped by similarity and patterns, they significantly aid in forming categories and analysing their relationships. (Saldana, 2013). “There is a growing recognition among qualitative researchers that the absence of codification regarding data management and analysis techniques undermines the credibility of qualitative research reports (Knafl et al.1988). Knafl and Howard, 1984 identified instrumentation, illustration, description, and theory building as the four purposes of qualitative research (Knafl et al. 1988, p. 195).”



Taken from: (Saldana, 2013)

Figure 4- Demonstration of Coding

3.9.2 Data Organization Technique

“Analyzing qualitative data collected can be challenging and a key ingredient in structuring collected data for analysis is how the data is captured in the first place (Kanther et al. 2005, p. 1).” The ultimate purpose of any data management scheme is to facilitate a systematic process of data analysis that can be communicated to others (Knafl et al. 1988).

For this study, I created several folders; one for interview data, that contained all the consent emails, the audio recordings, the transcripts of the recordings, summaries of the participants’

responses and the field notes of the semi structured interviews. I had another folder that contained the recording from the focus group discussions, transcripts of the recording, summary of the participants' responses to the discussion questions and notes taken by me during the discussions, to which I mostly listened, observed, and took copious notes. The third folder, used to store company documentation, contained all the documentation that was collected during the interview process that was provided by the company or found on their website.

All data that was collected I stored on a password protected external hard drive. As a backup, all research material was stored in a cloud-based storage system which was also password protected. I also created a Google folder where all of my study material was easily accessible, but also still securely saved and protected, with the access, limited to only myself. All hard copy notes, and documentation were securely stored in a fire-proof, password protected safe in my home office, to which only I have access to. These I will retain and keep secured for five years, after which, I will shred all hard copy documentation and also erase all stored data in the cloud and from the hard drive. Microsoft Word was used to organize the data collected into different tables and used the 'find feature' in the program, paired with a methodical strategy for inputting descriptors into raw data fields. This enabled quick building of data summary for entry into summary data cells.

Data tables are a straightforward, but powerful tool that helps to assemble all data into one place on related aspects of a topic (Kanter et al. 2005). Each of the data tables focuses on a particular issue in the study and each table was used to organize the data by major characteristics of the participant's answer. The table cell maps to a question asked in the interview and also in the focus group discussions and also on the notes that I took. Data tables

can easily accommodate raw data and audio recording and are highly readable and easily printed (Kanter et al. 2005). This enabled me to put the tables side by side, so that I could have different views and to be able to note the pages with data analyses and conclusions. Using tables in qualitative research ensures trustworthiness and also increases transparency about data collection, analysis, and findings (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2021). Using the tables in my study enabled me to organize and analyze the data more effectively. I was able to navigate the large amount of data and be able to see and examine the data from multiple and diverse angles. Tables enable researchers to condense and organize data, providing clarity and facilitating the identification of patterns that would be challenging, if not impossible to discern within extensive textual documents spanning hundreds or even thousands of pages. (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2021). I also used software to assist me in the data coding process, which will be discussed later in the section.

3.9 Data Analysis

The overarching intent of data analysis is to transform data into findings (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2021). The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore strategies that HR practitioners could implement in a multigenerational workforce to assist leaders in achieving improved team collaboration and increased productivity. Qualitative research has been gaining significant popularity over the years and has become widely accepted across a broad spectrum of discipline. Qualitative data is typically subjective, detailed, and comprises comprehensive information usually expressed in words. According to Medelyan (2023), qualitative data refers to any non-numerical and unstructured data and typically encompasses any verbatim or text-based responses such as open-ended responses in an interview.

“Analyzing qualitative data entails, the reading of a large number of transcripts, looking for similarities and differences and subsequently finding themes and developing categories (Wong, 2008, p. 14).” “Offering insight into in-depth information about the attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and motives of people in understanding their emotions, perceptions and actions have proved challenging for quantitative methods, and this has resulted in the rising popularity of qualitative research (Wong, 2008, p. 14).” “Data analysis tasks facilitate extracting the meaning from a data set and they are constructionistic since they focus on rebuilding and presenting the processed data set in a thematic or conceptually relevant whole (Knafl et al. 1988, p. 199).”

“Qualitative data analysis ideally, should start from the beginning of the research, as researchers immerse themselves in their fieldwork, be it an interview, participant observation, or published text, and then in reading, and rereading the data, they make sense of the data they have generated (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 133).” The interview and focus group questions addressed the core research question and was what guided the study to explore strategies that HR practitioners can implement to assist leaders to successfully lead a multigenerational and diverse workforce. Participants shared insight on how diverse the workforce had become in terms of the different generations represented in the workplace. I collected data from multiple sources, including the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and company documentation. “Immersing in the data, researchers attempt to understand what they have obtained. In commencing data analysis early in the research process, researchers move back and forth between the data they have gathered and their strategies to collect new and, in some cases, better data (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 133).”

“Data analysis in qualitative research involves the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, observation notes or other non-textual materials that the researcher accumulates to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon (Wong, 2008, p. 14).” It involves making sense of large amount of data by reducing the volume of raw information, followed by identifying significant patterns, and then, finally drawing meaning from data and subsequently building a logical chain of evidence (Wong, 2008). According to Liamputtong (2009, p. 133), “qualitative inquiry requires that the collected data be organized in a meaningful way, and this is what is referred to as data analysis.” It is therefore important to develop a systematic approach in order to effectively analyze the data to ensure its usefulness and reliability.

Qualitative data consists of words and observations, not numbers and with all data, analyzing this data and the subsequent interpretation of this data is required so that understanding of the data can be achieved. Taylor-Powell & Renner (2003) states that there are five major steps to be taken in analyzing data and posits that these steps are fluid and moving back and forth through these steps may be necessary. The steps are listed below:

Step 1. Get to know the data

Good analysis is strongly dependent on the researcher’s understanding of the data, and therefore reading and re-reading the full text will be necessary. If there is a recording of the interview, then listen to the recording several times, writing down any impressions you have as you go through the data, to use later. It is important to acknowledge the quality of the data, since not all data collected will be useful to the study and sometimes our own biases or the interviewees’ biases might get in the way. Not all data collected adds value or meaning to the

research and so before beginning any analysis, consider the quality of the data and act accordingly. It is very important to invest time and effort in understanding the data collected.

Step 2. Focus the analysis

Review the purpose of the test and what exactly you want to find out, identifying key questions that you would want your analysis to answer. Make note of these questions as this will help to decide how to proceed. These questions sometimes change as you proceed but is a good starting point. Importantly, focus on either question or topic or time period or event. Observe how individuals or groups responded to each question or topic, or a given time period or event. This is usually achieved using open-ended questions and by organizing the data by question to look across the respondents and their answers in order to identify consistencies and differences, and then put the data from each question together. This same approach can be applied to topics or a time period or an event. This can be later used to explore the connections and relationships between questions, topics, time periods and events.

Step 3. Categorize information

Some people might refer to organizing information as coding data or indexing the data. However, categorizing differs from quantitative analysis, as it does not involve assigning numerical codes or values to exclusive variables. To bring meaning to the word, you identify themes or patterns, ideas, or concepts or even phrases used. This is then organized into coherent categories that summarize and bring meaning to the text. This can be laborious depending on the amount of data, but this is how the analysis of qualitative data works. In qualitative research, abbreviated codes can be used with few letters, words or symbols and place these next to the themes and ideas that are found. A descriptive label for each category that is created should be used, and what you include or exclude in the category should be

clear. As you categorize the data, you might identify other themes that produce sub-categories, and should be continued to be categorized until all relevant themes have been identified and labelled.

Question	Categories Responses to the questions were sorted into:
1. How does the co-existence of different generations in the workplace affect productivity?	Generations (GX), Productivity (PX)
2. What strategies would you say work best to improve team collaboration amongst the different generations?	Team Collaboration (TCX), Different Generations (DGX), Strategies (SX)
3. What strategies work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations?	Improve productivity (IPX), Different Generation (DGX)
4. What barriers did you encounter when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration amongst the different age groups?	Barriers (BX), Implementation Strategies (ISX)
5. How did you address these barriers you encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve workplace cohesiveness and productivity amongst the different generations?	Barriers (BX), Implement Strategies to improve (ITCX), DGX
6. How can HR Managers lead the charge in mentoring leaders for the different generations?	HR Managers (HRMX), Mentoring (MX) Leaders (LX)

Table 2- Categories that were identified to sort responses to questions

Source : Giovanni Malcolm

<u>Phrases</u>	<u>Codes</u>
Generations	GX
Productivity	PX
Workplace Cohesiveness	WCX
Different Generations	DGX
Strategies	SX
Improve Productivity	IPX
Different Generations	DGX
Lower Productivity	LPX
Barriers	BX
Implementation Strategies	ISX
Improve Workplace Cohesiveness	IWCX
HR Managers	HRMX
Mentoring	MX
Leaders	LX

Table 3- Codes used to identify words or phrases

Source: Giovanni Malcolm

Step 4. Identify Patterns and connections within and between categories

As the data is organized into categories, either by question or by case, patterns and connections will emerge both within and between the categories. Assessing the relative importance of different themes or highlighting subtle differences may be important to the analysis. This can be done by summarizing the information pertaining to one theme or capturing the similarities or differences in respondent’s responses within a category, by assembling all the data pertaining to the particular theme. Some questions to ask yourself would be: What are the key ideas being expressed within each category? What are the similarities and differences in the way people responded, including the subtle variations? You could also count the number of times a particular theme comes up or the number of unique

respondents who refer to certain themes to show which categories appear to be more important. This can help to reveal general patterns in the data.

Step 5. Interpretation – Bringing it all together

Explain the findings by using the themes and connections. What does it all mean and what is really important? This is what is called interpreting the data and attaching meaning and significance to the analysis. A good place to start is to develop a list of key points or important findings that were discovered as a result of categorizing and sorting the data. Reflect and think about what has been learnt and what are the major lessons, and what new things were learnt. What will the people who use the results of the evaluations be most interested in knowing?

I followed the steps, which I found to be highly helpful in my research. I was careful to go through a series of steps to become comfortable with the data. I read through the initial set of transcripts, field notes and the company documents without making any notes at first, or even attempting to interpret the data. After the first reading of the notes, I began to write down a few notes which became of interest to me, seemed significant, and ‘struck a chord.’ I then re-read the data and then at this point, I began to make more notes about significant categories that were emerging from the data. I started to pick up key words used by the participants and to start giving names to the themes that were developing. This is how I started to code. I then reviewed the codes and where there were two or more phrases that related to the same issue, I then deleted one of them. “I then examined to see how the developed codes were relevant to concepts and categories in the existing literature and to see

if there were any connections between the codes or if there is any evidence that may suggest one thing tends to be associated with or caused by something else. (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 135).”

3.10 Thematic Data Analysis

This section is important for the research since it examines how the data garnered was processed to supply the findings for the study. “Thematic analysis is referred to as a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns and themes within the data (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 135).” “Comparatively, qualitative thematic analysis is the one that is dependent on the recognition of themes in qualitative data through rigorous codification and involves the identification of recurring patterns that are presented by the researcher as overarching statement or themes (Lochmiller, 2021, p. 2029).” Coding qualitative research to find common themes and concepts is part of thematic analysis (Medelyan, 2023). Thematic analysis extracts and identifies themes from text by analyzing the word and sentence structure (Medelyan, 2023). Thematic analysis was used in the study to make sense of the interviews and focus group data that were collected. “I read through each transcript and tried to make sense of the interview and focus group data and then as a collective set, I examined the transcript to make sense of what was said by the participants as a group. Thematic analysis involves searching across a data set, be that a number of interviews or focus group, or a range of texts in order to find repeated patterns of meaning. (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 134).” “Coding plays a major role in thematic analysis to deconstruct data, put them into codes and find links between them. Axial coding is the step that allows researchers to connect different codes

identified in the initial coding into categories and sub-categories (Liamputtong, 2009, p. 134).” By making these connections between the main categories and sub-categories, I was able to find themes emerging in the data. Applying the coding and conducting the literature review increased my understanding and assisted me in identifying themes of the different beliefs, values, and attitudes. I also got to understand the strategies in leading the different generational cohorts within the workforce. Once I identified the themes, I correlated the themes identified as an outcome of the data analysis process with the literature findings. I then triangulated data from the semi-structured interviews, company documentations, focus group discussions with the literature findings. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of a phenomena (Carter et al. 2014). “Triangulation is also viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Carter et al. 2014, p. 545).” The coding process can be time-consuming, monotonous, and demanding if it is mainly done manually. The data was organized and coded to identify themes and patterns. Although post its were used to help capture the information and the themes that were arising, I also employed the use of NVivo 11 for Windows to assist in the coding process. “NVivo provides a set of tools that assists in undertaking an analysis of qualitative data (Jackson & Bazeley, 2018, p. 8).” “The use of a computer is not intended to replace the time-honoured ways of learning from data and is not meant to diminish the role of the researcher in exploring and interpreting rich data (Jackson & Bazeley, 2018, p. 8).” “According to Jackson & Bazeley (2018, p. 8) NVivo was created by researchers who used manual methods, and there are various benefits to using this technology, including the ability to: mimic manual strategies for handling qualitative data, develop an efficiently searchable

warehouse database that records the choices made during analysis and can be examined and re-examined with relative ease, increase the efficiency of the more mundane and administrative tasks in organizing data, and also pushes the boundaries of what qualitative researchers are able to do manually by providing a few tools that open new opportunities.” I chose to use NVivo for my study due to its user-friendly interface and also, the ability to import documents directly via the word processing software. NVivo assisted me greatly in managing the data and keeping track of the messy records, managing the ideas, and providing faster access to conceptual and theoretical knowledge that was generated throughout the research process. I was also able to query the data by asking the program very simple or very complex questions, and the program was able to retrieve any information that was relevant to determining an answer to those questions. One of my favourite uses of the program was that it helped me to visualize the data and to visually represent the relationships amongst the different themes in a range of display.

To maintain an objective analysis, and not be biased in the results, several sources of data from different sources will help to enhance the process and increase the credibility of the findings. The use of the NVivo 11 software assisted in removing the bias from the research, which under normal human, manual analysis, is prone to bias. Using the NVivo 11 software also saved me a great deal of time and energy. The purpose of qualitative research is not necessarily to generalize across population, but it is meant to provide undertaking from the respondents’ perspectives (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003). It is important to note that even in open-ended questions, you are still seeking insight, differences, the individuals’ own perspectives and meaning, and the focus should be on the individual’s own or unique response. It is also important to recognize that every study has limitations and presenting the

limitations that were experienced during the research process while collecting and analyzing the data will help others better understand how conclusions were arrived at. It is also equally important to address other possible alternative explanations to the results and how evidence supports the interpretation of the data.

Coding in qualitative research is extremely important and is seen through the capture of words and phrases in each response, through assigning codes to these responses, which then leads to analyzing and summarizing of the results of the entire survey (Medelyan, 2023). Through the use of software, you can use thematic analysis software to automate the coding of your qualitative data, which divides the text into themes. (Medelyan, 2023). According to Medelyan (2023), thematic analysis software operates autonomously, eliminating the need to set up themes or categories ahead of time, you won't need to train the algorithm because it learns independently on its own, and also, it can easily capture the 'unknowns unknowns' to identify themes you might not have initially recognized on your own. This saved a considerably amount of time during the research process.

3.11 Reliability and Validity

“According to Leung (2015), researchers in a qualitative study evaluates the findings, reliability and validity using suitable designs and methods (Jackson, 2021, p. 364).”

Reliability and validity are related to the accuracy and precision of research and aims to make the qualitative research rigorous. The use of reliability and validity in qualitative research are quite common and is now considered as a critical component in the qualitative research paradigm (Golafshani, 2002). “Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor, and quality in qualitative paradigm

(Golafshani, 2003, p. 604).” According to Fairly (2013), the focus of a researcher in qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon under study and to ensure that the research process is properly represented (Lasten, 2016). “According to Long & Johnson (2000, p. 30), failure to assess the worth of a study in terms of the soundness of its method, the accuracy of its findings, and the integrity of assumptions made, or conclusions reached, can have devastating consequences on the research.”

“Long & Johnson (2000, p. 30), contend that ambiguous or meaningless findings may result in wasted time and effort, and more devastating, findings that are simply wrong could result in the adoption of dangerous or harmful practices.” The evaluation of the studies conducted must then become an essential pre-requisite of the application of the findings (Long & Johnson, 2000). The concept of reliability can best be described as the consistency or constancy of a measuring instrument, or the degree of consistency or dependability with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure (Long & Johnson, 2000). “According to Hammersley (1992, p.67), reliability pertains to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Long & Johnson, 2000). “

“Brink, 1991, p.176, proposes three tests to ensure reliability in qualitative research, each to be used as is appropriate according to the specific studies (Long & Johnson, 2000).” The author suggests that ‘stability’ is established when asking identical questions of an informant at different times produces consistent answers. There should also be a level of ‘consistency’ which pertains to the consistency of responses within a single interview, ensuring that a respondent’s answers on a specific topic are stable. ‘Equivalence’ is assessed by using different versions of a question with the same meaning in one interview or through

simultaneous observation by two researchers. I made use of and adhered to an interview protocol as a guide during the data collection process in order to ensure consistency across all interview questions and focus group discussions. In order to ensure dependability, I created and maintained a case study database which contained all data from the interviews, focus group discussions, audio recordings, transcripts, and the field notes that were collected throughout the research process. I also made use of the member-checking technique to enhance reliability by providing transcripts and a summary of the interpretation of each of the interview questions in order to allow participants to check for accuracy. “Yin, 2014 suggests that in order to enhance reliability in research, the researcher must ensure that the collected data be complete, accurate, and timeless to be of quality and that the use of multiple data sources might improve the reliability of a case study (Lasten, 2016, p. 57).” “Sykes, 1911, makes a distinction between the validity of the data and the generalizability of the conclusions in the study and asserts that if you have good data, first and foremost, depends on the purpose of the study (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 551).” The interaction between the researcher and the participants in the study leads to circumstances that improves the possibility of getting good data that provides the information needed according to the purpose (Stenbacka, 2001). I was careful to foster an open and trusting relationship with the participants by engaging them very early in the research process, built a cordial relationship before entering into the interview phase, focus group discussions, and created a safe space within which they could express themselves freely. Further, Stenbacka (2001), argues that in qualitative research, the answer to the questions of how to ensure validity in the study is quite simple. “The author asserts that with the purpose of generating understanding of a social phenomenon, the researcher is interested in understanding the participant’s reality based on a specified problem area, and

that the understanding of the phenomenon is valid if the informant is part of the problem area, and the informant is given the opportunity to speak freely according to the informant's knowledge structures. Validity is therefore achieved when using the method of non-forcing interviews with strategically well- chosen informants (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 551).”

According to Long & Johnson (2000), validity is taken to mean the determination of whether a measurement instrument measures what it is intended to measure or the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. “Hammersley, 1992, p. 69, asserts that a perspective on validity is that it is valid or true if it accurately represents those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain, or theorize (Long & Johnson, 2000).” Gabriel (1990), states that there is an easy answer to the issue of validity in qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001). “According to Hammersley (1992, p.69), no knowledge can be counted as certain, and the best we can do is to seek means of judging claims to knowledge in terms of their likely truth (Long & Johnson, 2000).” “These means are laid out as considering the plausibility of the claim, the credibility of the claim, and the weight of the evidence of each of these (Long & Johnson, 2000, p. 31).” Bryman, 2008, takes validity as the ‘integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research’ (Bapir, 2012).

Additionally, Lawrence Neuman, 2003, puts validity in a very concrete expression, asserting that ‘validity means truthful’ referring to the bridge between the construct and the data (Bapir, 2012). “As purported by Long & Johnson (2000, p. 32), validity is typically established through three main considerations: content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity.” “Content validity depends largely on sampling and careful construction of the instrument and refers to the degree to which the entirety of the phenomenon under investigation is addressed. Criterion-related validity is involving the comparison of the

instrument and findings with an established standard to determine the correlation between measured performance and actual performance. Additionally, construct validity is associated with consideration of the proximity of the instrument to the construct in question (Long & Johnson, 2000, p. 32).” Norris (1997) asserts that one practical way to consider the issue of validity is to focus on error and bias, since research is a human activity and subjected to the same kind of failings as other human activities. The author goes on to assert that research demands commitment and concentration, and the researcher should be open minded and be willing to look at the self and the way it influences the quality of the data and the reports. The researcher must be willing to accept criticism and to be self-critical in a constructive manner.

“Golafshani (2003, p. 602) posits that triangulation is typically a strategy for improving reliability and validity of research or evaluations of findings.” “Patton, 2001, advocates the use of triangulation by asserting that triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. Engaging multiple methods, such as observation, interviews, focus groups, and recordings will lead to more valid, reliable, and diverse construction of realities (Golafshani, 2003, p. 603).” “The key to achieving reliability and validity in qualitative research is to eliminate bias and increase the researcher’s truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon (Golafshani, 2003, p. 603).” Additionally, Farrell, 2013, asserts that one criterion for assessing the credibility of the findings is to reinforce that the findings of the study are credible from the participant’s perspective (Lasten, 2016). The method that I implemented to achieve this credibility was to allow participants who were willing, to participate in the member-checking process to validate the correctness of the interview and focus group transcripts and the interpretation of the research question. I requested from the

participants that they judged the interpretation of the responses to the interview questions and the interview transcripts for correctness, during the follow-up meeting.

“According to Kvale (1996), transcription is the transference of spoken language with its particular sets of rules to the written word with its own sets of rules (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 232).” It was important that the insights gained from analysis of the data from the feedback comments on the transcripts be authenticated by the participants in the study. “The review of the transcription by the participants was intended to validate the transcripts to preserve research ethics, empower the participants by allowing them to control what was written and contributed to the quality of the research. Another advantage to having the participants in the study review the transcripts was to ensure that justice, fairness, equality and generalization were observed through the use of standards and fair processes for checking the said transcripts, for example by comparing the transcripts to the interview protocols set up in the beginning (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 232).” Additionally, this also showed a commitment to the principle that research participants should not be harmed or exploited for the promotion of knowledge and the research should aspire to protect human dignity, minimize elements of harm, and maximize elements of the public benefit in the advancement of knowledge (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). This sense of openness to the interview allowed for a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere on the part of the interviewees, which led to the removal of defence mechanisms and barriers, and for the participants to be more candid and open throughout the process.

“Data saturation has also been acknowledged by many social scientists as evidence of rigor in qualitative research (Constantinou et al. 2017, p. 571).” “Admittedly, there have been considerable discussions on how to achieve data saturation throughout the years and, according Constantinou et al. (2017, p. 571), often researchers who use data saturation in their

research methodologies do not adequately describe how this is achieved.” “According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), data saturation is a term which has been used as a baseline for researchers to decide when to stop collecting data, and qualitative data is saturated when the topics or themes that derived from the dataset are repeated (Constantinou et al. 2017, p. 572).” “Accordingly, data is saturated when a dataset ceases to provide new information or themes, which relate to the research question (Constantinou et al. 2017, p. 572).”

“Duan et al. 2015, expounds that researchers take into account the amount of information required to fulfil the study’s purpose and ensure credibility of a study when selecting sample size, while Constantinou et al. (2017, p. 587) posits that the sampling of 10 to twelve participants in a case study is enough to amass enough data necessary to understand an occurrence’s context.” “Yin, 2018, argues that an essential element of multiple case study research is to ensure data saturation (Constantinou et al., 2017, p. 576).” I was careful in the selection of participants in the study, as posited by Moser and Korstjens, 2018, “that one way to ensure data saturation is to ensure that the selected participants possess the necessary experience and knowledge relevant to the research topic. (Constantinou et al. 2017, p. 575).” I conducted the semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, as well as the focus group discussions until data saturation was achieved, where no additional information was required for the study.

3.12 Transition and Summary

In the foregoing section, I discussed the purpose of this qualitative study, which was to explore strategies that HR practitioners can implement in assisting business leaders achieve higher productivity and enhanced team collaboration in a multigenerational workforce. I also

presented a discussion on my role as a researcher and gave a description of the target population and sample that consisted of 10 purposively selected mid to high level business executives, including two executives from a large company in British Columbia, Canada, HR practitioners, including team leaders and a selected group of 20 employees for the focus group discussions who worked in a utility company in Jamaica. I made the distinction in why I chose two business executives in Canada as well, as this organization had just implemented strategies to improve working relationships amongst the different generations working in the organization, and how this would contribute to the research in gaining their perspective and assisting in the triangulation process.

In the preceding section, I also provided a justification for using an exploratory case study for this research. I subsequently demonstrated the importance of observing ethical requirements and described how I conformed to these ethical requirements throughout the study. I included a discussion on how data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation. I also presented a brief distinction between primary and secondary data in this section. This was combined with a methodological process of triangulation and member-checking which contributed to the requirements of data saturation in the study. In this section, I also examined the role of the purposely chosen study participants and the importance of candidate selection in the research process. Importantly, I demonstrated the coding process and proved how themes evolved through data saturation and how the eventual findings were derived. This section concluded with a discussion on the data collection and analysis process and the methods that I employed that would guarantee research quality and rigor and ensure reliability and validity throughout the research process.

The focus of this study was on finding strategies that HR practitioners could implement within their organizations to assist leaders in leading a multi-generational workforce. Section 4 presents the research questions, the themes that emerged from the research and the subsequent findings of this study. This section also provides a description of the target company as well as a description of the participants in the interviews. Additionally, chapter four discusses the relevance of the themes to the conceptual framework and concludes with a discussion on its relevance and application to professional practices.

Chapter IV: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore strategies that HR practitioners can implement in an organization to equip leaders in effectively leading a multi-generational workforce to improve team collaboration and increase productivity. The motivation for the study was the ever-growing presence of a multigenerational workforce all situated within the same organization, experiencing conflict, and the blatant gap in the literature regarding how leaders can effectively lead a multi-generational workforce to have better team collaboration and increased productivity. The research focused on a large utility company in Jamaica, which I worked at for four years and experienced, firsthand, the effects of having an age-diverse workforce and the lack of effective leadership knowledge and capacity to support this paradigm shift. There was also a general lack of flexible HR policies and awareness training to equip leaders in effectively managing a multi-generational workforce. The research was even more justified by the ever-growing presence of different generational cohorts working in the same space, as was the case in this organization,

employees were staying longer on the job, allowing for a wider gap in the generations that existed in the organization.

In order to carry out the research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with six top-level business executives and senior managers in a large organization in Jamaica, along with HR business practitioners (middle level managers) within the same organization. I also conducted 2 sets of focus groups with different sets of employees from different age groups, within the same organization. To extend my research, I also conducted interviews with two senior level executives from a large organization in Canada to get their perspective on leading a multi-generational workforce and examined how it aligned with the executives from Jamaica. For the interviews and focus group, the participants chose the date, time and place that was most convenient for them and would offer them the space to be open and present during the process. This also allowed them a space to have the sessions go undisturbed without any distractions. The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were led by seven open-ended questions, and all interviews and focus group discussions were kept within the sixty minutes range. I also received the participants approval for both the recording of the interviews and focus group and the approval to continue before proceeding with the interviews and focus groups and shared the interview protocol before proceeding with the interviews.

Post Its Notes, Microsoft Excel and NVivo 11 Pro for Windows were used to assist in the coding process. I triangulated the data for my semi-structured interviews and focus groups, company documentation and literature. The result of which, I identified 15 themes, which I grouped into six thematic categories.

Thematic category	Themes
1. Effect of a multi-generational workforce on productivity	Theme 1: Positive effect of a multi-generational workforce on productivity Theme 2: Negative effect of a multi-generational workforce on productivity
2. Effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration	Theme 3: Positive effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration Theme 4: Negative effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration
3. Strategies to improve productivity in a multi-generational workforce	Theme 5: Implement a structured communication plan Theme 6: Implement cross-functional collaboration with knowledge transfer Theme 7: Encourage continuous learning
4. Strategies to improve team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce	Theme 8: Deploy engagement and team building strategies Theme 9: Conduct sensitization training across generations
5. Barriers when introducing strategies to improve productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce	Theme 10: Resistance to change Theme 11: Institutional experience with past change Theme 12: Inflexible policies and procedures
6. Strategies to counter resistance to change, institutional experience with past change, and inflexible HR policies and procedures	Theme 13: Build Trust Theme 14: Create environment for open dialogue Theme 15: Involve cohorts in the revision of policies

Table 4- Themes per Thematic Category

Source: Giovanni Malcolm

Theme 1 and Theme 2 include findings on the effect of a multi-generational workforce on productivity, while Theme 3 and Theme 4 include findings on the effect of a multigenerational workforce on team collaboration. Themes 5-9 reflect leadership strategies to improve productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce. Themes 10 to 12 address leadership barriers when deploying strategies to improve productivity and team

collaboration in a multi-generational workforce. Themes 13-15 reflect the strategies to counter resistance to change, countering institutional experience with past changes and countering inflexible HR policies and procedures.

Research Questions

4.1 Research Question One

How does the co-existence of different generations in the workplace affect team collaboration and productivity?

4.2 Research Question Two

What strategies would you say work best to improve team collaboration amongst employees from different generations?

4.3 Research Question Three

What strategies would you say work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations?

4.4 Research Question Four

What barriers did you encounter when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity amongst the different age groups?

4.5 Research Question Five

How did you address the barriers you encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity amongst the different generations?

4.6 Research Question Six

How can HR Managers lead the charge in mentoring leaders for the different generations?

4.7 Research Question Seven

What additional information can you provide to HR leaders in the utility industry in coaching and supporting leaders to effectively manage a multi-generational workforce?

4.8 Presentation of the Findings

This section in the paper provides the synthesis for the importance of the research findings for answering the question of the study. In qualitative research, the findings should prioritize detailed descriptions, specific examples and the incorporation and discussion of outliers rather than merely count instances of a phenomenon. Good qualitative studies obtain a kind of undeniability to their results, provided the findings come with detailed accounts of the phenomenon (Linneberg & Korsgard, 2019). The information below contains the research questions and the synthesis of the findings.

I purposely selected six top level business executives, and four senior and middle managers based on their lived experience developing and deploying successful strategies in their organization to improve workplace productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce. I conducted semi-structured interviews, two separate focus groups and collected data to answer the following central research question: What strategies do HR practitioners need to implement into the organization that can assist leaders in improving workplace productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce? I recorded the interview and focus groups on two separate devices as a precautionary measure in the event of any mishaps. A digital audio recording device was used for the recording of the interviews and focus groups, and I also used my smartphone, to which I attached a stand to record both audio and video of the interviews and focus groups. This provided a comprehensive record of the interviews and the focus groups, and the verbal and non-verbal

cues and communications displayed during the sessions. I then also downloaded the recording to my laptop computer. I then transcribed the interviews and focus group discussions verbatim, summarized the participants' responses to each question, and afterwards, emailed the summary of the participants' response to the participants who opted to participate in the member-checking process. Member-checking, also known as member validation, can be defined as a research phase during which the transcription of the interview is taken back to the participants who provided the information for scrutiny to ensure accuracy (Koelsch, 2013).

An excel sheet was used, in addition to Microsoft Word NVivo to store and format my data which led to the analysis of the data. I transcribed the interviews, transcribed the focus group discussions, immersed myself into the data, developed a data coding system and linked codes to generate overarching themes which led to the development of my theory. Using the excel sheet allowed me to navigate smoothly and flexibly through the data until a coherent narrative emerged. I started to analyze the data after all the interviews were conducted. I analyzed each participant's data on an individual level, and then logged the responses in my excel sheet with codes attached to each participant and codes attached to emerging themes. As an additional resource, post it notes were used to write out themes that had emerged.

Fifteen themes emerged from my analysis of participants' responses from the individual interviews, the two separate focus groups, company documentation, and the literature. Company documentation for the Jamaica Public service included the organization's Annual Report, 2022, and information obtained from their website; jpsco.com (see Appendix E). Mannheim's (1952) generational theory was used for the conceptual framework in this study.

Descriptive Data Concerning the Target Company and Participants of the Target Company (JPS)

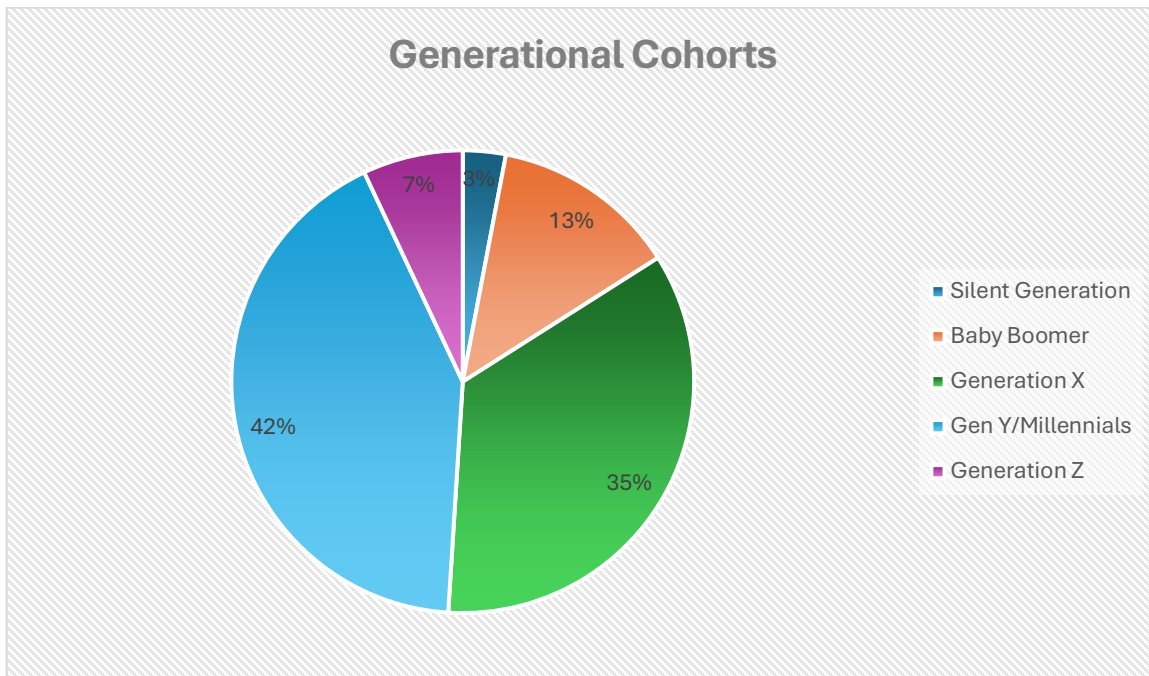
The company under study, Jamaica Public Service Company Limited, is a large organization located in the Caribbean nation country of Jamaica. The company is the only supplier of electricity to the island and has a workforce of approximately 1652 employees, servicing approximately 680,000 customers. According to the company's website, the company is owned 40% by Korea East-West Power (EWP) from Korea, 40% by Marubeni from Japan, 19% by the Jamaican government and 1% by private individuals (JPS100, 2023). The company runs three power stations, seven hydroelectric plants and one wind farm. The company has its beginnings in the 1800s and has evolved over the years from private to government ownership to its current structure.

Jamaica was one of the first in the world to have electricity, with the journey beginning when the Jamaica Electric Light Company (predecessor to Jamaica Public Service) started to supply electricity from a small coal-burning steam generating plant on Gold Street in Kingston (JPS Communications Department, 2023). This was quite an achievement for Kingston, a small island city, in Jamaica, achieving this before many large British cities and even before New York City. On May 25, 1923, the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) came into being as legal entity to 3928 customers (JPS Communications Department, 2023). The company's vision is: 'We are the people leading the energy revolution, unleashing Jamaica's growth and prosperity.' The company's mission is: 'Through inspired and committed employees, and innovative technologies, we deliver an energy solution to empower every Jamaican, fuel the growth of businesses, and support national development (JPS Digital Annual, 2018)

The Jamaica Public service volunteer team: Volunteers on location to serve (VOLTS) planted 3000 trees along a major highway in Jamaica in August 2023 and announced plans to add twelve new electric vehicle charging stations by end of 2023. Recently the company through the JPS Foundation provided J\$800,000 in cash prizes to the National School Tree Planting Competition Winners. In 2020, the company invested over J\$600 million in upgrading its technology and has received international recognition for its significant gains in service reliability and automation operations, which have greatly benefitted its customers (JPS Communications Department, 2023). The company received the prestigious award of OSI Most Valuable Global Customer Award for Grid Management System. OSI (Open Systems International), an AspenTech business, and is the world's leading supplier of Operations Technology Solutions, a software that combines information technology and engineering applications.

According to Lincoy Small, Director of System Operations at JPS, the company uses the system to monitor and control various aspects of energy production, distribution and consumption and that the system has helped the energy company to keep up with the increased changes in energy management and automation, and provide customers with more reliable service (JPS Communications Department, 2023).

The targeted company, the Jamaica Public Service Company Limited (JPS) has a multi-generational workforce. The composition of the company's workforce in terms of generational cohorts was; Silent Generation 3%, Baby Boomer 13%, Generation X 35%, Generation Y 42%, and Generation Z was 7% of the population. At the time of the study, the company had 1652 employees.



Retrieved from: Jamaica Public Service Company Limited HR Department: **(JPS100, 2023)**
 Figure 5- Generational Cohorts shows the composition of the workforce in terms of generational cohorts.

Details of participants in the study

The following table summarizes the list of participants in the interview process from both the target company in Kingston, Jamaica and the comparison company in British Columbia, Canada. All personal information of the study participants was removed, and the participants were represented by unique identifiers instead.

Participants Unique Identifier and Interviews Summary of the Participants

Participant	Unique Identifier	Gender	Age (years)	Position	Duration	Discussion Language
1.	BCNSM01	Female	45-50	SBE	65 min.	English
2.	SPJGT02	Female	35-40	SM	60 min.	English
3.	SPJLN03	Female	40-45	MM	60 min.	English
4.	SPJKC04	Male	40-45	MM	60 min.	English
5.	SPJDC05	Male	50-55	SM	65 min.	English
6.	SPJVM06	Male	45-50	SM	60 min.	English
7.	SPJTTM07	Female	55-60	SM	55 min.	English
8.	SPJKT08	Female	60-65	SBE	60 min.	English
9.	TCBEP01	Female	40-45	SBE	60 min.	English
10.	TCBMZ02	Female	40-45	SBE	70 min.	English

Table 5- Participants Unique Identifier and Interviews Summary of the Participants

Legend: Senior Business Executive (SBE), Senior Manager (SM), Middle Manager (MM)

Thematic Category: Effect of a multi-generational workforce on productivity

This thematic category reflects the effect of a multi-generational workforce on an organization’s productivity. Two themes emerged from my coding process and analysis. All participants in the interviews and all participants from the focus group, all acknowledged that age-diversity in the workforce could have both positive and negative effects on productivity. According to SPJTTM0, BCNSM01, SPJGT02 and SPJLN03, and 16 participants in the focus group; age diversity in the workplace has significant positive impacts on productivity if engaged in the correct manner. BCNSM01 and SPJGT02 and 14 participants in the focus group observed that having a multi-generational workforce can have a negative impact on productivity, but there is an opportunity to have a shared experience turn into a positive, depending on the contextual factors. All participants in the interviews and the focus groups observed that they have seen both positive and negative results on productivity from having a multi-generational workforce and leaders need to create an environment where the different

cohorts can exist in a positive environment in order to improve productivity. These observations by the participants are in line with the evidence found by Bashir et al. (2021) who posit that age diversity can lead to either a positive or a negative effect on productivity.

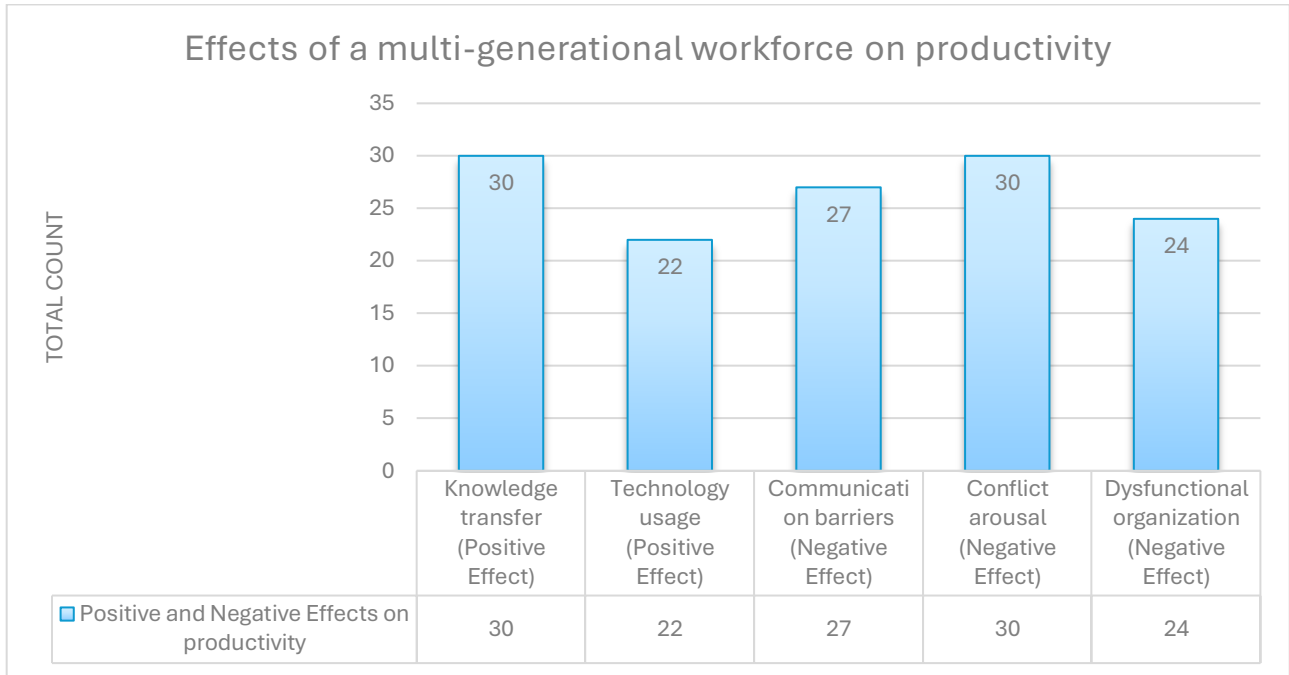


Figure 6- themes and respective counts for thematic category 1

Source: Giovanni Malcolm

Theme 1: Positive effect of a multi-generational workforce on productivity

All of the executives and senior management and middle management from the one-on-one interviews and all participants from the focus group recognized the ability for knowledge transfer across the different generations as one of the positive effects of having a multi-generational workforce. As posited by Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, knowledge is regarded as the most critical resource of an organization, and indeed, of the economy’s primary source of production and value (Brcic & Mihelic, 2015). According to Grover & Davenport (2001), knowledge sharing is conceptualized as an exchange of organizational

knowledge between different sets of people in an organization and as posited by Morgan, 2003, in order for this to be achieved successfully, cooperation between the different sets of employees is needed for knowledge givers and receivers to coordinate their efforts to accomplish the task of sharing and learning (Brcic & Mihelic, 2015). SPJTTM07, BCNSM01, SPJDC05, SPJVM08 and SPJGT02 expressed that fostering an environment of knowledge sharing can have a positive effective on productivity. The target company on its website states that ‘We are the people leading the energy revolution, unleashing Jamaica’s growth and prosperity’ (JPS100, 2023). It therefore becomes important that the different generations working in the organization collaborate and share knowledge in order to unleash this growth and prosperity. Participants BCNSM01, SPJLN03, SPJTTM07, SPJKT08 and participants from the focus group argued that the major difference between the younger generation and the older generation is that the younger generation’s first instinct is to use technology to make their work and life easier, while the older generation prefer to do things the traditional way and can sometimes be very manual. This continues to be a bone of contention amongst the different generations. Interestingly, a vast majority of the participants greed that having a multi-generational workforce can contribute positively to the use of technology, with the younger generation leading the way. Participants BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, SPJKC04, SPJDC05, and 17 participants form the focus group all agreed that the use of technology can contribute positively to a multi-generational workforce, and that this provides an opportunity for the younger generation to mento the older generation and build team camaraderie. Participant SPJTTM07 explained that the younger generation, and their lives are centered around technology and social media and brings this to the workplace as a resource. So too, in their daily interactions, the different generations have a stark difference in how they choose to

communicate, where the younger generation will prefer to send out communication in an email, SMS or a memorandum and even on social media platforms, where the older generation prefer to have face to face conversation and town hall meetings to communicate to the rest of the organization. The older generation rarely checks their social media (if they have it) and therefore some communication is missed in transit. Conversely, according to participant BCNSM01, the younger generation might not show up for town hall meetings. According to participant SPJGT02, the use of new technologies like social media, instant messaging, text messaging and teams messaging are taking centre stage with the younger generation and are now complementary to traditional forms of communication tools, such as face to face meetings, one on one conversations at the cooler, and town hall meetings. Participant SPJGT02, concludes that combining a traditional approach with new technologies will create an environment where all generations can thrive, and the co-existence of a multigenerational workforce will contribute positively to productivity. Participant SPJGT02 explained how having a multi-generational workforce will push the company to keep up with technological advancement and be able to attract young talent, while at the same time maintaining a sense of community where the younger generation joining the organization will be more open to engaging the older generation in showcasing new technologies and the benefits. Participant SPJGT02 went further to allude that the younger generation would be more open to being empathetic to the needs of the older generations, and the older generations being open to learn the new ways of knowing, and new ways of doing with proper guidance. All participants in the study shared that there needs to be willingness and motivation on both the older and younger generation's part in order for there to be a positive impact on productivity.

Theme 2: Negative effect of a multi-generational workforce on productivity

The participants in the study posited that if a multi-generational workforce is not managed properly, that this could contribute to significant challenges for the business. Participants SPJDC05, SPJTTM01, SPJKC04 and BCNSM01 and participants in the focus group all concluded that a multi-generational workforce could have a negative impact on productivity if leaders do not manage the workforce effectively. SPJKC04 and BCNSM01 explained that in their experience, having different generations working together in the same environment could negatively impact productivity. According to Saxena (2014), the organization consists of a network of people who work together to achieve some common objectives and if this network has some loopholes, then it would be very difficult for any organization to achieve those objectives effectively. SPJLN03, SPJGT02, SPJVM08 and SPJKC04, BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJVM06, SPJKT08, and SPJTTM07 all asserted that the differences in the characteristics between the younger and the older generations could affect productivity negatively. SPJLN03 stated. “the difference between the younger generation and the older generation is that while the younger generation concentrates on the ease of getting things done, for instance; with the use of technology to create a report or even writing a paper, the older generation is more focused on doing things the old-fashioned or traditional way, for instance, writing out a report by hand and doing their research manually instead of relying on AI technology to write a paper for them.

Additionally, SPJLN03 stated, “it is very difficult for the younger generation to understand the older generation and why they would insist on doing things the ‘hard way’ when technology could make it easier for them, while at the same time, the older generation wonders why the younger generation would not want to exercise the muscles in their brain

and in relying so much on technology, it makes the younger generation lazy. SPJLN03, SPJDC05, SPJTMM07, SPJKT08, SPJGT02, and SPJVM06 argued that failure to effectively manage a multi-generational workforce can create challenges for business leaders when having to navigate the different nuances that come with the different characteristics of this diverse workforce and can have a negative impact on productivity. SPJKC04 argued that it can be very difficult to achieve productivity targets when the employees in the organizations are not working in tandem and having a multi-generational workforce further exacerbates this. The workforce has become more diverse than ever before, and even though organizations can capitalize on workforce diversity to enhance innovation and organizational performance, it has been found that workforce diversity comes with potential risks, of which interpersonal conflict is the most salient one and organizations need to be aware of the detrimental impact of workforce diversity (Liu et al. 2023).

All participants, business executives, senior level management and middle management (BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, SPJKC04, SPJDC05, SPJVM08, SPJTMM07, SPJKT08, TCBEP01, TCBMZ02) and all participants in the focus group discussions concluded that the coexistence of a multi-generational workforce (if not managed properly) could impact relationships, introduce conflict, and affect productivity negatively, which in turn affect the organization's performance and sustainability. SPJTMM07, SPJLN03, SPJKC04, SPJKT08, and SPJGT02 all highlighted that the differences in how the younger generation and the older generation perceives work and how to get it done could negatively affect productivity, since these differences can affect communication, and that HR practitioners need to put effective strategies in place to help leaders navigate the different nuances with the generations in order to allow for better communication. Seven of the ten

participants in the face-to-face interview (TCBEP01, SPJDC05, BCNSM01, SPJKT08, SPJTTM07, SPJVM06 and SPJKC04) and all participants in the focus group were incessant that the way the older and the younger generations communicate are vastly different and this can affect productivity due to misunderstanding. They insisted that the generations had different communications styles, how they want to receive communication, how they give communication, and the feedback mechanisms in place, differ greatly with the different generations. These participants concluded that if communication is not a priority for leaders and if they are not tailored to meet the different needs of the generations, this can have a significant impact on the organization's productivity. BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, SPJDC05, SPJVM06, SPJTTM07, and 18 participants from the focus group discussions also insisted that this can lead to a dysfunctional organization that is fraught with tension and disengagement. TCBEP01 asserted that having different forms of communication is critical to ensure clarity and that all generations are hearing the same thing with the different modes of communication. For instance, TCBMZ02 argued that the younger generation does not like to read and prefer to receive information through digital and visual forms of communication, whereas the older generation prefers to receive communication in different formats like an email or a memorandum and has no issue with reading. SPJTTM07, SPJVM06, SPJKT07, and SPJGT02 were mostly adamant that the younger generation prefers to use social media to communicate, and leaders need to keep this in mind when managing a multi-generational workforce and that they need to use the most appropriate communication tools and create the right atmosphere for each of the generation in the workplace. SPJTTM07 also asserted and had this to say, "the older generation like to receive information on paper, and this is their

way of validating information, and this way gives them confidence that the information is true.” As expounded by BCNSM01:

“The different views, the differences in how the younger generation sees the organization with how the older generations sees the organization, the different ways of communication, and the different approaches to work between the different generations, creates a real issue on the organization and the level of output. It therefore becomes critically important that HR practitioners put strategies in place to prepare leaders for these different nuances and ensure these strategies are in place and effected before attempting to talk about goals and objectives. If this is not observed and actioned, this might force a lot of the intended goals to be reworked and contribute to waste of time and resources.”

The interview with SPJGT02 aligned with the argument of BCNSM01 and asserted that the gap between the older and the younger generation can bring about conflict and can negatively affect productivity. They also asserted that programs must be put in place to understand the nuances of the different generations before attempting to discuss goals and objectives. SPJGT02 stated:

“The younger generation of which I consider myself to be part of, wants things fast and thrives on instant gratification. We do not believe that we must ‘pay our dues’ and wait our turn, but instead should be judged on our merit and our contributions, while the older generation believe that you should take your time and ‘do your time’ and allow others who have come before us to get their due. The older generation believe that they should wait their turn and that their time will come. This creates a real issue amongst the different generations whose value systems vary drastically and can impede productivity.”

According to BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, SPJDC05, SPJVM06, SPJTTM07, and 18 participants from the focus group discussions a failure to effectively manage a multi-generational workforce can lead to a dysfunctional organization where employees begin to work in silos and there is no team cohesiveness, making the transfer of knowledge challenging which ultimately undermines the objective of the business, which is to perform at optimum and achieve its business objectives and enjoy long term sustainability. Participant BCNSM01 insisted that leaders must make adjustments in their workplace policies and procedures in order to create a productive and conducive workplace for a multi-generational workforce (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). SPJGT02 offered up that the different generations in the workplace have a different value system and do things differently, which can cause conflict and have a negative impact on productivity. According to Kapoor & Solomon (2011), leaders must identify the different characteristics of each generation that are present in the workplace and foster a work environment that aids productivity for each of the generations. SPJTTM07 argued that leaders must provide the different generations with the information and skills needed to understand generational characteristics of their teammates in order to create understanding and empathy towards their fellow co-workers.

Thematic Category 3: Effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration

This thematic category reflects the effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration in an organization. Two themes emerged from my coding process and analysis on this category. All participants in the one-on-one interviews and participants in the focus groups all acknowledged that having a multi-generational workforce can have both a negative and positive effect on team collaboration and effectively, on an organization. As observed by SPJKT08, BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJKC04, and SPJVM06, having a multi-generational

workforce has both negative and positive sides, while SPJTTM07, SPJDC05, SPJKT08, and TCBEP01 observed that having a multi-generational workforce comes as a real opportunity on team collaboration for business leaders. SPJDC05 and SPJLN03 underlined the importance of how a multi-generational workforce could set the organization apart from its competitors and offer a competitive advantage if proper strategies are in place. According to participant SPJDC05, otherwise, it could have a devastating effect on team collaboration, and ultimately on the organization’s goals and objectives. The observations from the participants in the one-on-one interviews and participants from the focus groups are in line with the evidence found by Srinivasan (2012), that when multi-generations are present in the organization, the work values of the different generations are likely to be different and this could result in tensions in the workplace.

Figure 7 shows the themes for this thematic category:

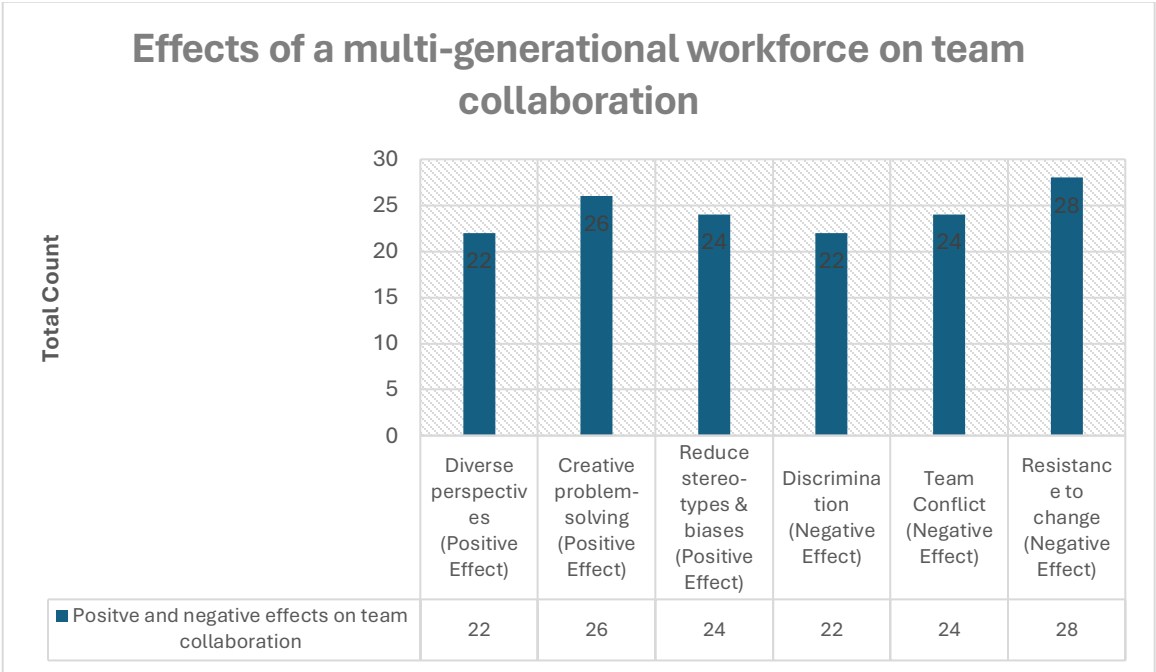


Figure 7- Effect of a multigenerational workforce on team collaboration

Source: Giovanni Malcolm

Theme 3: Positive effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration

Participants BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJKT08, SPJTTM07, SPJVM06, SPJKC04, and 16 participants from the focus group discussions recognized that having a multi-generational workforce leads to having diverse perspectives and experiences across the different generations, and that this is one of the positive effects of having a multi-generational workforce. They all concluded that the different diverse experiences and perspectives that come with having a multi-generational workforce can have a positive effect on team collaboration if managed properly. Participants SPJLN03, SPJDC04, SPJVM06, SPJKT08, TCBE01, BCNSM01, and SPJKC04 and 19 participants from the focus group discussions all agreed that having a multi-generational workforce can lead to more creative problem-solving, innovative ideas, build team camaraderie and improved team collaboration. SPJVM06, SPJKC04, SPJLN03, TCBMZ02, and SPJKT08, SPJTTM07, in addition to 18 participants from the focus group all acknowledged that if effective strategies are put in place by HR leaders, having a multi-generational workforce can help to reduce stereotyping and biases amongst the different generations in the workplace. This aligns with a white paper written by Paychex (2016), which states that by embracing generational differences, organizations can shape workforces that are driven, dedicated, and diverse and that together, a multigenerational workforce can help harness new creativity and old wisdom in order to boost the bottom line, revitalize old processes, benefit customers, and strengthen company culture in order to help their organizations succeed.

According to the company's website JPS (2023), the vision states "We are the people leading the energy revolution, unleashing Jamaica's growth and prosperity." The mission goes on to state, "Through inspired and committed employees, and innovative technologies, we deliver an energy solution to empower every Jamaican, fuel the growth of businesses, and support national development." The very essence of both the vision and mission statement of the target company speak to the fact team collaboration is critical to the success of the organization. There is a significant relationship between the older and the younger generation of employees and on an organization's financial and non-financial performance (Bashir et al. 2021). TCBEP01, BCNSM01, and SPJKT08, in addition to 18 participants from the focus group all acknowledged that having a multi-generational workforce can enable a better understanding and connectivity with a broader range of customers, as age groups often have different needs and preferences. SPJKC04, SPJVM06, SPJKT08, SPJTTM07, and SPJGT02 all agreed that employees in a multi-generational workforce with proper HR strategies in place can foster a greater sense of belonging, because they interact with team members of different backgrounds and ages, which can lead to higher job satisfaction and engagement.

SPJKT08 offered that older employees often have a wealth of knowledge and experience and can serve as mentors to younger team members, passing on their expertise, which can accelerate the professional development of younger employees, but also foster a community within the team. SPJGT02 put forward that the younger generation can help their older counterparts with embracing the use of technology to make their work easier.

TCBMZ02, SPJKT08, SPJLN03, and BCNSM01 and 16 participants from the focus group all acknowledged that organizations with a multigenerational workforce are better equipped to handle succession planning and the older generation of employees can help prepare the next

generation of leaders, ensuring smoother transition of responsibilities. BCNSM01, SPJKT08, TCBE01, TCBMZ02 and participants from the focus group all concluded by saying that having a multigenerational workforce can be a source of strength and innovation for organizations and by harnessing the advantages of different generations, organizations can foster a culture of collaboration and inclusivity, ultimately driving business success.

Theme 4: Negative effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration

I examined data from the semi-structured interviews, the focus group discussions, the literature, and company documentation. I identified codes on the negative effect of a multigenerational workforce on team collaboration. I applied code count and three themes emerged from the coding process and analysis of the negative effect of a multi-generational workforce on team collaboration. The participants in the study showed that not effectively leading a multi-generational workforce could have a negative effect on team collaboration and ultimately on an organization's success. SPJLN03, SPJDC05, SPJGT02, SPJKT08, and SPJVM08, SPJTTM07 and 16 participants in the focus group all agreed that the interaction amongst the different generations in the workplace can introduce bias and discrimination with the younger and older employees being treated unfairly in terms of promotions, opportunities, or work assignments. The participants offered that the younger generations are often discriminated against for wanting things done easy and fast and are always looking for faster upward mobility within the organization, while the older generation might be seen as slow, doing things the hard way, and insist on hierarchy. SPJLN03, SPJGT02, and SPJVM06 acknowledged that this level of discrimination can undermine collaboration and team morale. This is in alignment with Antoniou et al. (2009), who concluded that while age diversity can enhance workplace productivity by the utilization of more experience during problem solving,

it can also introduce disadvantages by introducing the intensification of conflicts for team functioning.

All participants in the study agreed that there are potential negative effects that having a multi-generational workforce can have on team collaboration if not managed properly and if effective HR strategies are not put in place. Participants BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, SPJKC04, SPJDC05, SPJVM06, SPJTTM07, SPJKT08 and all participants in the focus group discussions highlighted that there is a strong resistance to change from older employees and that they often resist adopting to new technologies and processes, while the younger set of employees might be more receptive to change. They asserted that this resistance to change could hinder the adoption of innovative practices, which can affect team efficiency and collaboration. SPJLN03, TCBEP01, BCNSM01, SPJVM06, SPJDC05, SPJTTM07, SPJGT02, and 17 participants from the focus group discussions all offered that the different work ethics of the generations can hinder team collaboration as the younger generation may prioritize work-life balance and value flexibility, while the older generation may have a stronger commitment to traditional work values. This they say can introduce conflict within a multigenerational workforce. TCBEP01 was adamant that these differences in work ethics can lead to tension within teams. SPJVM08, SPJTTM07, and SPJDC05 all agreed that team composition is very important to the success of any organization, and having the right 'mix' of people contributes largely to the efficiency of the team, This aligns well with Antoniou et al. (2009), who posit that research has shown that the composition of a team is a very significant factor which has to be considered for the design of successful teamwork. BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJTTM07, and TCBEP01 were all aligned, and agreed with Antoniou et al. (2009) with the sentiment that diverse personal attributes can be relevant for solving different team objectives and that the

collective intelligence of the team could have a positive effect on team performance, however, if not managed properly could have negative effects on the collaborative effort of the team and ultimately the organization's overall success.

SPJLN03, SPJVM08, SPJKT08, and TCBMZ02 all concluded that there can be inequalities in the workplace based on age and this can have a negative impact on the team and ultimately impede team cohesion and team collaboration. This aligns with Razaqat et al. (2022), whose research posits that problems like in-group favouritism, out-group stereotyping and prejudice, can hinder cooperation, cohesion, and communication between employees of different ages in the organization, which could result in confrontations. SPJKC04, SPJDC05, SPJVM08, and SPJKT08 and participants from the focus group all asserted that because of the stereotypes that exists about the different generations, for instance; the idea that older employees might often be seen as having poor health, that they do not like change, and that the younger generation do not have enough experience, and that they are impatient, that these ideas could severely hamper teamwork and collaboration. These preconceived notions, if not addressed effectively by putting HR strategies in place to demystify, could create significant problems with team cohesion and collaboration. The assertions of the participants align with Jungmann et al. (2020), who offer that stereotypes of older employees may often be perceived as having unfavourable characteristics, such as poor health, inflexible attitudes, and a strong resistance to change, while the younger employees are considered to be less experienced, having little patience and lower social incompetencies. BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJKC04, SPJVM06, SPJTTM07, TCBEP01, and SPJKT08, and participants in the focus group all concluded that if HR strategies were not effectively deployed to assist leaders in leading a multi-generational

workforce, there can be significant challenges with managing a multi-generational workforce and ultimately have a negative effect on team collaboration.

Thematic Category: Strategies to improve productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce

Thematic Category 5-8 reflects strategies to improve productivity and team collaboration within a multi-generational workforce. I examined data from the semi-structured face to face interviews, focus group discussions, company documentation, and the literature and identified codes on strategies to improve productivity in a multi-generational workforce. I applied code count, and four themes emerged from the coding process and analysis. Figure 8 shows the themes and for thematic category for strategies to improve productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce.

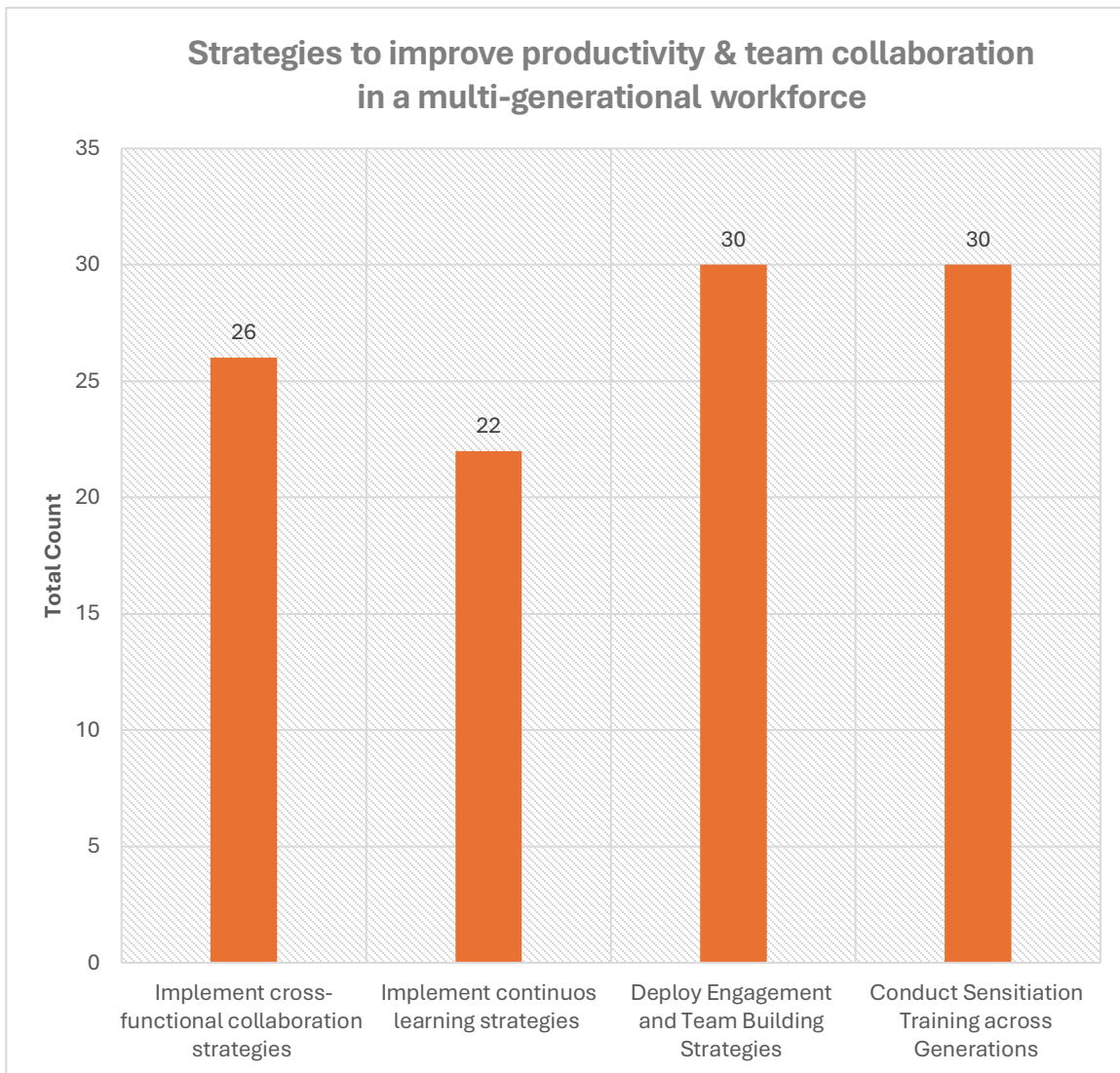


Figure 8- Strategies to improve productivity & team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce: Source: Giovanni Malcolm

Theme 5: Implement cross-functional collaboration strategies

BCNSM01, SPJLN03, SPJKT08, SPJGT02, TCBEP01, SPJVM06, TCBEP01 and participants in the focus group discussions acknowledged that organizations are witnessing an unprecedented demographic shift with multiple generations working side by side and fostering effective cross-functional collaborative strategies is essential for organizations to remain competitive and innovative. Participants BCNSM01, SPJKT08, SPJKC04, SPJGT02,

SPJVM08, SPJTTM07, SPJLN03, SPJDC05 and 18 participants from the focus group all concluded that in order to navigate this complex terrain, it is crucial that HR practitioners implement cross-functional collaborative strategies tailored to a multi-generational workforce. This conclusion is in alignment with (Joshi & Jackson, 2019) whose research indicated that when teams interact with other teams, the organizational context within which teams operate, can create opportunities as well as pose significant challenges for team functioning. In order to meet organizational goals, each team must be effective in terms of its internal functioning, and, in addition, each team must also effectively manage its relationships with other teams and individuals in the organization (Joshi & Jackson, 2019).

BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJKT08, and TCBEP0, plus a general consensus of participants from the focus group all agreed that HR must put strategies in place to cultivate a collaborative culture that values and promotes collaboration across the different age groups. In addition, BCNSM01 and TCBEP01 agreed that the organization must encourage open communication, have respect for diverse viewpoints and also cultivate a shared sense of purpose. SPJTTM07, BCNSM01, SPJLN03, SPJKT08, SPJTTM07, and SPJGT02 and participants from the focus group stressed the importance of having regular team building exercises and ‘touch in’ meetings to ‘test the temperature’ of the employees and find out how they are doing. SPJTTM07 also noted that having regular ‘touch point’ meetings is crucial to cultivating collaboration across the different generations. SPJVM08 and SPJDC05 were both in alignment with recognizing generational preferences in technology and that the organization must ensure that collaboration tools cater to the comfort and familiarity of different age groups in order to leverage the use of technology. SPJLN03, SPJKC04, and SPJGT02 asserted that HR must put a mentorship and reverse mentorship programme in place that allow experienced employees to share their

wisdom with younger colleagues and vice versa. They also agreed that organizations must have an inclusive decision-making policy, and that leaders should involve employees from all generations in the decision-making process and ensure that diverse perspectives are considered, and everyone feels valued. There was a general sentiment across all interviews and a general consensus from the 20 participants in the focus group that stressed the importance of HR policies that provided a baseline for ensuring that everybody is treated fairly by implementing strategies that ensured cross-functional collaboration amongst the different generations in the workplace, and that these policies are drivers of engagement that sets the tone for the organization.

Theme 6: Encourage continuous learning

Continuous learning emerged as one of the leading strategies that can assist with countering the issue of a having a multi-generational workforce. Eight participants in the face-to-face interviews and 14 participants in the focus group advised that organizations should offer continuous training and developmental opportunities to keep employees of all age groups updated on industry trends and skills, generational literacy, and that HR should tailor training methods to suit the learning preferences of different generations. SPJVM08 and SPJDC05 and participants in the focus group stressed the need for HR to put proper training and support in place to bridge technology gaps. Participants BCNSM0, SPJTTM07 and SPJGT02 stressed the need for creating psychological safety in a multi-generational workforce. They agreed that if employees don't feel safe, this can inhibit learning outcomes since employees will be less likely to share their knowledge. This aligns well with Voelpel et al. (2019, p. 3777), who posit that "drawing on social identity theory, having a multi-generational workforce can inhibit employees' learning outcomes because individuals are less likely to share knowledge than in

age-homogenous groups.” However, according to the authors, participants who feel a strong sense of psychological safety in training groups are inclined to share knowledge and report significant learning outcomes, irrespective of the age-diversity within the group.”

BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, and SPJKT08 highlighted the need for knowledge transfer between the different generations which is in alignment with SHRM Foundation Executive Briefing (2023), whose executive asserted that HR practitioners must implement programs that facilitates cross-generational mentoring in order to improve knowledge transfer. BCNSM01 and TCBEP01 both suggested that when you pair younger employees with older mentors and vice versa, this will increase the level of respect and engagement amongst the generations.

Theme 7: Deploy engagement and team building strategies

All Participants responses in both face-to-face interviews and focus groups suggested that HR must implement engagement and team building strategies across the organization in order to bring the different generations together in a setting that they can begin to understand and relate to each other. SPJVM08, SPJTTM07, and SPJDC05 highlighted the significance of understanding and engaging the differences across the various team members. SPJKC04 and SPJGT02 highlighted the importance of giving each generation a voice and to ensure that all voices are being heard and considered. SPJKT08, SPJTTM07, SPJGT02, SPJKC04, SPJVM08 and participants in the focus group discussions emphasized that HR leaders must be purposeful and consistent in their approach to ensuring all generations are engaged and that appropriate team building strategies that incorporate the various generations are put in place. All participants overwhelmingly stressed the point that having a multi-generational workforce can contribute to innovation, productivity, and resilience and in order for organizations to harness

these advantages, HR must prioritize strategies that promote engagement and effective team building across generational lines. This aligns with SHRM Foundation Executive Briefing (2023), that posits that HR practices that improve the age diversity climate within an organization have the potential to further improve performance and lower turnover. All participants in the face-to-face interviews and participants in the focus group insisted that engagement and team building strategies are important in bridging generational gaps and that HR plays a crucial role in this. All participants in the study overwhelmingly suggested that effective team building strategies improves cohesion and collaboration across generations and that this helps to enhance awareness and reduce stereotypes, biases, and misunderstandings based on age.

Participants BCNSM01, SPJKT08, SPJVM07, SPJGT02 and SPJTTM07, TCBEP01, and TCBMZ02 stressed that engagement plays a crucial role in bridging generational gaps and that leaders must recognize that different generations may prefer different communication methods when trying to engage them. They all insisted that leaders should employ a mix of digital tools, face to face meetings, and programs that cater to everyone's needs. They all suggested that HR practitioners should organize social events that appeal to different age groups, promoting interaction and camaraderie outside the workplace. SPJKT08, BCNSM01 and TCBEP01 highlighted that engagement and team building strategies are not just desirable, but essential in organizations where a multi-generational workforce exists. According to TCBEP01:

Team building and engagement strategies empower organizations to capitalize on the wealth of experience, perspectives, and knowledge that diverse generations bring to the table. By fostering engagement and building cohesive teams, organizations can, not only

navigate generational differences, but also thrive on the strengths of their multi-generational workforce, leading to enhanced creativity and contribute to the organization having a competitive edge.

“Multi-generational work groups can harness the extensive and rich knowledge base of team members and human resource development interventions such as social events and intergenerational mentoring initiatives could be implemented by HR to increase touch points between employees from different generations (Gerpott et al. 2021, p. 3780).”

Theme 8: Conduct sensitization training across generation

There was a recurring theme amongst all participants in the face-to-face interviews and participants from the focus group that asserted that HR must implement policies within the organization that ensured that sensitization training across the different generations is developed and implemented. All participants asserted that a critical component of fostering a harmonious and productive multi-generational workforce is providing sensitization training in a in the work environment. BCNSM01, TCBEP01, SPJGT02, SPJTTM07 and SPJKT08 stressed that sensitization training helps employees of all age groups recognize the value of diversity, appreciate generational differences, and work together more effectively. SPJGT02 and SPJTTM07 asserted that having a multi-generational workforce brings together employee from different generations, and each has its own unique set of values, communication styles and preferences. They offered that while these differences can offer a source a strength and competitive advantage, they can lead to misunderstandings, stereotypes, and biases, and therefore sensitization training aims to address these challenges by promoting empathy, understanding and inclusivity.

SPJLN03, SPJVM06, SPJKC04, TCBEP01, BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJDC05 and participants in the focus group discussions offered that sensitization training increases awareness about the different generations present in the organization. Participant BCNSM01 also asserted that sensitization training involves educating employees about the characteristics, values, and historical events that have shaped each generation. Participant SPJGT02 also offered that team members should be encouraged to recognize and challenge any stereotypes or biases that may be held about their fellow co-workers from other generations and the training should highlight that age does not define a person's abilities or contributions. This aligns with the 1953 study of Tuckman and Lorge who found that older people are subjected to the prejudice from the younger generation that they are less adaptable to the changing environment and for years, surveys in organizations have shown that older employees are often associated with the stereotype of being more resistant to change (Kunze et al. 2013). BCNSM01, SPJKT08 and TCBEP01 agreed that training should extend to executive leaders and managers, teaching them to lead inclusively and leverage the strengths of a multi-generational workforce. All three were in alignment with the notion that inclusive leadership is vital for setting the tone and expectations within the organization, especially in a multi-generational workforce. Both BCNSM01 and SPJGT02 asserted that sensitization training helps recognize and challenge stereotypes, which reduces age-related discrimination and bias in the workplace. They both agreed that sensitization training improves communication, enhances collaboration, and increases productivity. Overwhelmingly, the participants stressed that sensitization training must be customized, and should tailor programs to the specific needs and challenges of the organization and should recognize the unique generational composition and dynamics within the workplace. They all stressed that sensitization training should be an ongoing process to keep

up with evolving generational shifts and challenges. Important amongst the participants in the study was the involvement of leadership, and that these programmes must ensure leadership is actively engaged in the training process and demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity. SPJVM08 and SPJDC05 offered that HR practitioners, when introducing sensitization training, must establish channels for employees to provide feedback and share their experiences, enabling continuous improvement. BCNSM01, SPJKT08 and TCBEP01 all agreed that by offering sensitization training and being more inclusive, organizations can leverage the full potential of their multi-generational workforce and thrive in today's competitive business landscape.

Thematic Category: Barriers when introducing strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity in a multi-generational workforce

This thematic category provides a description of barriers when deploying strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity in a multi-generational workforce. I analyzed data from the semi-structured face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, company documents, and literature, identifying codes related to the impact of a multi-generational workforce. By applying code counts, three themes emerged from the coding process and the analysis of the obstacles encountered when implementing strategies. By applying code counts, three themes emerged from the coding process and the analysis of the obstacles encountered when implementing strategies. Figure 9 shows the three themes for this thematic category.

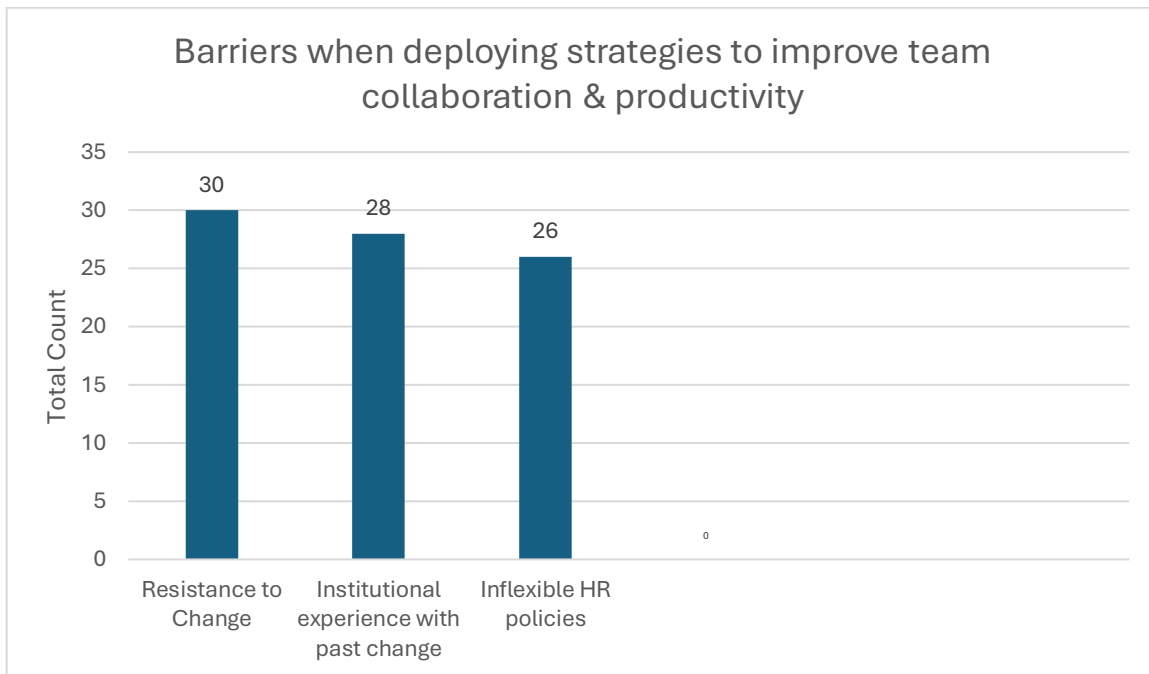


Figure 9- Barriers when deploying strategies to improve team collaboration & productivity
 Source: Giovanni Malcolm

Theme 10: Resistance to change

All Participants, including members of the focus group discussions identified resistance to change as an obstacle encountered when trying to deploy strategies to improve workplace productivity and team collaboration. BCNSM01 and SPJKT08 underlined the importance that employees with high resistance to change showed an increased difficulty in working effectively and may experience a breach of the psychological contract with the company due to change initiatives that may endanger their resources or their status at work. Participants SPJLN03, SPJTMM07, TCBEP01, SPJGT02, SPJKC04 and SPJDC05 and 18 participants from the focus group offered that employees are generally afraid of the unknown and prefer the familiar. They all offered that recognizing and addressing resistance to change is crucial for the successful execution of any change initiative and that HR practitioners must put policies in place to help leaders navigate the challenges that come with embracing new ways of thinking and doing.

SPJGT02 explained that:

Older employees who have been in the organization for a very long time often find it difficult to accept change as they have become used to doing things a certain way, and the common answer was always, ‘well this is how we have always done it,’ and why fix what’s not broken?’ The older generation often stressed the fact that I have been here long enough to see too many changes fail and every leader wants a change.’

Participants BCNSM01 and SPJKT08 added that resistance to change is a natural human reaction and that HR policies must be put in place to effectively address these barriers. “Hon et al. (2014, p. 921) in their research posit that people have a tendency to resist change and may at times engage in extreme measures to avoid it.” SPJVM08 stressed that the younger generation tend to be more open to change and adapt easier than the older generation. TCBMZ02 added that most people will resist change to some extent and that people may differ in their attitude towards change depending on the generation of which they are part of, with certain generations displaying a higher level of resistance than others. This sentiment aligns with the research of Hon et al. (2014), who stated that “most people resist change to some extent and that people appear to differ in their general tendency or disposition towards change. The authors further state that some people will exhibit higher levels of resistance to change, with some people even resisting changes that are inconsistent with their interests.”

Theme 11: Institutional experience with past change

Institutional experience with past change in a multi-generational environment is a complex and multifaceted concept. It involves recognizing the generational lens through which employees view change, leveraging the strengths and wisdom of older generations, embracing the innovation of younger generations, bridging the generation gap, learning from past

experiences, tailoring communication, and creating inclusive change initiatives. By effectively managing the intersection of past change experiences and age diversity, organizations can navigate change more successfully and create harmonious, productive, and adaptive work environment for all employees. 28 participants in the study concluded that employees' response to change initiatives are based on past experiences with change and how the change was carried out. BCNSM01, SPJKT08, SPJGT02, and TCBEP01 concluded that understanding institutional experience with past change, and how it intersects with a multi-generational workforce, is crucial for effective change management. They reiterated that past experiences, successes, and failures play a significant role in shaping an organization's readiness for change, and this is further influenced by the diverse perspectives and expectations that various age groups bring to the table.

SPJVM08, SPJTTM07, SPJDC05, SPJKT08 and TCBMZ02 acknowledged that one of the critical elements of institutional experience with past change in a multi-generational workforce is acknowledging that different generations may have varying views on change. They stressed that the Silent Generation, for instance, might have a different perspective on change based on their experience, which can be quite different from that of the Millennial Generation or Generation Z and, understanding and respecting these generational differences is key to effectively managing change.

SPJLN03, SPJDC05, SPJVM08, and SPJTTM07 stressed that while change can be a catalyst for growth and innovation, it is not always met with enthusiasm and success. They agreed that past changes, if not managed effectively, can have negative and lasting effects on an organization, particularly in the context of a multi-generational workforce. All participants in the study stressed that negative effects of past changes can manifest in the form of resistance

and scepticism, which can be influenced by generational differences. All participants asserted that older employees who have experienced numerous changes throughout their careers may become more resistant to new initiatives if they perceive them as disruptive or unnecessary, while younger employees, on the other hand, might be more open to change but can become sceptical if past initiatives failed to deliver promised results.

According to BCNSM01:

Failed or poorly executed changes can erode trust within an organization, and when employees, regardless of their age, experience change initiatives that result in job insecurity, layoffs, or a loss of faith in leadership's decision-making, it can lead to a decline in trust. This erosion of trust can be detrimental in a multi-generational workforce, as each generation may have different expectations and levels of trust in the organization.

All participants in the study agreed that constant change and the associated stress can lead to employee burnout, impacting both physical and mental health, and this is an issue that affects all generations, as burnout is not limited to any specific age group. They all concluded that negative effects of past changes can create a disconnect between generations within the workplace as the older generation may feel that the younger generation don't appreciate the history and wisdom they bring, while the younger generation may feel that the older generation resist changes that are necessary. All participants agreed that this generational disconnect can hinder effective collaboration, productivity, and communication.

Theme 12: Inflexible HR policies and procedures

All participants in the study maintained that having a multigenerational workforce in today's dynamic landscape has become the norm rather than the exception. They all alluded to the fact

that this diversity brings unique strengths and perspectives to the organization, but it also poses challenges, especially when organizations maintain inflexible human resources policies and procedures. According to BCNSM01:

The negative effects of rigid HR practices can be particularly pronounced in a multigenerational workforce, where employees from different generations have distinct needs, expectation, and work styles. HR policies can be extremely detrimental on a multigenerational workforce and therefore HR must adapt in order to accommodate the evolving needs of employees across various age groups.

Participants BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, SPJDC05, SPJKT08, SPJKC04, and all participants in the focus group discussions agreed that HR policies often result in standardized benefit packages that may not cater to the diverse needs of employees across the different age groups, and that these inflexible HR policies may hinder productivity and team collaboration. They stressed that younger employees may prioritize benefits like flexible work hours, work life balance and developmental opportunities, while the older generation may value health and retirement benefits. The participants all agreed that a one-size fits all approach can lead to dissatisfaction and reduced morale.

BCNSM01, SPJKT08, SPJGT02, SPJTTM07, and SPJVM08, all concluded that rigidity in HR policies can hinder career development, especially for older employees who may seek alternative paths or phased retirement options, while younger employees, on the other hand, may feel constrained by traditional career progression models and may just leave the organization. All participants acknowledged that inflexible HR policies limit the organization's ability to create tailored development plans that consider the aspirations and timelines of employees from different age groups. Additionally, all participants asserted that inflexible HR

policies contribute to reduced employee engagement, as they may not align with the diverse motivations and expectations of a multi-generational workforce. All participants concluded that employees who feel that their needs are not considered or met by rigid policies are likely to disengage from their work, impacting overall productivity, team collaboration, and ultimately, organizational success. All participants in the study stated that inflexible HR policies contribute to resistance to change, particularly from older employees who may be accustomed to traditional work structures, conversely, the participants all stated that younger employees, accustomed to flexibility and innovation, may resist policies that feel outdated or restrictive. BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJVM06, SPJTTM07, and SPJKT08 all agreed that a lack of flexibility in HR policies can contribute to higher turnover rates, especially amongst employees who feel their needs are not being met. They all concluded that older employees may opt for early retirement if there are no flexible work arrangements or phased retirement options, while younger employees may seek opportunities with organizations that offer more modern and accommodating policies, leading to talent loss. All participants agreed that different generations often have varying perspectives on work-life balance, and that inflexible HR policies that do not accommodate flexible work hours, remote work options, or alternative scheduling can strain work-life balance for employees across all age groups. BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJTTM07, and SPJKT08 agreed that organizations with inflexible HR policies may find it challenging to attract top talent, especially younger generations who prioritize workplace flexibility and a progressive approach to HR practices. They all agreed that if the organization has a reputation for inflexibility, this can hinder recruitment efforts and limit the diversity of skills and perspectives within the workforce. All participants agreed that the negative effects of inflexible HR policies

in a multi-generational workforce impact employee satisfaction, engagement, retention, and overall organizational success.

Thematic Category – Strategies to improve productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce

This thematic category contains a description of strategies to implement when trying to improve productivity and team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce. I examined data retrieved from the semi-structured face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, company documentation, and literature, and identified codes about the effect of a multi-generational workforce. I applied code count, and three themes emerged from the coding process and analysis of the barriers when deploying strategies. Figure 10 shows the three themes for this thematic category.

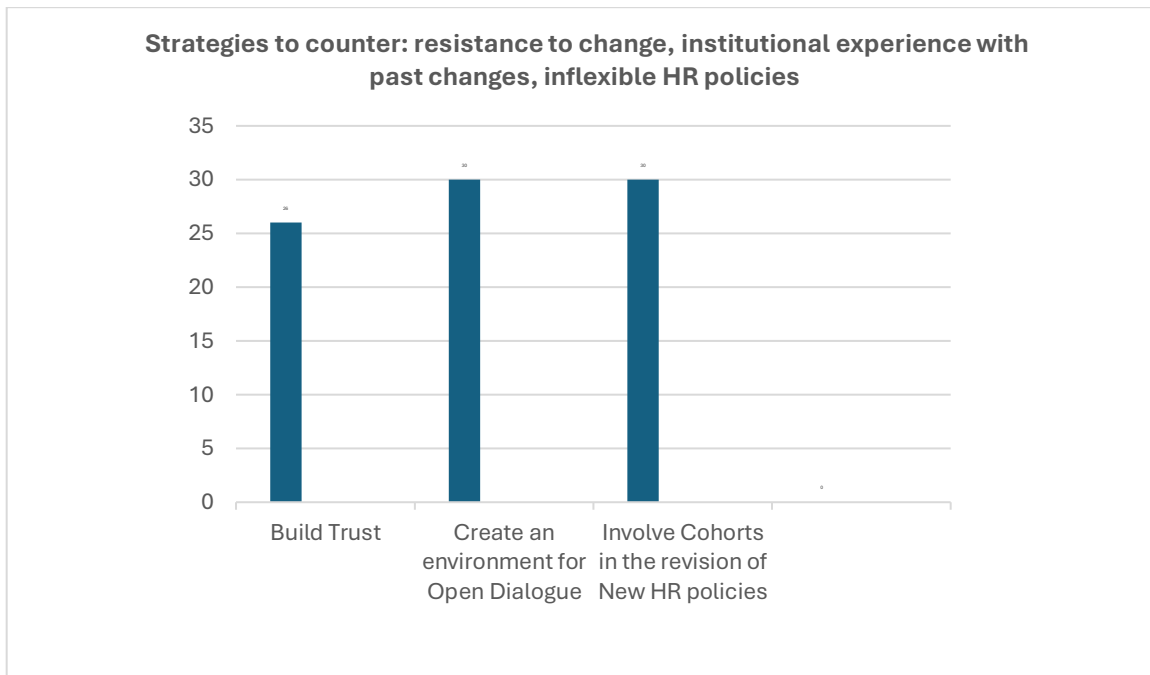


Figure 10- Strategies to counter: resistance to change, institutional experience with past changes, inflexible HR policies

Source: Giovanni Malcolm

Theme 13 - Strategies to counter resistance to change

Participants BCNSM01, SPJKT08 and TCBEP01 added that the quality of leadership and leader behaviours might play an important role in overcoming employees' resistance to change. Participants SPJGT02, SPJKC04, SPJVM06, TCBEP01, SPJLN03, BCNSM01 and SPJKT08, and 19 participants in the focus group discussions stressed that leaders should foster an environment of trust and communicate a compelling vision, while also allowing team members to exercise their own discretion and involve the different generations in the decision-making process. The participants stressed the importance of building trust in a multi-generational environment and the need for each generation to feel trusted. SPJKT08 added that having supportive co-workers can help to mitigate employees' resistance to change and that this social support is one of the most important factors in helping co-workers overcome resistance to change. SPJKT08 also stressed that seeking out help and giving help can include the sharing of knowledge and offering support which can help with providing encouragement even after mistakes or failures are made.

SPJVM08, SPJTTM07, and SPJLN03 and participants from the focus group added that clear and open communication is essential to managing resistance to change and that leaders must start by explaining why the change is necessary, what the long-term goals are and how it will benefit the organization and the employees. They stressed the importance of building trust through clear and open communication. SPJKT08, SPJGT02 and TCBMZ02 insisted that involving those affected by the change in the decision-making process can significantly reduce resistance, build trust, and that employees should be engaged in discussions about the change, their input should be considered, and where possible, their ideas should be incorporated. All three participants and participants from the focus group asserted that the relevant stakeholders must be involved in the process and have a hand in shaping the change. BCNSM01 and

SPJKT08 both offered that resistance to change often stems from a lack of understanding, lack of trust, or the feeling of incompetence in the face of new procedures or technologies, especially for the older employees. They both offered that HR practitioners must provide training and the necessary resources to help employees of all generations develop the skills and knowledge to adapt to the change, which can boost confidence and reduce resistance. SPJDC05, SPJVM08, SPJTMM07, SPJN03 all offered that leaders need to lead by example and that leadership plays a critical role in setting the tone for change. SPJKT08 and BCNSM01 both offered that when leaders demonstrate a commitment to the new direction, show that they trust their employees, and actively engage in the change process, it sends a powerful message to the rest of the organization, and both, stressed that leaders should embody the change they want to see and serve as a role model for the organization. SPJVM08, SPJDC05, and SPJLN03 acknowledged that the organization must establish a team of change advocates and influencers within the organization, who can appeal to the different generations, and who can assist the organization in building trust amongst the different generations. They asserted that this coalition could support the change effort by encouraging their team members, addressing concerns, and promoting the benefits of the change which can be beneficial in overcoming resistance to change. SPJKT08, SPJGT02, SPJTMM07, and BCNSN01 all offered that HR should implement support systems, such as mentorship programs, support groups and regular check-ins to help individuals as they navigate the transition. TCBEP01, SPJVM08, SPJLN03, and SPJGT02 insisted that HR policies must be flexible enough to adjust certain aspects of the change plan if it is not working or causing undue resistance. The participants insisted that regular assessment of the progress of the change initiative is important and that monitoring and adjusting accordingly, and being open to modifying the approach to better align with the needs of the

organization and the different generations are important to the change effort. All participants in the study, including participants in the focus group agreed that countering resistance to change is a vital aspect of successful change management, and that building trust is the cornerstone to achieving this, and further, HR practitioners must put strategies in place to mitigate against resistance to change. According to SPJKT08:

HR practitioners must put policies in place that foster a culture of trust, that is more adaptable to change, which can help the different generations navigate the challenges of change more effectively. By fostering a culture that is innovative and open to new opportunities, and embracing change as a positive force for growth, this can lead the organization to long-term success and resilience in an ever-changing world.

Theme 14 - Strategies to counter institutional experience with past change

All participants in the study concluded that past experience with institutional change have a significant impact on a multi-generational workforce, as past experiences, successes, and failures play a crucial role in shaping an organization' readiness for change. Participants in the focus group, and participants BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJTTM07, SPJKT08, and TCBEP01 from the face-to-face interviews all agreed that in order to counter institutional experience with past change, HR practitioners need to put strategies in place that acknowledges that different generations may have varying views on change. All participants stressed that leaders must acknowledge and respect diverse perspectives and foster an environment that values and respects the insights of employees across generations. A recurring theme across all participants was that HR practitioners must create an environment for open dialogue where employees can share their experiences, concerns, and suggestions regarding past changes.

All participants in the one-on-one interviews from the target company; BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJLN03, SPJKC04, SPJDC05, SPJVM08, SPJTTM07 and SPJKT08 stressed that institutional experience with past changes, especially for the older generation can be a liability to the organization, especially when the organization faces changes in its workforce and can hinder the organization's ability to innovate and adapt. All participants from the target company also stressed the importance of HR developing strategies to overcome potential barriers and challenges that institutional experience with past changes may pose. Participants BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJKT08, and SPJTTM07 all asserted that leaders need to reframe and reevaluate the meaning and relevance of institutional experience with the present and future situations, ensuring an environment where employees are free to raise concerns, make recommendations or oppose ideas without the feeling of repercussions. They stressed that this could help organizations by avoiding being trapped by the past successes or failures and to recognize the opportunities and threats that new changes may bring. In other words, they all concluded that leaders must find a way to steer the organizations' employees away from 'living in the past.' They all shared that leaders must communicate and share their reframed and reevaluated institutional experience with the different generations and solicit their feedback and support for the proposed changes. All participants in the study offered that the organization's leaders must seek out and incorporate new and diverse perspectives and also expose the different generations to new and novel ways of thinking and doing.

Participants SPJDC05, SPJVM08, SPJTTM07, and SPJKT08 all offered that one way to counter institutional experience with past changes is to leverage and mobilize the positive and useful aspects of institutional experience that can facilitate and enhance the change process. They offered that leaders should involve the older generation to identify and highlight the best

practices, lessons learned, and success stories from their institutional experience that could motivate the rest of the organization to embrace and implement the changes. All participants highlighted that it was important to engage and empower the different generations who have relevant and valuable institutional experience and involve them in the design and execution of the changes. The most frequent suggestion from the participants in both the interviews and focus group was that the organization must create an environment for open dialogue and participants BCNSM01, SPJGT02, and SPJTTM07 offered that leaders must recognize and reward the members who contribute and apply their institutional experience to the change process and also celebrate their achievement and impacts.

Theme 15 - Strategies to counter Inflexible HR policies and procedures

HR policies and procedures are essential for any organization, as they provide guidance, structure, and consistency. However, HR policies and procedures can also become inflexible, outdated, and irrelevant, especially in organizations, where the demographics of its employees are diverse. All participants in the study expressed the need for HR policies and procedures to be flexible in a multi-generational workforce. All participants agreed that inflexible HR policies can be a source of frustration and disengagement in a multi-generational workforce, where generational needs may vary. Participants SPJGT02, SPJDC05, SPJVM08, SPJTTM07 and participants from the focus group all offered that the industry within which they operate (the utility industry) can sometimes be slow to change and that HR policies and procedures sometimes fall into this trap where HR policies can become outdated and irrelevant over time, especially in a multi-generational workforce. All participants in the study agreed that these policies and procedures can be frustrating in a

multigenerational workforce and can lead to dissatisfaction and resistance among employees of every generation.

Participants SPJDC05 and SPJVM06 stressed the importance of HR practitioners conducting a policy audit where these policies are being evaluated to assess their effectiveness, efficiency and alignment with organizational goals, values, and culture in a multi-generational workforce. They both agreed that an audit can help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current policies and procedures, as well as the gaps and inconsistencies that may exist. All participants in the study, and especially in the focus group discussions, stressed the need for HR practitioners to involve the different generations in the development and revision the of policy. They all asserted that this involvement would help to assure that the policies and procedures reflect the needs, preferences, and expectations of the diverse and dynamic workforce, and in addition, hold everyone accountable.

All participants agreed that by involving the different generations in policy development and revisioning, that this can help to increase acceptance, commitment, and compliance with the policies and procedures, and also help to increase the communication and collaboration among the different generations. The participants further reiterated that HR practitioners must implement, new, flexible, and customized policy options. They all offered that flexible and customized policy options can help to accommodate the diversity and the complexity of the different generations. All participants offered that flexible and customized policy options can be applied to various aspects of employment, such as work schedules, work locations, work arrangements, compensations, benefits, and career development that fits the different generational cohorts.

Relevance of themes developed to the Conceptual Framework

Mannheim's generational theory provided the conceptual framework for this qualitative study on strategies needed to lead a multi-generational workforce. "(Lyons & Kuron (2014, p. 140) posited that Karl Mannheim (1952) argues that the events and context within which a generation experiences its formative years serve as a potential basis for the emergence of a shared 'inborn way of experiencing life and the world.'" "They further state that Mannheim, 1952, put forward that belonging to the same generational unit shapes the beliefs, values, and attitudes of members of a generational cohort." A generation generally shares common viewpoints and values which can create unique challenges (Alferjany & Alias, 2020). BCNSM01, SPJGT02, SPJTTM07, and SPJKT08 acknowledged the difference in values and personalities between the different generations and stressed that these values and traits could affect the business negatively. BCNSM01 added:

There is a disparity between the different generations in the workplace, and what the older generation wants from their work life may vary significantly from what the younger generation wants. One difference between the older generation and the younger generation is that the younger generation does not like power structures and dress casually in the workplace, whilst the older generation respects authority and the hierarchy and prefers to dress more 'business like' for work. The younger generation also looks for ways to make their jobs easier, whereas the older generation does not like changes. HR practitioners must find appropriate strategies to suit the needs of each generation in the workplace.

All participants in the study confirmed that if a multi-generational workforce is not managed effectively, that this can affect productivity and team collaboration negatively. However, all participants agreed that if a multigenerational workforce is effectively managed

that this can have a positive effect on productivity and team collaboration, leading to the organization having a competitive edge in the environment within which it operates. All participants stressed that knowledge sharing across all generations can be achieved if the workforce is properly led, and effective HR strategies are in place.

By weaving Mannheim's generational theory into the fabric of the analysis, the research aims to contribute a nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness between generational dynamics and effective organizational leadership. Karl Mannheim, a pioneering sociologist introduced the concept of Generational Theory in the early 20th century, providing a lens through which we can understand the interconnectedness of individuals within the same generational unit, location, and actuality (Alferjany & Alias, 2020). Further, Mannheim, 1952, posited that members of a generational cohort, defined by common historical experiences and social contexts, collectively shape their shared beliefs, values, and attitudes (Alferjany & Alias, 2020). The relevance of the adopted model is that it serves as a foundational framework for comprehending the dynamics of different age groups within a society. In the contemporary organizational landscape, where age diversity is increasingly prevalent, Mannheim's Generational Theory offers a valuable perspective for examining leadership and HR practices. BCNSM01 had this to add:

Generational leadership, within the context of a multigenerational workforce, involves understanding and effectively navigating the unique perspectives, expectations, and motivations of individuals from different generational cohorts. This understanding becomes particularly crucial as leaders strive to foster cohesion, collaboration, and productivity within teams comprising members from various age groups.

By grounding Mannheim's Generational Theory into the research, I was able to systematically investigate how leaders navigate the challenges posed by generational diversity, identifying strategies that resonate with the shared beliefs and values of each cohort. The theory's emphasis on the influence of historical and social context encourages a holistic examination of the factors shaping generational attitudes, which enabled a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in leading a multi-generational workforce. The relevance of the theory lies in its ability to provide a theoretical framework that captures the collective influence of shared experiences on the beliefs, values, and attitudes of generational cohorts. Mannheim's theory offers a valuable roadmap for researchers seeking to illuminate the path towards successful leadership in the face of age diversity. Mannheim's Generational Theory is instrumental in unravelling the complexities of generational leadership within the context of a multigenerational workforce.

Applications to Professional Practice

This qualitative, single case study aimed to investigate strategies that HR practitioners can implement into the organization to assist business leaders lead a multigenerational workforce in order to increase productivity and enhance team collaboration. Analysis of participant responses from both the one-on-one interviews, focus groups, literature and company documentation offered a comprehensive view of the positives and negatives of having a multi-generational workforce. The responses from participants concerning the issue of a multi-generational workforce and the subsequent effects of age-diversity underscore the evidence in the literature, highlighting the importance of evaluating the implications of, and

effective managing of a multi-generational workforce is becoming critical for business success and long-term sustainability.

Participants in the study emphasized the need for HR practitioners and business leaders to focus on strategies to improve productivity and team collaboration with a multi-generational workforce in the workplace. The ineffective management of a multi-generational workforce can create significant challenges for business leaders and in turn, affect productivity and team collaboration. BCNSM01 argued that HR practitioners should focus strategies that create an environment that employees from different generations can thrive and should concentrate on team building and engagement exercises that brings all the generations together. Participants SPJGT02, SPJTTM07, SPGLN03, and SPJVM08 stressed that organizations should focus on reducing ageism, retaining institutional knowledge, and put policies and procedures in place that ensures there is a level of understanding and acceptance amongst the different age groups in the organization in order to reduce the negative effects on team collaboration and productivity. Participant SPJTTM07 emphasized the need for business leaders to create an environment where the younger generation and the older generation can function in harmony and enjoy coming to work and being on the same team.

The participants in the study recognized resistance to change as an obstacle affecting the implementing of strategies to improve workplace productivity and team collaboration amongst members of different age groups. They all emphasized that if the different generations are not involved in the change process, then this can pose significant challenges to the change process and hinder productivity. All participants agreed that the success of having a multi-generational workforce depends on how well the leader understands the organization's human resources and the different idiosyncrasies that comes with the different generations.

Further, the participants all agreed that effective communication is necessary and that there should be a structured approach to how communication is disseminated amongst the different generations in the organization.

Participant SPJTTM07 argued that HR practitioners should ensure that communication is clear, consistent, and respectful to the different generations and that multiple communication channels should be used to reach all employees. SPJDC05 stressed the need to encourage feedback and dialogue and address any questions or concerns that employees may have about any change effort. SPJGT02 posited that HR policies need to be put in place on how to deal with a multi-generational workforce in order to guarantee consistency and not to leave the different department managers to handle it in their own respective ways.

Business leaders that have an interest in how to manage challenges that arise from having a multi-generational workforce might find this study useful, and they may benefit from the result of this study. The result of this study can help business leaders with the development of strong HR policies and procedures and the strategies that are needed in managing a multi-generational workforce.

4 Chapter V: DISCUSSION

Discussion of Results

The previous chapter presented the results of the data analysis, which revealed 15 themes that captured the essence of the phenomenon of generational leadership and how leaders lead a multi-generational workforce and how it affects productivity and team

collaboration. This section presents a summary of the results in relation to the research questions.

5.1 Discussion of Research Question One

How does the co-existence of different generations in the workplace affect team collaboration and productivity?

The co-existence of different generations in the workplace can have both positive and negative effects on team collaboration and productivity, depending on how well the generational differences are engaged and leveraged. On one hand, having a diverse mix of skills, perspectives, experiences, and values can enhance knowledge transfer and boost technology usage, leading to enhanced team collaboration and increased productivity. There is also the potential for innovation, creative problem-solving, and effective decision-making. On the other hand, generational differences can create communication gaps, conflicts, misunderstandings, and stereotypes, leading to a dysfunctional organization, which can hamper team collaboration and productivity. Therefore, it is important for leaders to comprehend and appreciate the generational diversity and foster a positive and productive work environment.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question Two

What strategies would you say work best to improve team collaboration and productivity amongst the different generations?

The study suggested that HR practitioners should implement several strategies to improve team collaboration amongst the different generations. These strategies include:

- Implementing cross-functional collaboration strategies with knowledge transfer that facilitates the sharing of ideas, feedback, and best practices among different generations, and that leverages the strengths and expertise of each generation
- Encouraging continuous learning and implement continuous learning strategies that promote the development of new skills and competences for all generations, and that provides opportunities for learning from each other through mentoring, coaching, and peer learning
- Deploying engagement and team building strategies that foster a sense of belonging, trust, and commitment among different generations, and celebrate the achievements and contributions of each generation. HR must prioritize strategies that promote engagement and team building across generational lines
- Conducting sensitization training across generations that raises awareness and understanding of the generational differences and similarities, and that reduces the biases and stereotypes that may exist among different generations. Sensitization training helps employees from the different generations recognize the value of diversity, appreciate generational differences, and work together more collaboratively

5.3 Discussion of Research Question Three

What strategies work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations?

The strategies that work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations are similar to those that improve workplace collaboration, as they both aim to

create a positive and productive work environment that leverages the generational diversity.

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, the study also suggested that leaders should:

- Implement a structured communication plan that ensures clear, consistent, and respectful communication across all levels and channels, and that addresses the communication preferences and styles of different generations
- Conduct a thorough assessment and analysis of the generational diversity and its implications for productivity, and use those findings to inform and design the strategies
- Engage and involve different generations in the development and implementation of the strategies, and solicit their feedback and input throughout the process
- Communicate and promote the strategies effectively and persuasively to different generations and highlight the benefits and value of the strategies for them and the organization
- Provide adequate training and development for different generations to equip them with the skills and competencies required, or the strategies and to enhance their awareness and understanding of the generational diversity
- Monitor and evaluate the progress and performance of the strategies, and using the results to improve and refine the strategies

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Four

What barriers did you encounter when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity amongst the different generations?

The study identified some barriers when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity in a multi-generational workforce. These barriers include:

- 6 Resistance to change: Participants emphasized that employees exhibiting high resistance to change often struggle to work effectively and may perceive a breach of psychological contract with the company. This is due to what they believe are change initiatives that may endanger their resources or their status at work
- 7 Institutional experience with past changes: Participants in the study acknowledged that employees' response to change initiatives are based on past experiences with change and how they were carried out. Past experiences with change, may it be successes or failures play a significant role in shaping the organization's readiness for change and this is further exacerbated by the diverse perspectives of the different generations
- 8 Inflexible HR policies: HR policies that have become outdated or inflexible and do not meet the needs of the different generations in the workplace can have a significantly negative impact on the organization. Participants agreed that inflexible HR policies limit the organization's ability to create tailored development plans that consider the aspirations and timelines of employees from different age groups

5.5 Discussion of Research Question Five

How did you address the barriers you encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve team collaboration and productivity amongst the different generations?

The study suggested some of the ways that leaders addressed these barriers they encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve productivity amongst different generations.

These ways include:

- 6 Address resistance to change that may arise from different generations and that may affect the adoption of new technologies, processes, or policies. Leaders should communicate the

rationale and benefits of the change, involve different generations in the change process, and provide adequate support and resources for the change

- 7 Leverage institutional experience with past changes that may exist among different generations, and that may provide valuable insights and lessons for the current and future change initiatives. Leaders should acknowledge and appreciate the past experience and achievements of different generation and encourage them to share their stories and wisdom with others
- 8 Review inflexible HR policies and procedures that may hinder the productivity and performance of different generations, and that may not reflect the current and future needs and expectations of the workforce. HR practitioners should revise and update the policies and procedures to make them more flexible, inclusive, and responsive to the generational diversity. Additionally, the study recommended that the organization involve employees from different generations in the review and development of new policies.

5.6 Discussion of Research Question Six

How can HR Managers lead the charge in mentoring leaders to effectively lead the different generations?

HR Managers can play a key role in mentoring leaders for the different generations, as they have the expertise and responsibility for managing the human resources and ensuring organizational effectiveness. HR Managers can lead the charge in mentoring leaders to effectively lead the different generations by:

- 6 Providing guidance and advice to leaders on how to understand and appreciate the generational diversity, and how to leverage it for productivity and team collaboration

- 7 Developing and delivering training and development programs for leaders on how to implement and manage the strategies for improving productivity and team collaboration amongst the different generational cohorts
- 8 Supporting and facilitating the communication and collaboration among leaders and different generations, and creating a culture of learning and sharing amongst them
- 9 Providing feedback and coaching to leaders on how to improve their leadership skills and competencies for managing a multi-generational workforce, and identifying their areas of strength and improvement

5.7 Discussion of Research Question Seven

What additional information can you provide to HR leaders in the utility industry in coaching and supporting leaders to effectively manage a multi-generational workforce?

The additional information that was provided by the participants on the study for HR leaders in the utility industry in coaching and supporting leaders to effectively manage multi-generational workforce are:

- 6 The utility industry is facing some major challenges and opportunities related to generational diversity, such as the aging workforce, the talent shortage, the technological advancement, and the customer expectation. These challenges and opportunities require leaders to adapt and learn how to manage a multi-generational workforce effectively and efficiently
- 7 The utility industry has some unique characteristics and features that may affect the generational diversity and its management, such as the high-risk and high-reliability environment, the regulatory and compliance requirements, the long-term and capital-

intensive projects, and the public and social responsibility. These characteristics and features require that leaders balance and integrate the need and expectations of different generations and create a safe and sustainable work environment for them

- 8 The utility industry can benefit from the generation diversity and its management, as it can enhance the innovation, quality, and performance of the industry, and it can improve the customer satisfaction and loyalty, and the stakeholder engagement and trust. These benefits can provide the industry with a competitive edge and a strategic advantage in the market

Chapter VI: Summary, Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusion

6.0 Summary

The objective of this qualitative, single case study was to explore strategies that HR practitioners can implement in a utility organization to assist business leaders in leading a multi-generational workforce to improve productivity and enhance team collaboration. The central research question that guided the study was: what strategies can HR practitioners implement with leaders to increase productivity and enhance team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce? Six executive business leaders and four senior and middle level HR practitioners participated in the face-to-face interviews, in addition to 20 team members from the target company participated in focus group discussions. The participants were purposely selected because of their experience in developing and implementing strategies within their organizations geared towards increasing productivity and enhancing team collaboration in a multi-generational workforce. The participants in the focus groups were also chosen because

they had real-life experience with the challenges and opportunities with working in a multi-generational workforce. The interview questions addressed the central research question and guided the study to on how HR practitioners can assist business leaders effectively manage a multi-generational workforce. The participants in the study shared insight and their lived-experience on the age-diversity phenomenon and the impacts on an organization. I collected and triangulate data from multiple sources, including; semi-structured face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, company documentation and literature.

6.1 Limitations

One can never underestimate the significance of this study since there was a rich amassing of knowledge, ideas, insight garnered throughout the study and the subsequent findings. The collective experience of the business executives that were interviewed, along with other high-level contributors and the focus group participants were effectively capitalized on during the investigation in demonstrating how HR practitioners can implement strategies to assist leaders in effectively lead a multi-generational workforce. Nevertheless, there are some limitations to the study.

Firstly, the study relied heavily on self-reported data that was obtained through the process of interviews and focus groups. This method can sometimes introduce bias, as participants in the study might provide a socially acceptable answer or in some cases misrepresent their behaviours and attitudes. I was also very close to the research, having worked in the organization under study, and that could potentially lead to a limitation for the study as bias could be introduced here as well. I was careful to create a safe space in order to have an open and honest discussion where the participants felt comfortable to share their true

feelings, also knowing that their interviews were kept anonymous and confidential. I was keen on ensuring that I confirmed the transcript with the participants through the member-checking process, so that the information captured were the true intentions of the participants.

Additionally, the study's scope was limited to a specific organization and industry, which could affect the generalization of the findings. Since industries and organizations cultures vary significantly, this could have potential limiting implication on the applicability of extending the study into other industries and organizations. With regards to this, using Jamaica only for the investigation could raise potential questions on generalization and application of the results in other organizations globally. Nevertheless, the findings of researchers confirm most of the findings of the study and therefore authenticate their generalization.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Previous research has predominantly concentrated almost exclusively on descriptive comparison of generation or birth cohorts, with not much consideration of the social forces that interact with the different cohorts throughout their own life experiences. Continued effort is necessary to understand the full effects of having a multi-generational workforce in the utility industry. The disconnect between the perceived differences and the reality is potentially an avenue for further inquiry. HR practitioners need to acknowledge generational differences as a legitimate and significant aspect of diversity and must implement flexible policies and procedures to help business leaders navigate the different generations successfully. "Leaders should acknowledge and interpret generational differences not merely as nuanced inter-group differences, neither as a reflection of age differences at that moment in time, but as

manifestations or reflections of broader societal and workplace trends that continue to evolve as the generations progress through their respective life stages (Lyons & Kuron, 2014, p. 145).” This means that HR practices, policies and procedures that worked in the past, must continue to evolve into the future and cannot be assumed to work across all generations. The generational trend evident in this review suggest that workers are more likely to become despondent if their needs aren’t being met and are increasingly seeking personal fulfilment in their work.

The population of this study consisted of top-level business executives, HR practitioners, and team members from different generational cohort in a large utility company in Jamaica. The sample consisted of four high level executives from the Jamaican company, two high level executives form a company in Canada, four HR practitioners from the target company in Jamaica, and 20 team members from the different generational cohort, within the target company in Jamaica. There is a gap in the industry where ‘generational leadership research is concerned, in particular, the utility industry, and this research has attempted to fill that gap. It is recommended that further research be carried out in order to fill this gap. The recommendation stems from the recognition that existing literature, while providing valuable insights, demonstrates certain limitations and gaps. By expanding the research to cover other geographical territories and borders, and in larger organizations and a larger sample size, this may provide valuable insight into the age-diversity problem, which more and more organizations are being faced with.

Reflections

The primary research goal of this study was to explore strategies business leaders can implement within the organization to enhance workplace productivity and team collaboration within a multi-generational workforce. It was important that I established a close working relationship with the participants in the study so that there was a level of comfort and openness during the interview process. Particularly, I sought to build a connection with the senior executives and HR practitioners who were part of the face-to-face interviews, so that they were able to be as candid and forthright as possible in order to uncover their honest opinions and experiences. I was also very aware of my closeness to the subject under study, having worked in HR and seeing the day-to-day issues that existed with a multi-generational workplace and, quickly acknowledged how this could steer the study in a particular direction. I constantly remained self-aware of this and was very vigilant in ensuring that the study took its natural course and that any bias on my part was significantly reduced and negated. I did not let my own motivation introduce researcher bias into the study. My reflection serves as an exploration into the journey of unravelling generational leadership dynamics within the context of the utility industry in Jamaica. Focussed on understanding how leaders can effectively manage a multi-generational workforce to increase productivity and enhance team collaboration, I delved deep into the personal insights gained throughout the research process from the diverse audience that participated in the study. The exploration into generational leadership revealed that diversity in age within the utility industry is not only a challenge, but also a strength. Each generation contributes unique perspectives, skills, and approaches to problem solving, creating a rich tapestry of ideas that can offer the organization a competitive advantage and contribute to propelling the overall industry forward. Personally, the research reinforced the transformative power of inclusivity and that by embracing and celebrating

generational differences, an organization creates a culture where each individual can feel valued, contributing to a more collaborative and productive workforce. The journey also highlighted the importance of continuous learning for not only leaders, but for organizations as whole, and staying abreast of evolving leadership theories, and generational trends is paramount for effective leadership in the dynamic landscape of the utility industry.

6.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore generational leadership and how leaders lead a multi-generational workforce and strategies that organizations can implement to increase productivity and improve team collaboration. The study used a qualitative approach and conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 10 participants, which included HR practitioners and business leaders, 2 focus group with ten participants in each focus group that was multi-generational. I also explored company documentation and examined relevant literature on the subject. The data analysis revealed 15 themes that captured the essence of the phenomenon.

The findings of the study indicated that a multi-generational workforce has both positive and negative effects on productivity and team collaboration. On the positive side, the study found that having a diverse mix of skills, perspective, experience, and values can enhance creativity, innovation, problem solving, and decision-making. On the negative side, the study found that generational differences can create communication barriers, conflicts, misunderstandings, and stereotypes, which can hamper productivity and team collaboration. The study illuminated the distinctive characteristics of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z and recognized the diversity in preferences for

each generation. The study also revealed that leaders play a crucial role in managing a multi-generational workforce and fostering a positive and productive work environment. The study suggested that leaders should implement a structured communication plan, implement cross-functional collaboration with knowledge transfer, encourage continuous learning, deploy engagement and team building strategies, and conduct sensitization training across generations. Further, the study suggested that HR practitioners should address resistance to change, leverage institutional experience with past change, and review inflexible HR policies and procedures in a timely manner and keep up with the evolving changes and the needs of the different generations. The study revealed that overcoming resistance to change required a delicate balance between preserving institutional wisdom and embracing progressive ideas. Interestingly, the study also revealed, the impact technology had on leadership effectiveness. Younger generations demonstrated a natural inclination towards technology, and harnessing this capability emerged as a powerful tool for innovation, efficiency, and team collaboration. Business leaders who can satisfy the individualistic needs of their multi-generational workforce will have a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). A recommendation resulting from the study was for business leaders to create awareness within the organization of the distinct attitudes, traits, behaviours, values, and characteristics of the different generations by developing sensitization and training programs. The findings emphasized the need for leaders to adjust leadership styles, communication methods, and organizational policies and procedures in order to successfully steer the utility organization toward a future of sustained growth and innovation. Another recommendation that emerged from the study was for HR practitioners to ensure that business leaders have the necessary skills to communicate with a multi-generational workforce, as each generation

requires a different approach. The study also recommended that HR implement training programs for leaders that will enhance their communication skills to effectively communicate with the different generations represented in the workplace, as each require a different approach.

The study contributed to the existing literature on generational leadership and provided practical implications for leaders, organizations, and policy makers. The findings in the study were in alignment with evidence from the literature reviews that proffered that it is crucial for business leaders to examine the implications of managing a multi-generational workforce in order to stay viable and compete in the global environment. The study also identified some limitations and directions for future research. The study concluded that generational leadership is complex and a dynamic phenomenon that requires constant adaptation and learning from both leaders and followers. The study emphasized the importance of embracing diversity and creating a culture of inclusion and respect for all generations. This study serves as a testament to the evolving nature of leadership within the utility industry and its pivotal role in shaping a harmonious, collaborative, and productive multi-generational workforce.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Questions

1. How does the co-existence of different generations in the workplace affect productivity?
2. What strategies would you say work best to improve workplace cohesiveness amongst the different generations?
3. What strategies work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations?
4. What barriers did you encounter when trying to implement strategies to improve productivity amongst the different age groups?
5. How did you address these barriers you encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve workplace effectiveness amongst the different generations?
6. How can HR Managers lead the charge in mentoring leaders for the different generations?
7. What additional information can you provide to HR leaders in the utility industry in coaching and supporting leaders to effectively manage an age-diverse workforce?

APPENDIX B: Ethical Review Application Form



Please complete **Relevant** sections of the form.

If you think a question is not applicable to your project, please provide an explanation as to why you think so.

Section 1: Applicant Details	
First Name	Giovanni
Last Name	Malcolm
Faculty	Choose an item.
Co-researcher Names (internal and external) Please include names, institutions, and roles. If there are no co-researchers, please state N/A.	Click or tap here to enter text. N/A
Is this application for a staff or a student?	Student
Student Course details	Postgraduate Research
Name of Director of Studies / Supervisor	Jonathan Westover
<p>Comments from Director of Studies / Supervisor</p> <p><i>For student applications, supervisors should ensure that all of the following are satisfied before the study begins:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The topic merits further research</i> <i>The student has the skills to carry out the research</i> <i>The participant information sheet is appropriate; and procedures for recruitment of research participants and obtained informed consent are appropriate.</i> <p><i>The supervisor must add comments here. Failure to do so will result in the application being returned</i></p>	

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 2: Project	
Section 2:1 Project details	
Full Project Title	
Generation Leadership – A Study on how Human Resource Practitioners can help Leaders increase productivity in an age-diverse workforce, in the utility industry in Jamaica	
Project Dates	
These are the dates for the overall project, which may be different to the dates of the field work and/or empirical work involving human participants.	
Project Start Date	18/05/2022
Project End Date	04/07/2023
Dates for work requiring ethical approval	
You must allow at least 6 weeks for an initial decision, plus additional time for any changes to be made.	
Start date for work requiring ethical approval	15/07/2023
End date for work requiring ethical approval	31/08/2023
How is the project funded? (e.g., externally, internally, self-funded, not funded – including scholarly activity) Please provide details.	
Self-Funded	

Is external ethics approval needed for this research?	No
<p>If yes, please provide the following:</p> <p>Where review has taken place elsewhere (e.g. via another university or institution), please provide a copy of your ethics application, supporting documentation and evidence of approval by the appropriate ethics committee.</p>	
<p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>	
<p>Section 2:2 Project summary</p>	
<p>Please provide a concise summary of the project, including its aims, objectives and background. (maximum 400 words)</p> <p>Please describe in non-technical language what your research is about. Your summary should provide the committee with sufficient detail to understand the nature of the project, its rationale and ethical context.</p>	
<p>The proposed research has a long-term goal of providing HR practitioners in the utility industry in Jamaica a framework with which they can use to prepare leaders to effectively lead an age-diverse workforce. In other words, identifying strategies that can contribute to effectively leading an age-diverse workforce to increase the retention rates and ultimately productivity in the utility industry in Jamaica.</p> <p>More specifically, the research has the following sub-objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 To develop a better understanding of the different generations now working in the utility industry. 	

4 To identify differences and similarities in the way in which the different generations prefer to be led.

5 To implement strategies to increase retention and improve productivity.

The outcome of this research will be beneficial to the long-term sustainability of one of the most essential services in Jamaica, as well as the utility industry in general. If HR practitioners can gain a better understanding of the age-diverse population, then they can help leaders understand how to best lead the different generations, by implementing strategies to reduce the turnover and increase productivity, and thereby, securing the long-term sustainability of the industry.

What are the research questions the project aims to answer? (maximum 200 words)

1. How does the co-existence of different generations in the workplace affect productivity?
2. What strategies would you say work best to improve workplace cohesiveness amongst the different generations?
3. What strategies work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations?
4. What barriers did you encounter when trying to implement strategies to improve productivity amongst the different age groups?
5. How did you address these barriers you encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve workplace effectiveness amongst the different generations?
6. How can HR Managers lead the charge in mentoring leaders for the different

generations?

7. What additional information can you provide to HR leaders in the utility industry in coaching and supporting leaders to effectively manage an age-diverse workforce?

Please describe the research methodology for the project. (maximum 250 words)

The primary research methods for this study are interviews and focus groups.

The secondary method for this study will be literature review, including journal articles and grey literature. Qualitative research is a process of inquiry that seeks an in depth understanding of a social phenomenon within its natural setting **Invalid source specified..** Qualitative research relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives **Invalid source specified..** According to Denny & Weckesser **Invalid source specified..**, qualitative research provides insights and understanding of people's experiences and may also be used in developing interventions or understanding barriers to successful implementation of programs. The authors further posit that qualitative research considers why individuals think or behave the way they do and how they come to understand those complex thoughts and actions within their own lives and the lives of others around them.

Qualitative research is the most appropriate and best suited for exploring strategies that HR professionals can use in equipping leaders in effectively leading an age diverse workforce. Qualitative research involves the use and study of a variety of empirical material, such as case study, personal experience, life story, introspection, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts and is used to

understand the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures **Invalid source specified.** Qualitative research is used when factual data are required to answer the research question when general information is sought on attitudes, opinions beliefs, views, or preferences and when variable scan be defined or isolated, and also when the question or problem is known, clear or unambiguous **Invalid source specified.** In their journal article Hammarberg **Invalid source specified.**, assert that qualitative research techniques include small-group discussions, semi-structured interviews to seek views on a focused topic with key informants and institutional perspectives to understand a condition, personal perspectives to learn about distributed or private knowledge.

Section 3: Human Participants	
Does the project involve human participants or their data? <i>If not, please proceed to Section 5: Data Collection, Storage and Disposal, you do not need to complete sections 3-4.</i>	Yes
Section 3.1: Participant Selection	
Who are your participants?	
HR Leaders, Organizational Leaders, 5 cohorts of generation, VP of HR, Linemen, Customer Service staff, Supervisory staff, Call centre staff, President of utility company, Maintenance staff, technicians,	
Will you be recruiting students as research participants who are from outside your faculty and/or from multiple faculties?	No

Please explain the steps you will take to select your participant sample.

I will start by identifying HR Leaders, HR Business Partners, Organizational Leaders, and employees within the utility in the Caribbean.

I will also identify leaders in other industries that can relate to the research question

I will also identify participants from the different generations that are represented in the workplace

Participants will be selected from the utility industry and will be from different demographics.

Different age groups within the sector and different level of positions will be selected

HR leaders and HR Business partners will be used in the sample

Please explain how you will determine the sample size.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Please tell us if any of the participants in your sample are vulnerable or are potentially vulnerable and explain why they need to be included in your sample.

NB: Please do not feel that including vulnerable, or potentially vulnerable participants will be a bar to gaining ethical approval. Although there may be some circumstances where it is inappropriate to include certain participants, there are many projects which need to include vulnerable or potentially vulnerable participants in order to gain valuable research information. This particularly applies to projects where the aim of the research is to improve quality of life for people in these groups.

N/A

Vulnerable or potentially vulnerable participants that you **must** tell us about:

- Children under 18
- Adults who are unable to give informed consent
- Anyone who is seriously ill or has a terminal illness
- Anyone in an emergency or critical situation
- Anyone with a serious mental health issue that might impair their ability to consent, or cause the research to distress them
- Young offenders and prisoners
- Anyone with a relationship with the researcher(s)

- The elderly

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 3.2: Participant Recruitment and Inclusion

How will you contact potential participants? Please select all that apply.

- Advertisement
- Emails
- Face-to-face approach
- Post
- Social Media
- Telephone calls
- Other

If Other, please specify: Click or tap here to enter text.

What recruitment information will you give potential participants?

Please ensure that you include a copy of the initial information for participants with your application.

Click or tap here to enter text.

How will you gain informed written consent from the participants?

Please ensure that you include a copy of the participant information sheet and consent form with your application.

I will be gaining consent by email

What arrangements are in place for participants to withdraw from the study?

The informed consent letter will let the participants know that they can withdraw at any time during the process

Section 4: Human Tissue

Does the project involve human tissue?	No
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If you answer 'No' to the above question, please go to Section 5

Please describe the research methodology that you will use.

This should include an explanation of why human tissue is required for the project and a description of the information that you and the research team will have access to about the participants/donors.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please describe how you propose to obtain/collect, process, securely store and dispose of the human tissue.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please explain if and how samples will be anonymised.

Where samples are not anonymised, please explain how confidentiality will be maintained, including how this information will be securely and appropriately stored and disposed of.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 5: Data Collection, Storage and Disposal

Research undertaken at SSBM by staff and students must be GDPR compliant.

Please confirm that you have included the SSBM Privacy Notice with the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

By ticking this box, I confirm that I have read the Data Protection Research Standard, understand my responsibilities as a researcher and that my project has been designed in accordance with the Standard.

Section 5.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Which of these data collection methods will you be using? Please select all that apply.

- Interviews
- Questionnaires/Surveys
- Focus groups
- Observation
- Secondary sources
- Clinical measurement
- Digital media
- Sample collection
- Other

If Other, please specify: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Please ensure that you include a copy of the questionnaire/survey with your application.

What type of data will you be collecting?
<input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative data
Please describe the data analysis and data anonymisation methods.
<p>I will be anonymizing the participants by assigning codes to the participants in order to preserve confidentiality. I will be the only one who will know the codes assigned to each participant. Data will be analysed by using the framework method, whereby the researcher identifies similarities and differences in the qualitative data to draw conclusions around themes. I will use audio recordings and verbatim transcriptions of the interview. I will also use field notes and will read the notes, line by line to and apply coding and analyse other interviews with the codes developed, creating a matrix that contains the developed codes and synthesize the data.</p>
Section 5.2 Data Storage, Access, and Security
Where will you store the data? Please select all that apply.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Google drive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted personal folder <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted public folder <input type="checkbox"/> Other (including secure physical storage)
If Other, please specify: Click or tap here to enter text.
Please explain who will have access to the data.
Only me
Please describe how you will maintain the security of the data and, where applicable, how you will transfer data between co-researchers.

Data will be stored on a flash drive, which will be stored in a locked safe. Additionally, data will be on my personal computer that requires an encrypted password in order to be accessed

Section 5.3 Data Disposal

Please explain when and how you will destroy personal data.

After 5 years of approval of defence, flash drive will be scrubbed and encrypted files will be deleted from both normal storage and recycle bin storage.

Section 6: Other Ethical Issues

What risks, if any, do the participants (or donors, if your project involves human tissue) face in taking part in the project and how will you address these risks?

None

Are there any potential risks to researchers and any other people as a consequence of undertaking this project that are greater than those encountered in normal day-to-day life?

NO

How will the results of the project be reported and disseminated? Please select all that apply.

- Peer reviewed journal
- Conference presentation
- Internal report
- Dissertation/thesis
- Written feedback to participants
- Presentation to participants
- Report to funders
- Digital media

<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If Other, please specify: Click or tap here to enter text.	
Does the project involve research that may be considered to be security sensitive?	No
For further information	
Please provide details of the research that may be considered to be security sensitive.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	
Does the project involve conducting research overseas?	Yes
Have you received approval from the Head of Research and is there sufficient insurance in place for your research overseas?	Not applicable
Please provide details of any ethical issues which may arise from conducting research overseas and how you will address these.	
N/A	

Section 7: Supporting Documentation

Please ensure that you provide copies of all relevant documentation, otherwise the review of your application will be delayed. Relevant documentation should include a copy of:

- The research proposal or project design.
- The participant information sheet and consent form, including SSBM privacy notice.
- The questionnaire/survey.
- External ethics approval and any supporting documentation.

Please clearly label each document - ensure you include the applicant's name, document type and version/date (e.g., Joe Bloggs - Questionnaire v1.5 191018).

Section 8: Declaration

× By ticking this box, I confirm that the information contained in this application, including any accompanying information is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct. I have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my obligations and the right of the participants.

Name: Giovanni Malcolm

Date: 17/06/2023

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT



Interview Consent Form

Research Project Title: Generational Leadership

Research Investigator: Giovanni Malcolm

Research Participants name:

The interview will take approximately one hour. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying **information sheet** and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be produced
- you will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- the transcript of the interview will be analyzed by Giovanni Malcolm as research investigator
- access to the interview transcript will be limited to Giovanni Malcolm and academic colleagues and researchers with whom he might collaborate as part of the research process
- any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed
- the actual recording will be locked in a combination safe with the researcher the only person who has access and then destroyed one year after thesis is completed

- any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval

I also understand that my words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

	I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
	I agree to be quoted directly.
	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name. (pseudonym) is used.
	I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

All or part of the content of your interview may be used:

- In academic papers, policy papers or news articles
- On our website and in other media that we may produce such as spoken presentations
- On other feedback events
- In an archive of the project as noted above

By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don't have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time.
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above.
3. I have read the Information sheet.
4. I don't expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation.
5. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
6. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

Printed Name

Participants Signature

Date

Researchers Signature

Date

Contact Information

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Edinburgh University Research Ethics Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Name of
researcher
Giovanni Malcolm
Full address: 3207
Ernhill Place,
Langford B.C V9C
0C6, Canada
Tel :7788884548
E-mail : giovannimalcolm@gmail.com

You can also contact Giovanni Malcolm's supervisor:
- Name of researcher supervisor: Jonathan Westover
- Full address Tel: +41 (0)22 508 7796
- E-mail: Jonathan.westover@ssbm.ch

What if I have concerns about this research?

If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how, it is being conducted, you can contact SSBM by email at contact@ssbm.ch.

Add names of any associated funding bodies and their logos

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Start the interview by welcoming participant and having an ice breaker question to set the tone and make the interviewee comfortable.
- Thank the participant/participants for taking the time out to be a part of this study.
- Do some basic housekeeping: if the environment is new, talk about where the washrooms are, say how long the interview will last for, reiterate the confidentiality of the information garnered and how it will be used, remind them that they can take a break whenever they feel like it.
- Introduce myself and talk about the topic and why it is important to me and relevant to the industry.
- Talk about the primary research goals: (a) explore strategies that human resource practitioners can develop and implement to help leaders effectively lead an age diverse generation, and (b) Identify similarities and differences in the different generations.
- Explain the contents of the consent form and address any concerns the participant may have.
- Ask for and receive consent to start the formal interview process.
- Advise participant/participants that I will start the recording and then start the recording.
- State the name, code, place, date, and time of the interview.
- Start interview with the initial probe question, and then follow up with the targeted concept questions, and then end with the wrap-up question.
- 1. How does the co-existence of different generations in the workplace affect productivity?
- 2. What strategies would you say work best to improve workplace cohesiveness amongst the different generations?
- 3. What strategies in your opinion work best to improve productivity amongst employees from different generations?
- 4. What barriers did you encounter when trying to implement strategies to improve productivity amongst the different age groups?
- 5. How did you address these barriers that you encountered when trying to implement strategies to improve workplace effectiveness amongst the different generations
- 6. How can HR practitioners lead the charge in equipping leaders with the necessary tools to lead an age-diverse workforce?
- 7. What additional information can you provide related to the topic of improving workplace productivity in an age-diverse workforce?
- Thank the participant/participants for their participation and reinforce what was contained in the consent form. Explain that I will summarize the responses to each

question and provide the summary within 5 days for any corrections or additions.

Also, mention when I would like to do a follow up meeting and get approval on date.

- End interview with another thanks and appreciation

APPENDIX E: Jamaica Public Service Annual Report 2022

[HTTPS://WWW.JPSCO.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2023/07/JPS-AR-22-JUNE-21-FINAL-V2.PDF](https://www.jpSCO.COM/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/JPS-AR-22-JUNE-21-FINAL-V2.PDF)