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INTERGENERATIONAL CHALLENGES AND HOW THEY MANIFEST IN THE PUBLIC WORKFORCE: A BASIS FOR DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

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Abstract:

This study explored the intergenerational challenges that manifest in the public workforce and aimed to provide insights for designing effective performance management strategies. The research utilized a qualitative design, with twenty (20) employees from various departments of the Provincial Government of Lanao del Sur in Marawi City as research respondents. The sample included representatives from four generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Data collection involved semi-structured face-to-face interviews using a purposive sampling technique. The analysis employed a collective case study approach and deductive coding. Ethical considerations were considered throughout the study. The main findings revealed that each generation exhibited distinct characteristics in terms of technology usage, social values, and core values. These differences gave rise to challenges related to work values, communication, motivation, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and learning. The results aligned with existing literature and theories such as generational cohort theory and stereotyping theory. Addressing these intergenerational challenges is crucial, particularly in the public workforce, given their significant impact in the modern workplace. By combining the study's findings with the principles of diversity management theory, this research offers valuable insights for developing strategies to mitigate intergenerational challenges. Recognizing and acknowledging these challenges is essential for fostering a harmonious work environment and promoting effective collaboration among employees from different generations. Organizations that proactively address these challenges can cultivate an inclusive and supportive workplace culture that values the unique contributions and strengths of each generation. Ultimately, this approach leads

to enhanced productivity and overall employee well-being in the public workforce.

Keywords:

Generations, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Millennials, Generation Z

Introduction

The world today is experiencing a demographic shift that is affecting the workforce and creating an evidently different workplace than in the past. One notable aspect of this shift is the presence of potentially five different generations in the workplace at the same time, a phenomenon that is unprecedented in modern history. Each generation is defined by shared experiences, such as news, music, mood, education, parenting styles, and more, during a particular period. The age diversity in today's workforce is greater than ever before, and the marked differences between the generations are largely due to significant societal changes that have occurred in the last 50 years. These differences have a significant impact on people's perspectives and understanding, not just in public sectors but also on society at large. As a result, these generational differences in the workplace can bring challenges and conflicts due to differences in values, communication styles, work habits, and expectations that have been shaped by their unique experiences, upbringing, and historical events, which can lead to different perspectives and approaches to work. Hence, it is essential to acknowledge and navigate these generational differences to ensure effective communication and collaboration in the workplace.

The Kelly Global Workforce Index (Kelly Services, 2012) states that forty-two percent of employees admit they have experienced intergenerational conflicts in the workplace, while seventy-five percent said they adapt the way they communicate with colleagues from different generations in order to avoid problems (Kelly Services, Inc., 2012). For instance, older generations may value loyalty and hard work, while younger generations may prioritize work-life balance and flexibility. These differences can lead to tensions and misunderstandings between coworkers. Communication styles can also vary across generations, with older workers preferring face-to-face interactions and younger workers favoring digital communication. The younger generation employees reported difficulty in interacting with older generations as one of their major workplace challenges (Urick, et. al. 2017). These differences can create barriers and misunderstandings in the workplace. In addition, younger workers may have different expectations of their careers, seeking quick advancement and recognition, while older workers may be content with stability and consistency. These differences in expectations can lead to conflicts over promotion and job responsibilities.

The demographic change in the workplace may have an impact on how the human resource office and supervisors in the said local government unit lead their workforce. The leadership challenge is to harness the power of these collective differences to foster growth. Public sector managers are challenged with creating a strategy to improve and maintain a harmonious interaction and collaboration among its employees of various ages. With multiple generations working together in the public sector, it is important to understand how they work together to bridge the generational gap and reduce potential conflicts. Improved workplace productivity can result from acknowledging and comprehending the diverse requirements of each generation.

General workplace differences affect the performance of each employee which led to the Civil Service Commission to implement the Agency Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS) as mechanisms which integrates personnel and organization performance. Per CSC Memorandum Circular No. 6, series of 2012, setting the guidelines in the establishment and implementation of agency Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS), the Provincial Government of Lanao del Sur created the Performance Management Team (PMT) championed by the Provincial Governor with the Provincial Administrator as the chairperson, the Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator as the vice chairperson and, and the Provincial Human Resource and Management Officer, Provincial Budget Officer, Administrative Officers and other department heads as members. These people are primarily responsible to assess the performance of each office and strategize to ensure that the performance targets and measures are aligned with those of the local government's mandate.

Performance management is vital due to the fact that public service managers need to be aware of the different cross-generational motivators, work habits and learning styles of specific age cohorts, in order to develop effective training processes for a multi-generational public sector workforce. Management can address generational issues by changing the way new and existing employees are oriented in their positions. This begins with sensitivity to generational differences, and the need to adopt or develop best practices for managing a multi-generational workforce (Walland, 2015). Although the differences between generations within multigenerational teams often result in miscommunication and negative conflict, these differences can also produce optimal team outcomes when there is preparation and understanding integrated into the multigenerational team (Cox, 2021). Managers who harness this unprecedented opportunity for growth, development, and collaboration, and build bridges between generations, will thrive (Hannam and Yordi, 2011). With this, the aim of this research is to understand the differences among generational cohorts and eventually explore multigenerational workforce strategies for public sector managers to use in the workplace.

Literature Review

A multigenerational workforce is a common happening in modern workplaces, with individuals from different age groups, backgrounds, and experiences working together. While this diversity can bring a range of perspectives and strengths to the workplace, it can also present challenges for employers and employees alike. Researchers have assigned different timeframes to each generation; however, the researcher of this study used the alternate listing and dates identified by the New Generation Analysis of the Pew Research Center and the One Generation defined by the Population Reference Bureau. These classifications include the following: Baby Boomers (born approximately between 1946 and 1964); Generation X (born approximately between 1965 and 1980); Generation Y/ Millennials (born approximately between 1981 and 1996, and; Generation Z (born approximately between 1997 and 2012).

Numerous researchers have addressed the management of intergenerational differences and diversity, but the majority of this research has been quantitative and has relied on categorizing respondents into demographic cohorts based on their birth years. And while many researchers have addressed generational differences and diversity management, few have delved into the macro-level descriptions of these different generations, specifically how these qualities manifest in the workplace. To better understand the unique challenges of managing a multigenerational workforce, this study reviewed relevant literature on the topic. This review explored the characteristics of different generations in the workforce and the potential challenges of a multigenerational workforce, based on widely accepted or macro-level

descriptions. Furthermore, this study also reviewed the strategies for effectively managing and communicating across generations. By analyzing and synthesizing existing literature and studies, this review aims to provide insights into best practices for managing and supporting a diverse workforce.

Characteristics

Technology

Throughout different generations, technological innovations have played a significant role in shaping society. The Baby Boomers, for instance, were exposed to transformative innovations such as television, transistor radios, and early computers, which steered in a new era of entertainment and communication, greatly impacting their lives (Twenge, 2017). In the case of Generation X, they were the first to witness the rapid evolution of technology. They experienced the rise of personal computers, video games, and mobile phones. The internet revolutionized communication and access to information during their time (Twenge, 2017). Millennials, often referred to as the first digital natives, have grown up alongside the internet and smartphones. This generation witnessed the rise of social media, basically transforming the way people interact and share information. Moreover, they were exposed to innovations like streaming services and cloud storage, enhancing the accessibility and convenience of digital content (Twenge, 2017). Generation Z, on the other hand, has come of age in a world of global technology. They are digital natives, proficient in technology, and have witnessed the rise of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT). Technology has become an integral part of their lives, and they are likely to continue pushing the boundaries of technological innovation in the future (Twenge, 2017).

Core Values

Different generations are shaped by unique core values that influence their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Baby Boomers, who came of age during the aftermath of World War II and the transformative cultural shifts of the 1960s, value individualism, optimism, and personal growth in high regard. They are often characterized as idealistic and rebellious, driven by a strong desire to challenge the norms and contribute positively to society (Twenge, 2017). Generation X, on the other hand, experienced a time marked by economic and social instability. They value independence, adaptability, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. They tend to exhibit skepticism towards authority and established institutions, prioritizing personal achievements and self-expression (Twenge, 2017). Millennials, who witnessed rapid technological advancements and the rise of globalization, have a deep appreciation for diversity, collaboration, and social responsibility. They are often characterized by their idealism, optimism, and a strong drive to effect positive change in the world. Work-life balance and meaningful relationships hold great importance for them (Twenge, 2017). Generation Z represents the first cohort to grow up entirely in the digital age. They highly value authenticity, individuality, and inclusivity. This generation actively engages in political and social matters, emphasizing social justice and environmental sustainability. Additionally, they cherish creativity and innovation, comfortably utilizing technology to express themselves and connect with others (Twenge, 2017).

Family Values

Baby Boomers experienced a transformative era marked by significant social changes. Traditional family structures, where fathers worked outside the home and mothers focused on childcare, were prevalent during their upbringing. However, the 1960s and 70s witnessed the

rise of civil rights and feminist movements, prompting Boomers to challenge traditional gender roles. Their values shifted towards individualism, personal fulfillment, and self-expression, leading them to adopt more permissive parenting styles compared to their own parents (Ng & Sears, 2018). Generation X, on the other hand, grew up amidst economic uncertainties and cultural shifts. Many Gen Xers were raised in single-parent households or homes with both parents working, granting them greater autonomy and responsibility from a young age. Consequently, they developed a strong sense of independence and self-reliance. Generation X tended to exhibit skepticism towards authority and tradition, while emphasizing the importance of work-life balance and individual accomplishments (Ng & Sears, 2018). Millennials emerged during a period characterized by rapid technological advancements and globalization. The impact of the Great Recession during their formative years significantly influenced their perspectives. Millennials display heightened social and environmental awareness compared to previous generations, placing great importance on inclusivity, diversity, and equality. They tend to adopt a collaborative and team-oriented approach to work and life (Ng & Sears, 2018). Generation Z embodies remarkable diversity and multiculturalism. They exhibit greater acceptance of various lifestyles and viewpoints. Generation Z actively engages in social and political matters, expressing strong passions for causes such as climate change, gun control, and racial justice. This generation demonstrates a more entrepreneurial and self-directed attitude towards work and education, prioritizing innovation and creativity (Ng & Sears, 2018).

Social Values

Baby Boomers, who came of age during a period of significant societal transformation, are often associated with values such as individualism, self-expression, and personal fulfillment. Work-life balance is a priority for them, and they are recognized for their active involvement in social justice causes, including civil rights and environmentalism. Education and personal growth hold great importance for this generation (Bradley, 2016). Generation X, on the other hand, experienced economic uncertainty and social fragmentation during their formative years. They are often characterized as independent, self-reliant individuals who question authority. Work-life balance remains significant for them, and they may prioritize job satisfaction over climbing the career ladder. Generation X is also recognized for their entrepreneurial mindset and willingness to take risks (Bradley, 2016). Millennials, or Generation Y, are commonly associated with values of diversity, inclusivity, and social responsibility. They highly value work-life balance and often seek flexible work arrangements and a sense of purpose in their careers. This generation exhibits a strong digital proficiency and tends to prioritize experiences over material possessions (Bradley, 2016). Generation Z is known for their tech-savviness and global outlook. They actively engage in social and political issues and emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion. Given the challenges they face in terms of economics and society, they tend to be pragmatic and driven towards achieving career success (Bradley, 2016).

Intergenerational Challenges

Work Values

Every generation possesses distinct work values that are influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors specific to their era. According to Thompson (2017), comprehending the work values of different generational cohorts can aid public sector managers in enhancing productivity and minimizing conflicts. Baby Boomers are renowned for their strong work ethic, ambition, and competitive nature. Growing up during a period of prosperity and economic growth, they placed considerable emphasis on career advancement and material success. Often characterized as workaholics, they prioritize their professional pursuits over other aspects of

life. (Cucina, et. al., 2018) Generation X, on the other hand, values work-life balance, independence, and adaptability. Shaped by economic instability and rapid technological progress, they developed a preference for flexibility and autonomy in their careers. Prioritizing personal lives, they may opt for multiple career changes throughout their lifetime. (Cucina, et. al., 2018) Millennials place importance on purpose, meaning, and diversity in their work. They possess a strong desire to create a positive impact on the world and actively seek out positions that align with their values. Striving for a healthy work-life balance, they value flexibility in their career paths. Comfortable with technology, they tend to exhibit collaborative tendencies in the workplace. (Cucina, et. al., 2018) As Generation Z begins entering the workforce, their work values are still being shaped. However, they are recognized for their digital proficiency, entrepreneurial spirit, and social consciousness. They prioritize work that enables them to make a meaningful difference and may favor freelancing or remote work over traditional office environments. Additionally, they value workplace diversity and inclusivity. (Cucina, et. al., 2018)

Communication

Generational cohorts exhibit distinct communication styles that reflect their unique experiences, values, and social norms. Baby Boomers, having grown up amidst rapid change and social movements, tend to be direct communicators who prioritize face-to-face interactions and personal connections. They hold loyalty and respect for authority in high regard and often express themselves through formal language and written correspondence. (Rooyen & Coetzee, 2017) Generation X, shaped by technological advancements and globalization, is characterized by a pragmatic, independent, and self-reliant communication style. They are comfortable with both in-person and digital communication, valuing efficiency, transparency, and directness. Humor and sarcasm are commonly employed by Generation X as means to establish rapport and find common ground with others. (Rooyen & Coetzee, 2017) Millennials, raised in the digital age, demonstrate high proficiency in social media and other online communication platforms. They gravitate towards informal and casual communication styles, utilizing abbreviations and emojis to convey emotions and foster connections. Authenticity, transparency, and collaboration are highly valued by Millennials, who actively seek feedback and validation from their peers. (Rooyen & Coetzee, 2017) Generation Z emphasizes speed, brevity, and visual content in their communication style. Proficient in various social media platforms and instant messaging apps, they effortlessly navigate different forms of digital media. Generation Z places a strong emphasis on inclusivity, diversity, and social justice, often expressing themselves through artistic mediums like art, music, and video. (Rooyen & Coetzee, 2017)

Motivation

Each generation possesses distinct workplace motivators that have been shaped by their unique life experiences and historical events. Baby Boomers are commonly driven by aspirations of ascending the corporate hierarchy and attaining financial success. They place great importance on job security and exhibit strong loyalty towards their employers. Boomers also appreciate recognition and rewards for their diligent efforts, along with opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth. (Wang & Mallon, 2018) Generation X individuals, on the other hand, tend to demonstrate independence, self-reliance, and skepticism towards authority. They value achieving work-life balance and are motivated by the freedom and autonomy to control their own work environments. Xers often prioritize personal fulfillment over solely focusing on career advancement and greatly value opportunities that allow for creativity and innovation. (Wang & Mallon, 2018) Millennials are frequently motivated by a sense of purpose

and finding meaning in their work. They place emphasis on personal and professional growth, prioritizing integration between work and personal life rather than striving for a strict balance between the two. Millennials also highly value collaboration and teamwork, being drawn to organizations that exhibit a strong commitment to social responsibility. (Wang & Mallon, 2018) Generation Z, the youngest entrants into the workforce, are still in the process of shaping their motivations based on their unique experiences. They tend to display strong entrepreneurial tendencies and possess advanced technological skills. Meaningful work that contributes to making a positive impact in the world is highly valued by Zers. Furthermore, they prioritize diversity and inclusion in the workplace and are attracted to companies that demonstrate a commitment to social and environmental responsibility. (Wang & Mallon, 2018)

Work-Life Balance

Different generations have distinct approaches to the work-life balance, reflecting the evolving values and priorities of society. Baby Boomers, known for their strong work ethic, often prioritize their careers above all else. They may make sacrifices in terms of personal time and leisure activities to advance professionally. However, as retirement age approaches, many Boomers are now seeking a more harmonious balance between work and personal life. (Allen & Finkelstein, 2015) Generation X, having come of age during a period of economic uncertainty and rapid technological advancements, tends to be independent and adaptable. Flexibility in their careers is highly valued, and they actively pursue a balance between work and personal life. Remote work and flexible schedules are often sought after by this generation as they strive for a better equilibrium. (Allen & Finkelstein, 2015) Millennials, heavily influenced by the rapid expansion of technology and the emergence of the gig economy, have distinct priorities. They tend to prioritize their personal lives over their careers, placing value on experiences and work-life balance rather than conventional markers of success. Millennials often switch jobs more frequently and actively seek out employers who prioritize employee well-being and offer a supportive work-life balance. (Allen & Finkelstein, 2015) As Generation Z gradually enters the workforce, early indications suggest that they, too, prioritize work-life balance and flexibility. Like their millennial predecessors, they seek employers who align with their values and provide opportunities for personal growth and development. (Allen & Finkelstein, 2015)

Job Satisfaction

For Baby Boomers, finding job satisfaction is often closely tied to a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment derived from their work. They tend to highly value job security and stability, often remaining in a job for an extended period if it offers a sense of stability and the chance to make a meaningful difference. Traditional markers of success, such as career advancement and financial stability, are often prioritized by this generation. (Wang, et. al., 2018) On the other hand, Gen X individuals typically associate job satisfaction with a sense of autonomy and a healthy work-life balance. They greatly value flexibility and the ability to work on their own terms. Gen Xers often seek work opportunities that allow them to utilize their skills and expertise in creative and independent ways. They may not be as driven by conventional measures of success like promotions or salary increases. (Wang, et. al., 2018) Millennials, often driven by a desire for purpose and impact, tend to find job satisfaction when their work aligns with their values and creates a positive difference in the world. Personal growth and development take precedence over traditional markers of success for this generation. Additionally, Millennials seek jobs that foster a strong sense of community and encourage collaboration among colleagues. (Wang, et. al., 2018) For Gen Z, job satisfaction is closely tied to a sense of authenticity and social responsibility. They prioritize work that reflects their

values and enables them to make a positive impact on society. Gen Zers highly value flexibility and remote work options, while also seeking continuous learning and development opportunities. (Wang, et. al., 2018)

Learning

Each generation possesses unique learning styles that are influenced by their upbringing, social and cultural environments, and exposure to technology. Baby Boomers, for example, were raised during a time when education primarily revolved around teacher-centered approaches and rote memorization. Consequently, they tend to favor traditional lectures and structured, hierarchical learning environments. (Liu&Li, 2015) Generation X, growing up amidst economic instability and evolving family dynamics, developed as independent learners who highly value flexibility and autonomy. They are comfortable with technology and are inclined towards interactive, hands-on learning experiences that enable them to apply their skills in real-world scenarios. (Liu&Li, 2015) Millennials, who emerged during the digital age, are recognized as technologically adept and have a strong inclination towards collaboration and teamwork. They thrive in collaborative, social learning environments that foster connections with peers and facilitate project-based learning. (Liu&Li, 2015) Generation Z, as true digital natives, have been immersed in technology from a young age. They tend to be visual learners who prefer multimedia sources, such as videos, as their primary learning medium. Additionally, they exhibit a high degree of independence and self-direction in their learning. Generation Z values experiential learning and hands-on activities that allow them to explore and experiment with new ideas and concepts. (Liu&Li, 2015)

Goal Setting

Goal setting in a multigenerational workforce involves creating a shared understanding of the organization's vision, mission, and values, and then setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals that align with those overarching objectives. Allen and Zafutto (2015) explored how different generations in the workforce approach goal setting and how organizations can implement effective goal-setting strategies that are inclusive of all generations. Through a qualitative analysis of interviews with employees from various generations, the study found that each generation has unique characteristics and values that shape their goal-setting approach. The study suggests that organizations should consider these generational differences when developing goal-setting programs, and tailor their approach to accommodate the needs and preferences of each generation.

Understanding Work Styles and Preferences

In a review of existing research on generational differences conducted by Bader & Bergstresser (2016), it found that there are significant differences in work-related attitudes and values among different generations, including differences in work ethic, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. The study identifies areas where further research is needed to better understand the impact of generational differences on work styles and preferences, such as how generational differences affect leadership styles, communication preferences, and the use of technology in the workplace. It suggests that understanding and accommodating generational differences in work attitudes and values is critical for creating a positive and productive work environment for a multigenerational workforce.

Enforcing a Varied but Appropriate Work Culture

Matuson (2018) examine in their study the challenges and opportunities of managing a multigenerational workforce. The study argues that organizations that embrace the diversity of

their workforce and create a culture that is inclusive of all generations are more likely to attract and retain employees from different age groups. The study suggests that a varied but appropriate work culture should be based on the core values of the organization, but also take into account the unique values and preferences of employees from different generations. The study also emphasizes the importance of effective communication and leadership in managing a multigenerational workforce.

Constant Communication and Feedback

Constant communication and feedback in the workplace can help by promoting understanding, collaboration, and mutual respect. Regular communication can help employees of different generations understand each other's perspectives and work styles. It can also help build trust and foster a positive work environment. Feedback can also help employees understand how their work is perceived by others and identify areas for improvement. In addition, constant communication and feedback can help managers identify potential conflicts and address them proactively. Cushing (2019) states that while multiple factors contributed to the success of a manager, the results of this study indicated that the most robust strategies that led to the achievements were strong communication skills and constructive feedback.

Narayana's (2015) study on "Managing Multigenerational Workforce through Effective Communication" argues that communication is a critical factor in creating a work environment that is conducive to collaboration and productivity among employees from different age groups. The study suggests that a communication strategy for a multigenerational workforce should take into account the unique communication styles and preferences of each generation. By tailoring communication strategies to the needs and preferences of each generation, managers can create a communication environment that is effective for all employees.

Encourage Cross-Collaboration and Mutual Mentoring

Cross-collaboration involves working with employees from different departments or teams, which can help break down silos and promote communication and knowledge-sharing. By bringing together employees of different generations, cross-collaboration can help promote understanding and appreciation for different work styles, perspectives, and skills. It can also help employees develop new skills and perspectives by working with colleagues who have different experiences and backgrounds. Mutual mentoring involves pairing employees from different generations to learn from each other. Mutual mentoring can help promote understanding and respect among employees of different generations, while also promoting learning and growth. Both cross-collaboration and mutual mentoring can help minimize conflicts among generations by promoting understanding and appreciation for different work styles and perspectives.

Anderson & Anson (2016). also examines the benefits of mutual mentoring, or the process of cross-age peer mentoring, in managing a multigenerational workforce and found that mutual mentoring, which involves the process of cross-age peer mentoring, can help bridge the generational divide and create a work environment that is supportive and inclusive for all employees. The study suggests that mutual mentoring programs can be designed to provide opportunities for employees from different age groups to learn from each other and to share their unique perspectives and experiences.

Forge Strong Bonds and Personal Connection

Forging strong bonds and personal connections in the workplace can minimize conflicts by creating a sense of understanding, empathy, and trust. When employees feel a connection with their colleagues, they are more likely to recognize and respect their differences and communicate more effectively. One way to foster personal connections is through team-building activities that bring employees of different generations together. These activities can include social events, team-building exercises, or volunteer opportunities that allow employees to connect on a personal level, share their experiences, and build relationships based on common interests.

In a study conducted by Hess & Jepsen (2016), it examines the importance of personal connections in managing a multigenerational workforce. The study argues that personal connections are critical for creating a work environment that is supportive, collaborative, and productive for all employees. The study suggests that managers can create personal connections among employees from different generations by encouraging social interactions and activities outside of work. By creating opportunities for social interaction, managers can foster a sense of community and belonging among employees from different generations.

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design to explore the intergenerational challenges that arise in a public sector workforce due to generational differences and identify effective strategies for managing these challenges. Specifically, this study focused on the four generations currently present in the workforce: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. This study was conducted in Provincial Government of Lanao del Sur located in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. The research respondents for this study were employees from such local government. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling. The research instrument for this study was a semi-structured interview guide which consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit information. Potential respondents were contacted personally or through phone, and the purpose of the study and the data collection methods were explained to them. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the collective case study approach.

Results and Discussion

To ensure the rigor and validity of the study, a thorough data collection process was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews as the primary method. Respondents were purposefully selected to represent each generational cohort, ensuring diverse perspectives and experiences were captured. The data collected underwent rigorous analysis using deductive coding, guided by a conceptual framework developed based on widely-accepted macro-descriptions of each generation and the research questions.

Research Question No. 1: What Are The Macro-Level Descriptions And Characteristics Of Each Generation In The Workforce?

Technology

The findings highlight significant disparities and perspectives regarding technology among different generations in the workplace. Baby boomers acknowledged their lack of familiarity with digital technology and rely on the expertise of younger generations in this area. Generation X respondents recognized the learning curve they experienced in adapting to computers and the knowledge gap between their generation and the current digital era. Millennials are strongly

connected to technology and adapt quickly to new advancements. Generation Z respondents emphasized the challenges faced by older individuals in adapting to technology, highlighting the importance of technological literacy.

Core Values

The responses from different generations provided valuable insights into their core values and work ethics. Baby boomers prioritized punctuality, integrity, and effective communication, while Generation X emphasized adaptability, learning ability, and collaboration. Millennials valued respect, collaboration, innovation, and work-life balance, driven by their passion for making a difference. Generation Z emphasized passion, respect, determination, discipline, and career success. These findings highlight the diverse values and priorities across generations, showcasing the importance of understanding and accommodating different perspectives in the workplace.

Social Values

The findings regarding social values among different generations provide significant insights into intergenerational dynamics. Baby boomers expressed a sense of exclusion when younger individuals engage in conversations among themselves, while Generation X raised concerns about feeling excluded by millennials in office activities. Millennials perceived a generation gap in social values and respect, with a sense of being looked down upon by older generations. Generation Z valued open-mindedness and inclusivity but encounters resistance from the older generation. These findings highlight the complexity of social interactions and differing values between generations, emphasizing the importance of fostering understanding and inclusivity in the workplace.

Research Question No. 2: What Are The Intergenerational Challenges That Arise In The Workplace Due To Generational Differences?

To answer this research question, the data collected from interviews with respondents representing each generation (baby boomers, generation X, millennials, and generation Z) were analyzed. The following intergenerational challenges emerged:

Work Values

The findings regarding work values among different generations provide valuable insights into the differences and conflicts that can arise in the workplace. Baby boomers valued a quiet work environment, ethical work standards, and professionalism. However, they perceived a lack of dedication and discipline in the younger generation who prioritize personal needs over work. Generation X clashed with both older and younger generations, particularly in terms of attendance and punctuality, as they try to bring their own work ethics into established workplace cultures. Millennials faced challenges such as being assigned more challenging tasks based on their age and older generations imposing technology-related responsibilities on them. Generation Z experienced unequal workload distribution and conflicts related to interactions and relationships with the opposite gender. These findings highlight the importance of understanding and managing generational differences in the workplace to foster a harmonious and productive environment.

Communication

The findings regarding communication patterns among different generations in the workplace shed light on various challenges and dynamics. Baby Boomers were sensitive to potentially hurtful remarks from younger colleagues, who may not be aware of the impact of their words.

The direct and less polite communication style of younger generations also contributed to misunderstandings with older individuals who are accustomed to a different manner of expression. Generation X employees faced discomfort and strained relationships when they are expected to apologize or take guidance from younger colleagues, disrupting the traditional hierarchy based on age and experience. Millennials often encountered unresolved conflicts due to older colleagues' failure to directly communicate their frustrations, and they may perceive a lack of respect or disregard even when it is unintended. Generation Z employees faced age-based bias and communication challenges, with their ideas and perspectives often dismissed by older colleagues. These findings emphasize the need for effective communication strategies and understanding across generations in the workplace.

Motivation

The findings on motivation among different generations in the workplace highlight distinct drivers for baby boomers and younger generations. Baby boomers prioritized respect, recognition, and appreciation for their expertise and the results they achieve. They valued the influence that comes with their experience. In contrast, younger generations are motivated by job recognition and seeking appreciation for their specific job functions. They prioritized validation and recognition for their contributions within their roles. Additionally, the observation from a Generation Z respondent revealed that low salaries and significant debts can dampen enthusiasm and engagement levels among employees, emphasizing the impact of financial factors on motivation. These findings underscore the importance of understanding generational differences and addressing diverse motivational factors to foster a motivated and engaged workforce.

Work-Life Balance

The findings on work-life balance reveal different approaches and challenges faced by various generations. Baby boomers struggled with taking work home, impacting their personal time and family dynamics. Generation X emphasized completing work before leaving the office and separating work and personal life. Millennials faced difficulties in separating work from their personal lives, often bringing work home and desiring dedicated family time without work interruptions. They recognized the importance of resolving urgent matters at work to avoid delays. These insights highlight the need for effective strategies to manage work-life boundaries and address the evolving dynamics of work practices across different generations.

Job Satisfaction

The findings on job satisfaction revealed that different generations have distinct factors that contribute to their satisfaction at work. The baby boomer respondent emphasized the importance of her subordinates fulfilling their responsibilities, prioritizing task completion despite workplace distractions. In contrast, Generation X employees prioritized different factors, such as flexibility and specific wellness needs. Millennials prioritized clear job descriptions and strictly adhering to their assigned responsibilities, expressing frustration when burdened with additional tasks outside their designated roles. These findings highlight the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse job satisfaction priorities across generations to create a positive and fulfilling work environment.

Learning

The findings regarding learning attitudes across different generations in the workplace highlight varying perspectives and approaches. Baby boomers generally showed a lack of interest in acquiring high-tech skills, prioritizing other factors like appreciation and financial

security as retirement approaches. They often delegate technology-related tasks to younger generations. In contrast, Generation X employees demonstrated adaptability and a willingness to learn new technologies, recognizing their value. Millennials exhibited a strong passion for continuous learning and personal growth, actively acquiring new software skills. Generation Z also showed enthusiasm for learning, leveraging online resources and supporting older colleagues. However, there is a misconception among Generation Z about baby boomers' motivation to learn, as baby boomers emphasized the importance of continuous learning even after retirement. These findings emphasize the importance of understanding and bridging generational gaps in learning attitudes for effective knowledge sharing and professional development in the workplace.

Research Question No. 3: What Are The Effective Strategies That The Performance Management Team Can Use To Minimize, If Not Eradicate, These Intergenerational Challenges?

The third research question aims to explore effective strategies that can be employed by the performance management team to address and mitigate intergenerational challenges in the workplace. This section presents key findings and recommendations from the interviews that offer valuable insights into practical approaches for minimizing or even eliminating intergenerational conflicts and promoting a more cohesive and productive workforce.

Goal Setting

The respondents from the baby boomer generation provided valuable insights regarding goal setting in the workplace. They emphasized the importance of properly identifying the mission of the organization and ensuring that all staff members are aware of it. This aligns with the need for a clear sense of purpose and direction in order to guide the actions and decisions of employees.

Furthermore, the respondents emphasized the significance of a common goal that unites the team. They highlighted that it is not just about how tasks are performed, but the underlying motivation and purpose behind them. Having a shared objective fosters unity, collaboration, and a sense of belonging among employees.

This is consistent with the study by Allen and Zaffuto (2015) which found that Baby Boomers view goal setting as a critical tool for overcoming intergenerational challenges. They believe that by setting clear goals and working together, different generations can find common ground and work towards a shared vision.

Understanding Work Styles and Preferences

Bader and Bergstresser (2016) argues that understanding work styles and preferences can help to overcome intergenerational challenges in the workplace. The study also found that intergenerational differences can lead to conflict and misunderstandings in the workplace and that understanding these differences can help to bridge the gap among generations. When managers and employees are aware of the different work styles and preferences, they can be more proactive in finding ways to work together effectively.

The respondents from different generations emphasized this importance in the workplace as a strategy to promote harmony, minimize conflicts, and maximize productivity. They provided several recommendations on how to achieve this understanding such as organizing training or

seminars, task assignment based on capacity, personalizing approaches, annual team building and individual understanding.

Enforcing a Varied but Appropriate Work Culture

Matuson (2018) defines a varied but appropriate work culture as one that is flexible enough to accommodate the needs of employees from different generations. This means that the work culture should be open to different communication styles, work-life balance preferences, and learning styles. Matuson argues that by creating a varied but appropriate work culture, organizations can help to bridge the gap between different generations and create a more inclusive and productive workplace.

The respondents from Generation X and Generation Z shared recommendations regarding the enforcement of a varied but appropriate work culture in the workplace. Both generations emphasized the importance of fairness, communication, and building rapport among employees.

Constant Communication and Feedback

Cushing (2019) study found that constant communication and feedback can help to build relationships, resolve conflicts and promote collaboration. On another study by Narayana (2015), it found that effective communication can help to reduce misunderstandings, increase trust and improve morale. Both studies conclude by stating that constant communication and feedback are essential for creating a positive and productive work environment for employees from all generations.

These studies are consistent with how the respondents from all generations emphasized the crucial role of constant communication and feedback in the workplace. They highlighted the need for management methods that prioritize day-to-day communication, fostering understanding and respect among team members. Proper communication was seen as essential for problem-solving, conflict resolution, and overall staff success. Open channels of communication, such as regular meetings and direct discussions, were recommended to address conflicts and prevent escalation.

Additionally, respondents emphasized the importance of understanding generational differences in communication styles and feedback handling. They recommended organizations to be open to employee feedback, establish norms for working together, and create a culture of teaching and learning. Open-mindedness, clear and calm communication, and intervention from superiors were identified as key factors in effective conflict resolution. Regular assessments and feedback by supervisors were also emphasized as necessary for employee development and creating opportunities for addressing conflicts and finding solutions.

Encourage Cross-Collaboration and Mutual Mentoring

Anderson and Anson (2016) argue that cross-generational collaboration and mutual mentoring can help to overcome intergenerational challenges in the workplace. They define cross-generational collaboration as "the process of working together across generational differences" and mutual mentoring as "a relationship in which two people from different generations share knowledge and expertise with each other."

Hayes (2013) provides additional support for the benefits of cross-generational collaboration and mutual mentoring. He argues that these practices can help to improve organizational performance, attract and retain top-talent and create a more inclusive workplace.

The respondents from both the baby boomer and millennial generations also shared insightful recommendations on encouraging cross-collaboration and mutual mentoring in the workplace. They emphasized the importance of fostering camaraderie through team-building activities that pair older and younger individuals.

Additionally, the respondents highlighted the value of blending generations in the workplace and promoting knowledge exchange. They suggested mentorship programs and buddy systems, where older employees can share their expertise with younger generations, while younger employees can provide support in areas such as technology. Involving younger employees in planning and recognizing performance based on merit, rather than age, was also seen as crucial for creating an inclusive work environment that embraces diverse perspectives.

Forge Strong Bonds and Personal Connections

Hess and Jepsen (2016) found that forging strong bonds and personal connections can help to overcome intergenerational challenges in the workplace. The authors argue that by taking the time to get to know each other and understand each other's perspectives, team members can build trust and respect, which can lead to more effective communication and collaboration. The study found that there are a number of ways to forge strong bonds and personal connections between team members from different generations. These include encouraging informal interactions, celebrating diversity and providing opportunities for learning and development.

The findings then indicate that respondents from Generation Z and Millennials considered forging strong bonds and personal connections as crucial in the workplace. They emphasized the importance of team building events as a means to bridge the gap between employees and foster interaction. Engaging in activities together not only imparts direct lessons but also facilitates relationship building, allowing individuals to get to know one another on a deeper level. The respondents highlighted that team building events create an environment where employees can form connections, even if they don't become close friends, enabling better understanding and more effective communication.

Furthermore, the respondents recommended incorporating informal gatherings to strengthen personal connections among colleagues. Drawing inspiration from the concept of team dinners and lunch outs often seen in K-dramas, they proposed that such occasions provide opportunities for employees to spend time together outside of work and build stronger relationships.

Findings

The objective of the study was achieved based on the results and through concluding that the intergenerational challenges observed in the workplace stemmed from differences in technology, social values, and core values, which align with the generational cohort theory. Each generation's formative years and experiences shaped their work values and expectations. Baby boomers and Generation X, influenced by a time of stability and traditional values, prioritized a quiet work environment and ethical standards. In contrast, Millennials and Generation Z, growing up in a technologically advanced and interconnected world, emphasized personal needs, work-life balance, and inclusivity. These differences highlight the influence of

generational experiences on work values and expectations, confirming the validity of the generational cohort theory.

These differences in work values, communication styles, motivation, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and learning preferences gave rise to intergenerational challenges within the workplace. Communication breakdowns occurred due to distinct communication styles resulting from shared experiences and upbringing. Stereotyping theory further compounds these challenges, as generations hold preconceived notions and biases about one another. Misunderstandings and conflicts arose from stereotypes such as Baby Boomers and Generation X viewing younger generations as lacking dedication, and Millennials and Generation Z facing stereotypes regarding entitlement and reliance on technology. The clashes in work values among generations highlight the complexity of navigating between different generational norms and expectations.

This study is beneficial because it addresses these intergenerational challenges which is crucial in any organization, especially in the public workforce, given their evident impact on the modern workplace. The study's results, combined with the diversity management theory, provide valuable insights for developing strategies to overcome these challenges. Recognizing and acknowledging these intergenerational challenges is essential for fostering a harmonious work environment and promoting effective collaboration among employees from different generations. By addressing these challenges head-on, organizations can create an inclusive and supportive workplace culture that values the contributions and unique strengths of each generation, leading to enhanced productivity and overall employee well-being.

Limitations and Recommendations

The findings of this study highlighted the importance of avoiding generalizations and recognizing that each individual within a generational cohort has their own unique preferences and characteristics. Stereotyping based on generational labels should be avoided, as it oversimplifies the complex and diverse nature of individuals' work behaviors and attitudes. While macro-level descriptions provide some insights into generational tendencies, they do not hold true for every member of a generation.

While analyzing the research findings, it is worth noting that certain generations, such as Generation X and Millennials, did not provide substantial inputs specifically addressing the topic of motivation. Similarly, Gen Z responses did not provide significant insights regarding work-life balance and job satisfaction. However, this lack of responses does not imply that these factors are not relevant for these generations. Instead, it suggests a need for further study and exploration to better understand the perspectives and experiences of these generations in relation to motivation, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. Despite these gaps, the responses derived from the available data provide valuable references to formulate recommendations that address the challenges and conflicts arising from generational differences in the workplace.

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