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Lamija Basic

Brandman University, basi0601@mail.brandman.edu

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Examining Generational Differences in The Workplace: Employee Engagement Practices
and their Impact on Retention of Different Generations of Human Resources Employees
in Higher Education

A Dissertation by
Lamija Basic

Brandman University
Irvine, California
School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

March, 2018

Committee in charge:

Margaret Moodian, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Sharon Floyd, Ed.D.

Keith Larick, Ed.D.

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY

Chapman University System

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Lamija Basic is approved.


_____, Dissertation Chair
Margaret Moodian, Ed.D.


_____, Committee Member
Sharon Floyd, Ed.D.


_____, Committee Member
Keith Larick, Ed.D.


_____, Associate Dean
Patricia Clark-White, Ed.D.

March 2018

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Dedication

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To my loving, compassionate parents for their endless love, support, and inspiration. Thank you both for encouraging me to reach for the stars and chase my dreams. Your support and love are far beyond what can be described. Dragi moji mama i tata, volim Vas najviše na svijetu!

ABSTRACT

Examining Generational Differences in The Workplace: Employee Engagement Practices and their Impact on Retention of Different Generations of Human Resources Employees in Higher Education Important to Their Retention

by Lamija Basic

Purpose: The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the employee engagement practices that Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial human resources (HR) employees in four-year private institutions of higher education (IHEs) in southern California perceived as most important to their retention. The secondary purpose of the study was to determine the similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial HR employees compared to Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in IHEs.

Methodology: A quantitative descriptive, nonexperimental research design was selected for this study. The population included three generations of HR professionals working in four-year private IHEs in southern California. An online survey developed by Dr. Sharon Floyd (2015) was used, which consisted of 18 statements examining generational retention strategies.

Findings: The study identified more similarities than differences between the multiple generations in the workplace in terms of their preferred practices related to engagement and retention. The data analyzed showed no significant difference between engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California compared to Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in IHEs.

Conclusions: Based on the findings of this study, employee engagement stemmed from having tools, clearly identified roles, resources, and compensation. Having a mentor in the workplace continues to provide a better understanding of the ongoing need to monitor employee engagement attributes, which fluctuated greatly among generations. Establishing a strong, positive culture wherein employee development and career development were the norm was promising for fostering employee engagement, regardless of employees' age or generation.

Recommendations: It was recommended to replicate this study in five years as Generation Z enters the workplace and more Baby Boomers retire. Additionally, it was recommended to conduct this study with other populations outside of HR and in different industries, such as entertainment and hospitality, and with telecommuting and remote workers.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

During times of organizational change, human resource (HR) professionals are essential to help guide the organization through the change process (Ulrich, 1997). As such, the skills required for HR professionals became more stringent over the past few decades (Ulrich, 1997). This made it essential for companies to retain qualified HR professionals to support a thriving workplace infrastructure (Bastedo, Altbach, & Gumpert, 2016).

Global and national changes affect all industries, including higher education. Although these changes are rarely rapid, constant changes of demography, globalization, economic restructuring, and information technology force universities to adapt (Morrison, 2003). Institutions of higher education (IHEs) typically possess the capacity, knowledge, and research skill necessary to support and influence major changes related to economic development, globalization, and technology (Sampson, 2003); however, it is essential to employ skilled HR professionals to help navigate the personnel side of such changes (Bastedo et al., 2016).

“Today’s American workforce is unique. Never before has there been a workforce and workplace so diverse in so many ways” (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000, p. 1). Over the years, generational diversity became the norm as these various generations worked side-by-side in the workplace. Salahuddin (2010) acknowledged that organizations and researchers were just beginning to address issues of generational differences related to leadership and the success of the organization. Whether this multigenerational workplace dynamic created a desirable workplace culture and

encouraged engagement and retention was up to each organization, including geographic and industry variation.

Globalization, new products, new business, and new mindset increased the need for skilled and knowledgeable HR professionals. However, 76 million Baby Boomers are rapidly reaching retirement age and preparing to exit the workplace (Shellenback, 2016). The cultural shift resulting from Baby Boomers retiring and younger Millennials joining the workforce in massive numbers was apparent and inevitable (Shellenback, 2016). The demographic shift is affecting higher education, and the HR professionals who work in the field, with many seasoned employees reporting plans to retire within the next three years (National Association of College and University Business Officers [NACUBO], 2016). The exodus of many Baby Boomers is placing greater responsibility on the Millennials expected to fill those positions.

To be successful in retaining employees, more information is needed to determine whether a difference exists in the preferred engagement practices of Millennials compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X (Floyd, 2015). Fully understanding the engagement practices, their importance, and their impact on retention would allow organizational leaders and managers to implement practices, develop tools, and establish norms to improve the retention of HR professionals.

Background

The Role of Human Resources

The evolution of the HR field from the 1950s until today was well-documented in the management literature (Boxall, 1992; Legge, 1995; Schuler & Jackson, 2007; Sisson & Storey, 2000; Torrington, Hall, & Taylor, 2005). Scholars repeatedly stressed the

value of HR in organizations. Flamholtz (1974) developed one of the first known HR theories, the human resources accounting (HRA) theory. HRA theory drew attention to the importance of HR by measuring both financial and other behavioral factors (Flamholtz, 1974). HRA theory opened the door for the development of HR as a concept—one that continued to gain support throughout the 1980s and into the present (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1990).

The field of HR underwent dramatic changes in the last 20 years due to globalization and increased competition, and because of the recognition of HR as a profession and the creation of HR academic programs. The last two decades saw the addition of HR to the master of business administration (MBA) curriculum and a growing awareness of the importance of HR to business development and strategy.

The nature of the field changed significantly with its shift in nomenclature from personnel management that performed simple administrative tasks to the more expansive HR role (Guest, 1991; Legge, 1989). More recently, the HR field was considered proactive, intentional, and executive (Boxall, 1994; Legge, 1995), and assimilated HR functions into business strategies (Brewster & Larson, 1992; Budhwar & Sparrow, 1997; Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 1989). The result was a respected, comprehensive role, enhancing the value of HR in achieving a competitive advantage in organizations and in improving performance and overall strategy (Barney, 1991; Guest, 1997; Schuler & Jackson, 2007).

A clear path to the next generation of HR was a multifaceted approach to delivering HR services, positioning HR as a significant contributor to organizational success (Ulrich, 1997). As noted by Ulrich (1997), many different pressures on

organizations created both problems and opportunities for HR to play an essential role in helping organizations navigate these shifts. Almost every industry strongly depends on HR support and guidance. HR activities deliver economic value to customers and employees, including support of organizations' biggest asset, their people (Beatty & Schneier, 1997).

The future demand for human resources professionals. Nearly every industry employs HR professionals. Per the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2015), job outlook for employment in HR was projected to grow at a rate of 9% in the next seven years, more rapidly than other occupations. The growth of individual organizations would drive the need to expand their operations, creating a demand for more HR professionals.

Julius (2000) asserted that a variety of external factors, including the matter of addressing state and federal legislation, required IHE HR departments to adequately respond to complex changes, often relying on the expertise of the HR professionals. However, Julius (2000) cautioned this could be problematic because of the limited training programs for HR professionals in higher education. With the ever-changing external factors affecting higher education, it is important for IHEs to retain talented staff, including those in the HR department (Bastedo et al., 2016).

The future of human resources professionals in higher education. "Trends in education emerge, grow, and develop, and often become daily practice" (Norton, 2008, p. 37). The need for HR professionals with the skills to handle the unique demands of the higher education environment constantly increases. Suitable publications, trainings, and resources intended exclusively for HR professionals in higher education were rare (Julius,

2000). The absence of HR professionals with higher education experience places added pressure on IHEs to reexamine their current practices and create dynamic and stimulating environments for HR professionals.

Despite the variations in reporting and leadership structures, almost all HR departments in IHEs encounter similar challenges, including working with faculty and staff. Emerging trends impacting HR professionals in IHEs directly influenced the environment in which HR was embedded. Julius (2000) regarded HR in IHEs as critical because three-quarters of institutional budgets were devoted to faculty and staff compensation and benefits.

The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR, 2017) highlighted the importance of continuing education for HR professionals in IHEs, suggesting the need to advance and sustain the necessary skill sets essential to meeting the emerging trends and issues in higher education. Although many HR efforts focused on the ongoing development of skill sets needed to serve the organization, it was evident that many internal and external factors drove HR initiatives. For example, there has been an increased demand to closely examine multigenerational workplaces and their unique challenges, and opportunities to strengthen an organization's bottom line (Tannenbaum, 2014).

Generational diversity became the standard for many organizations. Today's workplace could be comprised of five generations: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials (or Generation Y), and the upcoming Generation Z (Tannenbaum, 2014). Three generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials—drew the most attention regarding their expectations and needs. As Baby

Boomers continued to retire and Millennials started to take over, it became vital for managers to learn more about generational differences in personal job satisfaction and commitment levels. This rapid and extraordinary demographic shift required greater understanding of their differences and of the engagement practices needed to successfully address the retention of Millennials (Bersin, 2015).

Overview of the Generations

Murphy (2007) defined a generation “as a group of people who are programmed at the same time in history” (p. 6). They shared the same set of formative events and trends, news, music, and education systems. Through similar news, music, habits, moods, education, and heroes, they learned and grew together, adjusting their behaviors and shaping their skills. However, they generally did not radically change the way they viewed the world (Murphy, 2007).

Today’s rich mix of employees consists of individuals from several generations, each bringing unique perspectives and distinct values to the workplace. Each of the generations developed its own principles, work behaviors, affiliations, and communication styles, which they brought to the workplace (Dois, Landrum, & Wieck, 2010). Each also brought its own perspective on leadership, communication, and motivation (Murphy, 2007).

Even though different models use different names and birth years for the generations, the existence of diverse generations in the workplace was consistently visible and engaging. A multigenerational workplace could be a productive environment for employees of all ages, as long as the organizations and staff were aware of the differences in styles and engagement practices (Hammill, 2005). Recognizing

generational variances empowered a greater appreciation for each group's values and motivations.

Although today's workplace consists of five different generations (Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z; Tannenbaum, 2014), the following groups and categories were the focus of this study:

- Baby Boomers, born 1946 – 1964
- Generation X, born 1965 – 1980
- Millennials, born 1981 – 2000

Baby Boomers. Until recently, the largest generational cohort in the workplace was the Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964 (NACUBO, 2010). Baby Boomers were born following World War II, in and after 1946. The influential events of this generation's early years included the civil rights movement, the moon landing, and the Vietnam War (Murphy, 2007). Baby Boomers were motivated by rank, earnings, and status, and possessed a strong work ethic (Murphy, 2007).

Unlike other generations, they Baby Boomers were considered extremely loyal to their employers, while remaining competitive (Murphy, 2007). They were characterized as reluctant to go against their peers and tended to put process ahead of results. Although most Baby Boomers were already at retirement age, many continued to work or stay actively productive in their jobs or fields well past traditional retirement age (Murphy, 2007).

Generation X. Members of Generation X (also known as Gen-Xers) were born between 1965 and 1980. This generation tended to get lost between two more influential

generations, Baby Boomers and Millennials, and was often called the *sandwich generation* or *middle child* generation (Taylor & Gao, 2014).

The influential events of this generation included the energy crisis, the AIDS epidemic, and the fall of the Berlin Wall (Murphy, 2007). Due to an increased divorce rate, many were the children of divorced couples, including working mothers, which created a strong ability to adapt to change and work independently. In addition to being characterized as flexible and adaptable, they were also noted as deeply skeptical and doubtful of authority (Murphy, 2007).

Millennials. Millennials, often referred to as Generation Y, overtook the Baby Boomers as the largest of the generations in the workplace (Fry, 2015). This generation was born between 1981 and 2000. They grew up with technology, diversity, and a team approach. Millennials were often referred to as the *everybody gets a trophy* generation, were the product of social liberalism, and became characterized by their technology use and unpleasant economic circumstances (Taylor & Gao, 2014).

The behavior of the Millennial generation was described as goal- and achievement-oriented (Murphy, 2007). They tended to hold higher expectations for their jobs and their use of social media. They exhibited a computer-driven communication style and were not afraid to use technology to share their workplace experiences. Through social media and other outlets, Millennials quickly shared their opinions about companies, identifying if they matched or fell short of their ideals (Murphy, 2007).

Shifting Workplace Demographics

The 2010 U. S. Census counted the U. S. resident population at 308.7 million (BLS, 2012). Compared with the labor force of the past decades, those employed in the

21st century were older and more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender (BLS, 2012).

The expected labor force progression is being amended by the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. They will be between the ages of 56 and 74 in 2020, placing them in the 55-years and older age group in the labor force (BLS, 2012). Additionally, by 2020 Millennials are expected to comprise 50% of the worldwide workforce, and based on predictions, those from Generation Z (born between 2000 and the present) were expected to comprise 20% of the global workforce (Burden, 2017).

Understanding the generational differences, and embracing and leveraging them, was deemed essential to help foster generational acceptance and communication (Hammill, 2005). Navigating the changing demographics of the multigenerational workplace requires close examination of current and future trends, and preparation for the projected labor force growth in the future. Two main forces are driving the tightening of the labor market: “the retirement of large numbers of Baby Boomers and a slowdown in labor productivity” (Babcock, 2016, para. 3).

Tight labor markets already affect HR professionals. The effort needed to hire qualified workers greatly increased since 2007, and the time needed to recruit and hire new staff was back to that of 2000 (Babcock, 2016). Additionally, because it was also more difficult to retain workers as more were quitting and leaving the workplace, organizations needed to place a strong focus on recruitment and retention practices to attract and retain Millennial HR professionals (Babcock, 2016).

Engagement

Engagement was defined as a person's identification and participation in an organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Engaged employees were fully drawn in and passionate about the work, and demonstrated anticipated performance (Mowday et al., 1982). For that reason, it was considered imperative to implement strategies to ensure employee engagement was driven by a positive work environment leading to improved functioning, dedication, and retention (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002).

Research explored many vital issues regarding Millennials, including engagement and retention. Although a variety of engagement-related research was conducted, CUPA-HR (2017) provided the most comprehensive data addressing age, gender, and measurement of employee happiness with their studies on job and working conditions. However, the research did not measure how much effort the employee was willing to expend or whether the employee had an emotional commitment to the organization (CUPA-HR, 2017). Additional research was needed on the engagement practices relevant to retention of Millennial HR professionals in IHEs. Furthermore, additional research was needed to explore whether a difference in preferred engagement strategies existed between Millennials and other generations.

College and University Professional Association for Human Resources

CUPA-HR serves higher education by providing knowledge and resources to HR professionals. As the association for HR professionals in higher education, CUPA-HR (n.d.) provides leadership on IHE workplace matters by monitoring trends, developing workforce concerns, and conducting research. More importantly, CUPA-HR conducts

ongoing research critical to HR professionals in higher education and promotes ongoing strategic discussions among colleges and universities. CUPA-HR (2017) defined employee engagement as committing to an organization or one or more people in the organization.

CUPA-HR (2017) highlighted that engaged employees held a positive emotional connection to their work; they valued, enjoyed, and believed in their jobs, managers, teams, and organizations. The output of the CUPA-HR (2017) research showed employee engagement was fundamental to individual productivity and retention, as well as organizational performance. Despite their extensive research, the question about what practices or strategies were most likely to engage employees of various generations to the

Statement of the Research Problem

Shifting demographics resulting from five generations simultaneously in the workforce, expected massive retirements, and skilled employee shortages in many fields are forcing organizations to recognize and understand the importance of employee engagement practices that support retention. These demographic shifts and employee shortages affect all industries, including higher education. In this environment, establishing workplace practices leading to engagement becomes crucial for higher retention.

Over the next two decades, many Baby Boomers are expected to retire and younger Millennials will join the workforce in large numbers (Shellenback, 2016). Millennials are the fastest growing generation in the workforce and estimated to represent 50% of the global workforce by 2020 (PWC, 2013). Additionally, the number of

Millennials in the workplace in America is expected to reach 81.1 million by 2036 (Shellenback, 2016).

Millennials must fill the positions left by the Baby Boomers, but their generational characteristics also exacerbated problems related to retention. Millennials were much less likely to stay on the job for a longer period compared to prior generations (Sinek, 2016). Sinek (2016) asserted that the actions and behaviors of Millennials were often misunderstood, as they were characterized as being entitled, self-interested, and unfocused. Although Millennials were expected to make significant contributions to their companies, they were also found to be open to taking any opportunity to expand their education, knowledge, and career, which included changing companies often (Sinek, 2016). These distinctive characteristics of Millennials demand a different strategic approach to the engagement and retention of employees.

To retain employees, especially Millennial employees, leaders must understand how engagement practices affect retention. Knowing the characteristics of effective engagement practices from the perspective of Millennial HR professionals in higher education would allow IHEs to implement those practices and retain employees. Engaged employees showed enthusiasm, shared innovative ideas, contributed to organizational success, and were optimistic about the organization and their performances; additionally, engaged employees were seldom absent from work and stayed with the organization longer (Towers Watson, 2014). Research findings provided insight into the engagement practices and behaviors that positively contributed to the welfare of the organization (SHRM, 2016). However, no research could be found that

uncovered and explored the engagement practices that resonated with the Millennial and other generations of HR professionals in higher education.

SHRM (2016) confirmed that maintaining high levels of employee engagement was the most pressing HR challenge in today's work and economic environments. However, a gap in the research existed as to specific actions that would lead to better engagement levels of the various generations of HR professionals in the higher education workplace. Additionally, more research was needed to determine the preferred engagement strategies of the Millennial generation of HR professionals compared to other generations of HR professionals in higher education.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the employee engagement practices that Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial human resources (HR) employees in four-year private institutions of higher education (IHEs) in southern California perceive as most important to their retention. A second purpose of the study was to determine whether a significant difference in preferred engagement practices existed between Millennial, HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California and the engagement practices preferred by the Baby Boomer and Generation X generations.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the focus for this study:

1. What are the engagement practices that Millennial, HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?

2. What are the engagement practices that the Baby Boomer generation, HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
3. What are the engagement practices that Generation X, HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial, HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California compared to the engagement practices considered most important for retention by the Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in those same IHEs?

Significance of the Problem

The significance of the study rests on the absence of consistent and dependable studies regarding the trends and issues in the HR profession for higher education (Julius, 2000). Although considerable research was conducted about the HR profession (Ulrich, 1997), multiple generations in the workplace, engagement of generations in the workplace, and the relationships among generational cohorts (Ahlrichs, 2007; Alch, 2000; Bell & Narz, 2007; Deal, 2007; Hastings, 2007; Zemke et al., 2000), there was a distinguished lapse of debate and research about employee engagement practices that Millennial HR employees in higher education perceived as most important for retention.

Knowing and understanding engagement levels leads to development of strategies for addressing their practices, boosting morale and productivity, and increasing retention. Defining and understanding engagement objectives and behaviors provides employers

with targeted resources and strategies from thoughtful onboarding, performance, and compensation. Many scholars suggested Millennials differed in significant ways from other generations. Recognizing and comprehending Millennials' engagement levels is the first step toward maximizing strategies to engage them. Figuring out how to appeal to multiple generations of employees simultaneously leads to greater profitability, productivity, and effective talent management. The positive effects of engagement result in increased emotional attachment to their employer and inspire excellence.

The findings from this study could assist HR professionals and organizational leaders in higher education to involve employees based on generational needs, improve the understanding of generational differences, and better comprehend what motivates the breadth of generations. Furthermore, a key aspect from this study could serve as a prototype to higher education organizations desiring to establish a variety of strategies to engage multiple generations in the workplace. The intent of this study was to fill the gap and inform HR professionals about the emerging employee engagement and retention trends among HR professionals in higher education and to inform the development of policies related to total reward strategies and employee relations. Lastly, this study could help to inform the development of future research and resources for the HR profession in higher education.

Definitions

The following definitions were used for purpose of this study:

Baby Boomer. Members of the large generation of people born between the years of 1946 to 1964 (Leiter, Jackson, & Shaughnessy, 2009); also known as the nation's largest living generation (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Employee Engagement. Macey et al., (2009) described employee engagement as engaging notion, in which the employees' sense of purpose and focused energy was evident to others. Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ, and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 700).

Employee Retention. Employee retention was identified as the ability of an organization to keep its employees. Employee retention was noted as the desire to stay with the organization (Tornikoski, 2011).

Employee Turnover. This term signifies an employee's voluntary or involuntary separation from an organization.

Generation. Generations were defined as a cohort of people who shared similar birth years and significant life events as lived through time collectively, being influenced by an array of important factors (Westerman & Yamamura, 2006).

Generation X. The group of individuals born between the years of 1965 and 1980 (Pew Research Center, 2016), also referred to as Gen-X and Gen-Xers.

Generation Y. The groups of individuals born between 1981 and 1997, also referred to as Nexters, N-Geners, Echo Boomers, and Millennials (Glass, 2007).

Generation Z. The group of individuals born from 1998 to 2010 (SHRM, 2017).

Human Resources Employee. Human resources role who performs or provides all activities associated with the relationship of talent in an organization. The scope of those duties focused on three major responsibilities: strategic, operational, and administrative.

Human Resources (HR) Management. “HR management is the direction of organizational systems to ensure that human talent is used effectively and efficiently to accomplish organizational goals” (Mathis & Jackson, 2006, p. 4).

Kahn’s Employee Engagement Theory. “Engagement is being psychologically present when performing an organizational role. Engaged employees are more likely to have a positive orientation toward the organization, feel an emotional connection to it, and be productive” (Kahn, 1990, p. 464).

Schultz – Interpersonal Needs Theory. The theory asserted the tendency to create and sustain relationships depended on how well the relationship met three basic needs: inclusion, control, and affection (Tsai, 2017).

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). SHRM is the world’s largest HR professional society representing 285,000 members across 165 countries (SHRM, n.d.).

Delimitations

The study participants were delimited to HR professionals working in higher education. For this study, only HR professionals working in private IHEs located in the southern California area were selected. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to other industries or geographic areas.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter presented the introduction, background, statement of the research problem, purpose statement, research questions, and significance of the problem, definitions, and delimitations. Chapter II provided a more comprehensive review of the literature, concentrated to the research

questions, the characteristics, historical contexts, and generational workplace principles of the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. In addition, the second chapter provided an overview of current workplace trends that have been recognized as major influencers on employee engagement, and on the on retention in the workplace. Chapter III summarizes the details of the research design, which included an overview, purpose statement, research questions, research design, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, limitations, and summary. Followed by the method that was used in population and sample selection, the survey instrument used, and the limitations of the study. Chapter IV was designed to examine the perceptions of the employee engagement through data analysis. Chapter V concludes the study with a summary, key findings, conclusions, implications, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks around the data gathered during the study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This research study intended to identify the employee engagement practices Millennials in human resource (HR) positions at four-year, private institutions of higher education (IHEs) perceived as most important to job retention. The study also sought to determine whether a substantial difference existed among Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers in the employee engagement practices that most appealed to them.

The Chapter II provides the literature review and theoretical background to the study. The first section focused on the literature regarding generational differences and HR as a profession. The second section reviewed the theoretical background and evolution of leadership styles. This chapter includes an examination of the historical and theoretical contexts of employee engagement, which was guided by literature pertaining the definition of employee engagement, theories, and models most widely recognized by academic leaders and practitioners, and the attributes that nurture and hinder engagement. Lastly, Chapter II highlights the relationship between engagement and retention, and concludes with a synopsis of literature findings.

Generations

Kupperschmidt (2000) described a generation as individuals born within two decades from each other, specifically defining a generation as an “identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages” (p. 66). Pew Research Center (2017) delineated today’s workforce as blend of three generations: Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), and Millennials (born between 1981 and 1997). However, some variation existed among researchers and authors regarding the calendar years for

each generation. For example, Strauss and Howe (2000) and Kupperschmidt (2000) defined the Baby Boomers as being born between 1943 and 1960, Generation X as being born between 1961 and 1981, and Millennials as being born between 1982 and 2004. Although researchers differed in calendar year for each generation, they agreed work values, behaviors, and career aspirations may be influenced by generationally specific social, historical, and economic happenings. Nonetheless, each generational group, and their unique characteristics, aspirations, and expectations, were shaped by the significant life experiences (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964, and represent the largest generation because of post-war birth rates (Pew Research Center, 2014). The U. S. Census Bureau (2015) estimated there were 75.4 million Baby Boomers living in the United States. Baby Boomers grew up before globalization, during a distressing economy and before American preeminence (Tsai, 2017). This generation supported the Civil Rights Movement and fought for equal rights (Elliott, 2009; Steinhorn, 2006). They were described as optimistic by nature and as idealists, and originated progressive ideas (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Steinhorn, 2006; Zemke et al., 2000). Additionally, Baby Boomers were considered perfectionists and thought success came from life-long learning (Elliott, 2009; Weston, 2001). Baby Boomers were influenced by the invention of the television (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Zemke 2000). They were surrounded with icons of peace and anti-war movements when the U. S. sent troops to Vietnam in 1965, and were part of the historic movement, Woodstock, in 1969 (Zemke, 2000).

In terms of employment, Baby Boomers were characterized by hard work, personal gratification, and continuous growth (Arsenault & Patrick, 2008). The term *workaholic* was coined to describe the work ethic of the Baby Boomers (Zemke et al., 2000). At early age, they were commended for their team orientation and relationship building skills (Stevens, 2010). This generation enjoyed the collaborative style to make decisions and favored teamwork and participation from fellow colleagues (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Steinhorn, 2006). They enjoyed challenging work, developed strong loyalty, respected the organizational hierarchy, and were willing to wait their turn for advancement (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Tsai, 2017). Nicolas (2009) noted many Baby Boomers identified themselves by their job, paralleling their work with their personal lives and associating job status with self-worth.

The Baby Boomer generation was defined by the boom in U. S. births following World War II; however, this population is shrinking as they get older (Tsai, 2017). This generation grew up in a period of American economic prosperity. They believe strongly in lifetime employment and were less likely to change jobs because of loyalty to a company obtained by seniority and respect. Baby Boomers were often described as self-absorbed workaholics, and often for financial or personal reasons, for went or delayed retirement as they continued to bear a heavy workload and long hours (Tsai, 2017). For that reason, many Baby Boomers remain in the workplace.

Generation X

Generation X, also referred to as Gen Xers, were born between 1965 and 1980, and represent a smaller population than the previous Baby Boomer and succeeding Millennials (Strauss & Howe, 2000). Gen Xers grew up watching Sesame Street and

MTV (White, 2011). They saw the mainstreaming of computers and introduction of cellular phones. They were also raised during a time of soaring divorce rates, so they were the first latch-key kids (White, 2011). Gen Xers were often considered the middle child of generations, trapped between two larger generations (Pew Research, 2016).

In terms of employment, members of Generation X were characterized by a strong desire for teamwork, autonomy, independence, flexibility, and work-life balance (Tulgan, 2004). This generation was often noted for their high levels of skepticism, “what’s in it for me” attitudes, and concern for lifestyle, health, and friends (Tsai, 2017). Gen Xers tended to have less loyalty to their jobs than Baby Boomers; however, once they found the fit that allowed work-life balance, they tended to stay longer (White, 2011). Brown, Thomas, and Bosselman (2015) described the Gen Xers as a generation currently in middle and senior leadership positions, and a generation with a roughly double rate of startup formation than Millennials.

Millennials

The Millennials, also known as Generation Y, had different birth years depending on the source, with the U. S. Census Bureau (2015) definition between 1982 and 2000 and the Pew Research Center’s (2016) definition between 1981 and 1997. U. S. Census Bureau data (2015) declared Millennials as the largest generation, with 83.1 million living in the United States, which represented more than one-quarter of the nation’s population.

History defined Millennials as a fragmented population and a generation with a narrow gender-role gap (Strauss & Howe, 2000). Millennials were often described as well-educated, tech savvy, and digital natives because they were the only generation thus

far to grow up with technology rather than needing to adapt to it (Pew Research Center, 2014). Millennials were also described as the *found* generation, as they were born in an era of positive attitudes about children and planned parenting (Strauss & Howe, 2000). As self-described optimists, they often labeled themselves as happy, confident, and positive (Strauss & Howe, 2000). They grew up during a period of economic growth that was influenced by modern culture, but were also affected by the financial turbulence of the early 1990s and the 9-11 terror attack, which resulted in a loss of feelings of security (Parment, 2013).

Several studies compared different generations, examining their characteristics, cultural acceptance, preference for teamwork, and entitlement. Cole, Smith, and Lucas (2002) concluded Millennials were more community service-oriented than other generations, and more willing to volunteer than other generations. Millennials are moving the existing workplace topography with their distinctive set of values, showing more individualistic traits, greater self-esteem, and a smaller need for social approval (Twenge 2010). Furthermore, Twenge (2010) noted Millennials had a poor work ethic and a high level of entitlement, which contributed to them switching jobs often.

Words associated with Millennials included entitlement, optimism, civic-minded, work-life balance, impatience, multitasking, and team-oriented (DeVaney, 2015). Along with other attributes commonly attached to Millennials were entitlement, laziness, and lack of productivity (Caraher, 2015). Moreover, Caraher (2015) quoted a recruiter describing the Millennial work style as, “It’s not a question of whether or not they are right for the job, it’s a question of is the job right for them” (p. 27). Millennials are confident and dislike the idea of working their way up the ladder. With a childhood of

instant gratification, they are likely to change jobs frequently to have a hands-on role and to make a bigger impact (Caraher, 2015). Demographically, Millennials are the most racially and ethnically diverse generation (Strauss & Howe, 2000). As a result, they can accept and work with other people easily, accept diverse cultures, and are more tolerant of different races and ethnicities (Tsai, 2017).

Human Resources

HR, or personnel administration, arose as a distinctly defined field in the 1920s. Armstrong (2006) defined HR management (HRM) as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of people. HRM comprises all the activities undertaken by an enterprise to ensure the effective use of employees toward the attainment of individual, group, and organizational goals. HR mainly focuses on development of policies and systems, and their effect on people within the organization (Collings & Wood, 2009).

Evolution of Human Resources

The traditional core of HR activities involved hiring and firing people (Ulrich, 1996). Other subspecialties followed, including testing, assessment, performance evaluation, training, and compensation. Over time, the HR role changed significantly from a focus on personnel operations to more strategic thinking and planning (Ulrich, 1996). By the late 1970s, HR was described as an organizational function focused on staffing, development, appraisal, and rewards (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). By the late 1980s, HR professionals mastered the skills needed at the operational level and moved to add the value at the strategic level. Ulrich and Lake (1990) suggested the 1980s, influenced by a significant number of mergers and acquisitions, created a demand for HR professionals. With shifts such as globalization, multigenerational product design, and employee

contributions, most business demanded HR play a more strategic partner role, leading initiatives in process improvements and cultural changes (Ulrich, 1996). This included new HR capabilities such as employee program implementation and integration of strategic plans. With increased domestic and global competition, the sustainability of competitive advantage relies on human capital, and thus HR departments play a major role in sustaining a long-term competitive advantage (Ulrich, 1996).

As the role of HR employees evolved, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2017) developed an HR profession map including eight important HR practice areas: organization design, organization development, resourcing and talent planning, learning and talent development, performance and rewards, employee engagement, employee relations, service delivery, and information. Lawler and Boudreau (2009) stated that HR should be knowledgeable about the business and be experts in organizational change, noting HR professionals must play multiple roles. First, HR staff must be adept to execute the processes and activities required in legal compliance, compensation, staffing, development, and deployment. Second, HR professionals must be able to react to business needs and support managers by providing advice and services in areas such as employee relations, talent management, and organizational development. This second role provided an opportunity for HR to add value to the organization at the strategic level, which requires individuals who understand how business strategies and plans connect to talent and organization management (Lawler & Boudreau, 2009).

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2005) recognized the importance of defining success factors for HR professionals, especially as their role

became more complex. SHRM (2005) suggested HR professionals should learn the business they are in, be adaptable to change, get comfortable with analytics, and demonstrate superior personal initiative. More specifically, Fanning (2011) defined nine characteristics of an HR profession:

1. Governing body
2. Certification, education, and training
3. Body of knowledge
4. Code of ethics and discipline
5. Legal status
6. Research
7. Independence
8. Contribution to society
9. Recognition

Human Resources Occupations

Over the last three decades, the HR profession underwent a major revolution. HR moved from being a lower-level, administrative function to a core business function and a strategic business partner (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015). However, a primary challenge for HR going forward is the transforming external business trends in the marketplace and the workplace (Ulrich, 2012). To follow the shifting trend, re-naming and branding HR into different, more descriptive roles such as human capital, people development, or workforce development was examined. Boston Consulting Group (2011) identified four critical topics for HR based on assessment of current capacity and future importance: managing talent (recruiting, developing, retaining), developing leadership, transforming

HR into a strategic partner, and planning for a strategic workforce. Similarly, Deloitte defined their HR competencies as business awareness, employee relations, HR expertise, employment metrics, and consulting capabilities, which included serving as a trusted advisor to influence leadership organizational and impact (Ulrich, 2012). Ulrich (2012) also noted HR professionals had to maintain professional credibility, build human capacity, and serve as a change champion. An impactful HR professional was considered business literate, able to connect with stakeholders, was an active member of an HR professional organization, built credibility through results, and established trust (Ulrich, 2012).

HR departments play an essential role in an organization because they support the unique talent of the organization (SHRM, 2017). Although staffing may vary based on the size of an organization, the typical HR department includes one or more HR Assistants, HR Specialists/Generalists/Administrators, HR Managers, HR Directors, a vice president (VP) of HR, and a Chief HR Officer (CHRO). HR professionals can choose between two career paths, HR generalist and HR specialist. The decision is often based on the personal preference, but can be dictated by the organizational structure, nature of the business, or size of the organization. HR generalists are expected to have a broad spectrum of knowledge in all areas of HR, including staffing, training and development, and compensation and benefits. In contrast, HR specialists focus on a specific area or aspect of HR. The five most common areas of specialization are workforce planning and employment, organizational development, total rewards, employee and labor relations, and risk management (SHRM, 2017).

HR generalists and specialists can work their way toward becoming an HR Manager, a person who oversees the HR department and accomplishes higher-level HR functions (SHRM, 2017). Managers can get promoted to HR Director, with a similar role as the HR manager but a key difference being Directors report to higher levels in the organization and are often responsible for oversight of all HR functions. Some mid-size and larger organizations also have a VP of HR positions, a top-level strategic HR role within the organizations who brings an HR perspective to higher levels of management and is responsible for decision-making impacting the entire organization. CHRO is the highest level of HR. Strategic in nature, the CHRO works with other executives of the organization and possess a unique combination of HR knowledge and vision for company and people. CHROs partner with the executive leadership team to develop business strategy and align HR precedence to ensure achievement of business goals. Figure 1 provides an overview of the HR hierarchy found in most mid- to large-size organizations.

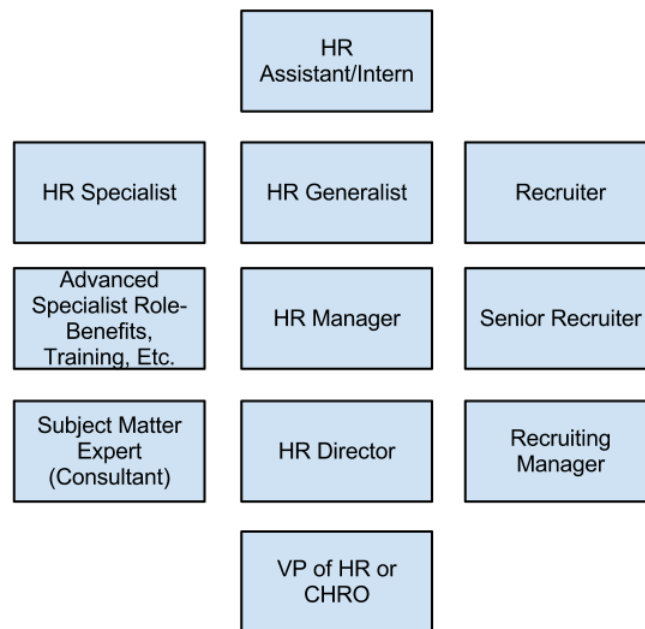


Figure 1. Typical HR structure for mid to large organizations. Source: SHRM 2017.

SHRM (2016) research suggested HR work became more complex and global in recent years, necessitating the next generation of leaders to be skilled in marketing and brand management, information technology, finance, corporate relations and even community activism (2016). This reinforced findings from Ulrich, Younger, and Brockbank (2013) specifically defined six competency domains that HR professionals must prove on personal and professional levels to positively impact business performance:

1. Strategic positioners with ability to translate evolving business complexity into talent, culture, and leadership actions
2. Credible activists with the ability to build trusting relationships
3. Capacity builders able to define, audit, and create organizational competencies
4. Change champions who initiate and sustain change from the individual to the organizational level
5. Innovators and integrators who constantly look for new ways to improve HR practices and deliver solutions
6. Technology proponents who effectively use technology and social media to increase efficiency of communication with employees

Despite the evolving role of HR professionals, the outlook for HR jobs opportunities is healthy. The HR profession continues to grow and impact every organization's bottom line (Ranstand, 2017). Ranstand (2017) projected the unemployment rate for HR professionals was about half of the national unemployment rate, hovering near 4.5%. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2017) estimated the employment of HR managers would grow 9% from 2014 to 2024. Correspondingly, job

prospects for HR specialists were expected to be positive and grow faster than the average of all occupations. The BLS (2017) reported the demand for HR professionals was higher than the national job growth average for all other professions, and predicted the job growth through 2024 would be higher than other occupations.

Training for HR Occupations

The increased complexity of HR responsibilities and functions demand a proper education (SHRM, 2017). To gain an entry level HR position, a bachelor's degree is needed. A master degree in HR or a master's in business administration (MBA) could provide a competitive edge for promotions and employment growth. Additionally, employers are demanding occupation specific certifications to validate the knowledge of federal, state, and local employment laws and regulations needed for the positions (SHRM, 2017).

SHRM's (2017) mission is to serve and advance the HR profession, and to support HR practitioners in their career and professional development. To that end, SHRM created a variety of trainings and certifications for HR professionals. SHRM (2017) also created the Competency Model to identify the knowledge and skills needed to be a successful HR professional from entry level to executive positions. This model provides the foundation for the HR lifecycle and helps organizations ensure HR professionals are skillful in the essential competencies required (SHRM, 2017). The SHRM Competency Model identified nine competencies linked with a high-performing HR professional at all levels: They include: HR Expertise, Relationship Management, Consultation, Leadership and Navigation, Communication, Global and Cultural Effectiveness, Ethical Practice, Critical Evolution, and Business Acumen (SHRM, 2017).

HR management in education emerged in the early part of the 20th century (Ezenne, 2010). Since its development in the 1920s, HR management underwent significant changes (Ezenne, 2010). “I’m a people person” and “I like helping others” were two common reasons HR professionals identified as the main reason for selecting their career path; however, these reasons no longer satisfied organizational needs (SHRM, 2017). Although the traditional functions and responsibilities of HR in education persist, today’s educational institutions are more complex and competitive, placing significant importance on HR and employee development as key elements in organizational effectiveness (Ezenne, 2010). Government regulations, shifts in economy and technology, the war for talent, and the diverse and constantly changing workforce demand HR leaders aligned with organizational goals, which included more accountability and increased superiority in education and professionalism.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement recently became one of the most studied topics in the organization sciences for many practitioners and academics (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Cataldo, 2011; McClure, 2013; Medlin & Green, 2014; Saks & Gruman, 2014, Schaufeli et al., 2002). Research suggested employee engagement was more important than previously thought. However, definitions of employee engagement varied greatly. Kahn (1990) conducted one of the first fundamental academic studies of employee engagement and defined engagement as the psychological experiences of work and processes of people being mentally present or absent during task performances. However, other researchers pointed out the relevance of employee relatedness, connections with authenticity and commitment, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and the

impact of dispositions as components of employee engagement (Barrick et al., 2013; Deci & Ryan, 2000; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). Saks (2006) defined employee engagement as “the extent to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of his/her roles” (p. 600). Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) referred to employee engagement as a relationship to between three work-related elements: energy, captivation, and dedication.

Kahn (1990) developed an engagement framework by defining themes of engagement and disengagement, noting “personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active full role performances” (p. 700). Kahn’s (1990) definition was distinctive as it concentrated on how staff employed themselves at different periods of the workday. Although Kahn’s (1990) conceptualization of engagement enlightened research, his framework lacked a measurement instrument to assess his notion that people “express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (p. 694). Kahn’s (1990) theory of employee engagement was founded on the employees’ presence of three psychological conditions: (1) meaningfulness, (2) safety, and (3) availability. Engagement was enhanced when work was meaningful and valued, and employees felt they were not taken for granted (Kahn, 1990).

Other researchers attempted to define and measure employee engagement through motivational concepts. Catlette and Hadden (2001) defined engaged employees as those who felt inspired by the positive work-related behaviors and prepared emotionally, physically, and cognitively to perform their work duties. Zuckerman (2014) defined

engagement as getting involved in, being enthusiastic about, and having a positive working relationships and career development. The varied definitions of employee engagement resulted in several engagement theories and models.

Engagement Theories and Models

Although the recognition of employee engagement has been shown to be a critical area for organizational effectiveness and attainment, the theory was not without criticism. Everyday associations of engagement denoted to “involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, absorption, focused effort, zeal, dedication, and energy” (Schaufeli, 2013, para. 1). Rigg (2013) implied the concept was criticized because of overlaps with other eminent and recognized concepts, such as commitment and job satisfaction. Similarly, whereas some scholars utilized specific definitions, others suggested the concept of employee engagement was redundant (Jeung, 2011).

To distinguish specific definitions and measures of employee engagement, many scholars examined the concept promoted by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker (2002), which remains common among scholars and researchers in the field. Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement as “a persistent and positive affective-emotional state of fulfillment in employees characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74). Employees who were energetic endured at their jobs longer, even when the jobs became challenging. Similarly, employees conveying dedication demonstrated ongoing enthusiasm about their job, remained involved, and were proud and inspired even if work was problematic (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Saks (2006) defined employee engagement as a “unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance” (p. 602).

Saks' (2006) theory offered two distinct states of engagement, job engagement and organizational engagement. Saks (2006) attempted to illustrate engagement was an attitude in addition to the employee's alertness and interest while performing the job. Saks (2006) distinguished between two states of engagement by asserting that organizational commitment differed from individual engagement, as compacts with a person's attitude and level of attachment with the organization.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) hypothesizes that human motivation depends on satisfying the innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Byrne, 2015; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagne, 2014). Deci and Ryan (2008) recognized the focus of theory on categories, rather than just quantity of motivation, calling attention to autonomous, and controlled motivation, as well as to amotivation as explainers of performance.

Macey and Schneider (2008) defined engagement as "a concept with a sparse and diverse theoretical and empirically demonstrated nomological net" (p. 3). Macey and Schneider concentrated predominantly on task performance and effectiveness as outcomes of engagement. According to Macey and Schneider (2008), behaviors that specify meticulousness and diligence signified the importance of doing something extra, which was consistent with a conventional theory of engagement (e.g., going the extra mile). The authors stipulated engagement consists of other elements, which presents a challenge theoretically, and therefore suggested engagement embraced actions that went beyond those typically expected (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Conversely, SDT research concentrated on engaged individuals and their physical and psychological well-being compared to those who were unmotivated or lacked

personal control (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, Deci and Ryan (2000) specified psychological needs were not related to principles, but rather with “innate psychological nutrients that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity and well-being” (p. 229).

According to Macey and Schneider (2008), job involvement and satisfaction were regarded as components of engagement, but not equivalent to it. Others suggested job satisfaction may evaluate the set of circumstances that grounds engagement; Shuck and Wollard (2010) advanced that employee engagement was “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes” (p. 103). MacLeod and Clarke (2009) furthered that employee satisfaction and engagement varied in their extrapolative connection surrounded by power in excess of outcomes. Furthermore, MacLeod and Clarke (2009) pointed toward the notion of employee engagement, and how employee engagement takes many forms. For that reason, employee engagement remains a fascinating topic.

Kahn’s (1990) theory of engagement was influenced by the earlier motivational theories of Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s (1987) two-factor theory regarding recognition of self-actualization and meaningful work. These works influenced Macey and Schneider’s (2008) theory that employees could be predisposed to workplace engagement based on distinctive personality traits.

Significance of Employee Engagement

From large multinational corporations to small organizations, everyone is interested in increasing employee engagement (Khan, 1990). Magazines like Forbes and Business Week recognize business as “best places to work” based on the most admired

characteristics, prompting scholars and practitioners to closely examine significance of employee engagement. Research suggested that a positive work environment was created when employees felt psychologically and emotionally safe, the workplace environment established and promoted employee personality as a fit for the current job, and the organization provided additional opportunities for future development and promotions (Kahn, 1990; Resick et al., 2007). A good job fit resulted in increased productivity and job satisfaction; reciprocally, poor job fit led to decreased productivity (Resick et al., 2007, Verquer et al., 2003).

Multiple studies highlighted the positive effects of engaged employees. Kahn (1990) stated workplace environments that encouraged and promoted support, trust, and cooperation led to better productivity. Consulting (2013) noted a positive climate led to boosted productivity, retention, and performance. Frederickson (1998) talked about supportive workplace climates that created positive emotion and employee's ability to build the available emotional and physiological resources. Supportive workplace climates manifested in higher commitment to the organizational success (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Furthermore, according to Harter et al. (2002) enchaining workplace culture and climate created positive emotions such as joy, love, and acceptance, and contributed to higher emotional activity that led to more productive employees. Employees who worked in enriching psychological environments were more productive and achieved preferred organizational goals and targets (Kahn, 1990, O'Neil & Arendt, 2008). Although research to date established the significance of engagement on organizational outcomes, Rich, LePine, and Crawford (2010) highlighted the strong

relationship between engagement and performance by showing engagement was supported by intrinsic motivation, job involvement, and job satisfaction.

Researchers Schaufeli et al. (2002) called attention to the negative relationship between engagement and burnout, which adversely impacted work performance. Accumulating evidence showed poor workforce engagement was detrimental to organizations because of the ensuing decrease in employee well-being and productivity. Employees were no longer passive spectators in the workplace environment; instead, they dynamically affected their work environment by necessitating their preferences and abilities (Tims, Bakker, Derks, & Van Rhenen, 2013).

Attridge (2009) found high levels of work engagement could be achieved through adaptation of positive workplace practices including, supervisory communication, job design, resource support, working conditions, corporate culture, and leadership style. As a result, organizations started paying attention to workplace culture and design so people felt valued, trusted, and respected because then they were engaged in their work and did not worry about losing their jobs (Stanford Business, 2015). However, Gallup's (2016) *State of the American Workplace* report indicated only 33% of U. S. employees were engaged in their job, 51% said they were actively looking for a new job or watching for openings, and 35% reported changing jobs within the past three years. Gallup (2016) found only 20% of employees thought their management provided motivation to perform outstanding work. Thus, organizations were not giving employees convincing reasons to stay so it was not surprising 91% of employees said they left their prior company for a better opportunity (Gallup, 2016). Gallup (2016) estimated actively disengaged employees cost the U. S. \$483 to \$605 billion each year in lost productivity.

Characteristics that Foster Engagement

Kahn (1990) noted employee engagement was influenced by the presence of three psychological conditions: (1) meaningfulness, (2) safety, and (3) availability. Although these psychological conditions were considered vital for workplace engagement, other conditions were essential to enable the psychological factors of personal engagement. Research organizations and practitioners continue to provide annual reports and guidance for possible solutions in relation to the states of engagement (Aon Hewitt, 2014; Gallup Inc., 2016).

Rich et al., (2010) defined engagement as “a multi-dimensional motivational concept reflecting the simultaneous investment of an individual’s physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in active, full work performance” (p. 619). Kahn (1990) offered a more specific definition of personal engagement, stating, “Personal engagement is the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active full role performances” (p. 700). Kahn (1992) classified psychological presence as feelings of concentrating, connecting, and focusing on role performance. Each of these resources is equally important and required for engagement to flourish.

Deloitte’s (2016) report on employee engagement stated companies must compete to win the title of “best place to work” by offering nice workspaces, flexibility, benefits, and a culture that keeps employees engaged. Deloitte’s (2016) engagement model encompasses five broad areas: meaningful work and jobs, management practices and behaviors, the work environment, opportunities for development and growth, and trust in

leadership. Deficiency in these areas decreased engagement, which resulted in uncommitted employees, high turnover, low performance, and lack of innovation (Deloitte, 2016).

Gallup's (2016) recent meta-analysis further confirmed the connection between employee engagement and key performance outcomes of increased productivity, higher retention, and lower absenteeism. Other research confirmed the positive correlation between engagement and productivity and retention in the workplace (Consulting, 2013). A correlation was found between employee engagement, their willingness to go "above and beyond," and their willingness to stay with the organization (Consulting, 2013). Ulrich et al. (2007) suggested the best ways to increase employee engagement was to adjust the compensation structure to fit the external value, express a higher level of interest in employees by offering more personalized rewards, offer a flexible benefits package, and provide more appealing job titles. Parker and Griffin (2011) reiterated that engaged employees thrived on challenges and working to solve problems, which could benefit organizations. The changing nature of workplace dynamics also demonstrated that engaged employees had high levels of energy, and were more active and enthusiastic about their work (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2016).

In today's highly competitive, multicultural, and multigenerational work environment, the biggest and most important asset are employees (Dickson, Keesan, & Shaver, 2009). To maintain high levels of productivity and customer satisfaction, and encourage innovation, senior leaders recognized the importance of employee engagement as they created ways to recruit the best talent, retain their best performers, and get the highest levels of productivity from all their employees (Dickson et al., 2009). Employee

commitment could be increased by increasing employee satisfaction, and knowing that the connection between employee role and values was strengthened when a “sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work” were present (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, p. 417).

Characteristics that Hinder Engagement

Employee engagement continues to dominate interest among practitioners and academics (Carasco-Saul et al., 2015; Cataldo, 2011; Medlin & Green, 2014; McClure, 2013; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Although researchers offered explanations of antecedents and consequences of engagement (Anitha, 2014; Shantz, Alfes, Truss, & Soane, 2012; Shirom, 2011), practitioners took interest in finding prospective solutions and costs concerning the state of engagement (Aon Hewitt, 2014; Gallup Inc., 2016).

Although Kahn (1990) offered the concepts of engagement and disengagement over 25 years ago, disengagement obtained little attention since then. The emphasis was on employees who were burned out, emotionally exhausted, and lacked efficiency in their performance (Maslach et al., 2001). McCauley and Broomfield (2011) defined employee disengagement as individuals who were indifferent or emotionally disconnected from their organization or employer. Organizations with high levels of engagement outperformed organizations with disengaged employees by up to 200% in terms of productivity and reduced absenteeism. McCauley and Broomfield (2011) found that disagreement occurred when:

1. Job expectations were unmet
2. Inadequate resources were available

3. Talent was misused, either from underutilization or overutilization
4. Poor individual appraisal/development
5. Lack of advancement opportunities
6. Lack of recognition
7. Poor work/life balance
8. Poor work environment, such as from office hostilities
9. Poor line management that lacked drive or direction

Contrary to belief, disengaged employees did not show signs of being worn out by chronic stress, nor did they depersonalize their coworkers (Maslach et al., 2001). Instead, influenced by chronic exhaustion and depersonalization, disengaged employees experienced inefficacy and doubted their ability to complete their job (Maslach et al., 2001). Additionally, disengagement could be contagious, just as engagement was contagious (Byrne, 2015). Disengaged employees showed up for work, but contributed modicum (Pech & Slade, 2006). Employee disengagement as an emerging phenomenon in the workplace was revealed by dissatisfactory performance, deficient commitment, and possible turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Wollard, 2011).

Engagement Preferences by Generation

The difference in engagement preferences by generations was well documented in the research (Dogan, Gen-Qing, & Ersem, 2012; Jeongdoo & Dogan, 2012; Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley 2010). Studies found the different generations accepted diverse values and goals, and reported different reasons for engaging and disengaging in their jobs (Pech & Slade, 2006; Shuck, 2011). Delving further into the definition of engagement

preferences by generations revealed that by comparing the values exhibited by multiple generations, it was established that Gen Xers placed more value on benefits and convenient work hours compared to Baby Boomers who placed more value on achievement and contribution to society (Dogan et al. 2012, Murphy, 2011).

Additionally, Baby Boomers valued their ethics and integrity, whereas Millennials valued a flexible work schedule to accommodate other outside engagements and duties (Murphy, 2011). Millennials displayed an inclination for work/life balance, but not as much as the Gen Xers. Although, many similarities were found among generations in general categories of employment, there were still many conflicting results, which could include engagement preferences because of intrinsic values and varied career paths (Murphy, 2011).

Millennials were characterized as well-educated, confident, and goal-oriented employees (Weingarten, 2009). They value work-life balance, time away from work, and preservation of their lifestyle. Millennials desire to maintain their personal life, and will leave their current position if they believe the change would contribute to their lifestyle, which makes them the hardest generation to retain in the workplace (Barren et al., 2007). Compared to other generations, they enjoy challenging jobs and want a sense of significance and enthusiasm; however, they lose the value of a job easily, which could be a crucial determinant of intention to leave the job (Barren et al., 2007; Weingarten, 2009).

White (2015) determined all generations aspired the same work motivators, including continuous employment and opportunities for promotion. Moreover, the study elaborated that commitment levels among generations were similar. White (2015) suggested the generations had more in common than previously thought, and Baby

Boomers and Gen Xers had similar perceptions of leadership and organizational climate. Additionally, the study found Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials all shared the same top five expectations of their employers, and that all generations expected (1) work on challenging projects (2) competitive compensation, (3) opportunities for advancement and chances to learn and grow in their jobs, (4) fair treatment, and (5) work-life balance (White, 2015).

Employee Retention

Numerous scholars and researchers examined and published over 1,500 studies on turnover (Bluedorn, 1982). Bridger (2014) stated engagement was a two-way relationship with both employer and employee needed to develop and nurture engagement. The link between employee engagement and retention is gaining prominence in the workplace because of the strong association between engagement and performance (Dessler & Cole, 2011; Gallup, 2016). However, the research provided contradictory views to employee retention (Chiang & Birtch, 2008).

Significance of Employee Retention

Researchers examined the topic of employee turnover, an ongoing challenge for organizations, and the relationship between employee turnover and total rewards (Dessler & Cole, 2011). Scholarly researchers debated the importance of a shortage of skilled workers, employee turnover, and an aging workforce (Brenner, 2010; Hutchings, De Cieri, & Shea, 2011). Employee demographics, job dynamics, and opportunities for advancement influenced different generations' intentions to voluntary turnover (Iqbal, 2010, Hunter, 2010). The cost of turnover was highlighted by Fitzenz (1997, as cited by Ramlall, 2004), who stated,

The average company loses approximately \$1 million with every 10 managerial and professional employees who leave the organization. Combined with direct and indirect costs, the total cost of an exempt employee turnover is a minimum of one year's pay and benefits, or a maximum of two years' pay and benefits. There is significant economic impact with an organization losing any of its critical employees, especially given the knowledge that is lost with the employee's departure. (p. 63)

Additionally, unrestrained turnover and an inability to retain talent led to loss of organizational knowledge and skills (Ramlall, 2004). Thus, the concept of retaining human capital and increasing knowledge of management became a global imperative (Gallup, 2016). It became considerably more important to distinguish the commitment of individuals to remain in an organization, and for an organization to form an atmosphere in which employees were willing to stay (Gallup, 2016).

The Relationship between Engagement and Retention

Employee engagement was viewed from various academic and practical perspectives. This popular topic continues to draw attention of scholars to determine the meaning, measurement, and theory of employee engagement. For many years, scholars examined the relationship between employee intention to stay with the organization and total rewards (Dessler & Cole, 2011). In 1943, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory explained a psychological perspective of employee retention antecedents. Maslow (1943) explained a person's motivation and progression from basic physiological needs to the highest level of need, self-actualization (Figure 2).

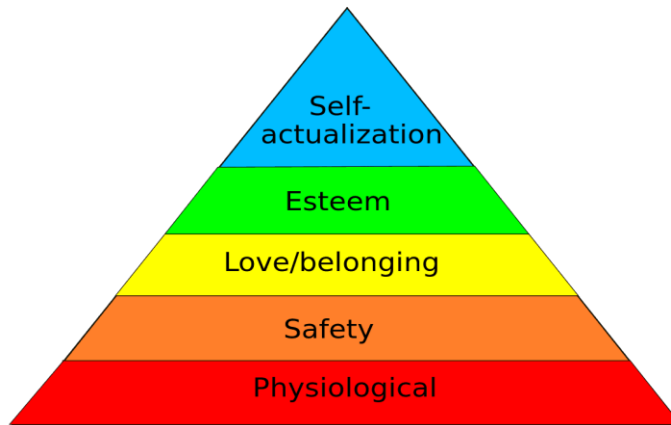


Figure 2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model.

In 1987, Herzberg developed dual-factor motivational theory connecting self-actualization and meaningful work. Scholars found a strong correlation between employee engagement and different generations based on Herzberg and Maslow's theories (Chiboiwa, Samuel, & Chipunza, 2010; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Williams, McDaniel, & Nguyen, 2006). Interest in employee engagement gained attention in recent years as Towers Watson (2011), Gallup (2016), and Price Waterhouse Cooper (2016) examined nuanced areas of engagement and found a strong correlation between employee engagement and retention.

The relationship between employee engagement and turnover became an increasingly attractive topic for businesses to study due to costs associated with turnover and recruitment. It was commonly believed that organizations could reduce unnecessary voluntary turnover through increased employee development, engagement, and compensation (Shuck & Reio, 2011). Several studies revealed that providing employees with supplementary knowledge and skills resulted in positive consequences (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Examining the positive relationship between employee engagement and retention led many organizations to praise their

learning and development programs, mentoring programs, leadership development initiatives, or skills development initiatives for developing a positive relation with affective commitment to the organization (Lee & Bruvold, 2003; Shuck, & Reio, 2011).

Gallup (2016) showed a connection between employee engagement and 12 engagement elements. Gallup studied the 12 engagement elements and repeatedly found engaged employees were highly productive, desired clear role expectations, had the ability to perform, could communicate their organization's mission and purpose, and too advantage of learning and development opportunities. Underlying all of this was that the 12 elements could boost the outcomes of individuals and the entire organization. Furthermore, by providing an opportunity to learn and grow, organizations realized 44% less absenteeism and 16% higher productivity (Gallup, 2016).

The positive connection between engagement, retention, how an employee interprets the working environment, and the emotionally engaging connection to the organization further corroborated relationships between employee engagement and intention to turnover (Kahn, 1990; Rich et al., 2010; Shuck & Reio, 2011). Engaged employees were more likely to remain with their current employer (Shuck & Reio, 2014). Fredrickson (2001) further substantiated the direct relationship between engagement and positive emotions, which resulted in positive outcomes and lower turnover. In contrast, negative emotions and burnout led to disengagement and contributed to employee intentions to leave organizations. Although work place engagement was categorized by the active use of positive emotions (Saks, 2006), the opposite was also true as negative emotions hindered positive interpersonal relationships and led to disengagement, and ultimately to turnover (Maslach et al., 2001).

Summary

The role of HR professionals evolved from basic personnel and staffing to serving as strategic business partners within organizations. They play a key role in setting policies and procedures, and developing organizational cultures, which could affect employee engagement. Although there is much theoretical and empirical research on the employee engagement in different sectors, relatively little empirical work was conducted on the degree of employee engagement in higher education and the factors influencing HR employees to be engaged in this industry. Studies suggested each generation demonstrates a unique set of workplace expectations (Murphy, 2011; Strauss & Howe, 2000). As such, it would be worthwhile to examine employee engagement preferences among the different generations employed in higher education.

Rapid changes in recent years, including technology and global movements, created an increased demand for talent in the intellectual capital environment. The BLS (2017) predicted the job growth in HR professions would be higher than other occupations. Given the emphasis within organizations on retaining its critical employees, and the high demand for HR professionals, there is a need for research to explore employment practices that can increase employee retention and engagement and reduce employee turnover within organizations. Classifying engagement practices as pertinent for every generation of HR professionals would help illustrate the outcomes of the respective employee retention efforts and the importance of developing and implementing employee engagement practices aligned with generational preferences.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study sought to improve the understanding of workplace engagement practices that influenced employee decisions to remain with their current employer. More specifically, it explored the retention practices of human resources (HR) employees in four-year private institutions of higher education (IHEs) in southern California. The focus was on current workplace dynamics in relation to the anticipated mass exodus of one of the largest generations in the workplace, Baby Boomers. Per population estimates by the U. S. Census Bureau (2015) and Pew Research Center (2016), Millennials exceeded Baby Boomers as the nation's largest living generation. Millennials, ages 20-36 in 2017, reached 75.4 million, surpassing the 74.9 million Baby Boomers aged 53-71 in 2017. Additionally, Generation X (ages 37-52 in 2017) was projected to pass the Baby Boomers in population size by 2028 (Pew Research Center, 2016). These generational shifts were also reflected in the workplace, which created a need for employers to develop and implement different engagement practices to ensure retention of other generations, particularly Generation X and Millennials. The Millennial generation of HR workers must be developed to fill the knowledge and skills gap needed for leadership roles as the Baby Boomers retire and leave a void in the workplace.

This chapter commences with a restatement of the purpose of the study and research questions. Next, the methodology, rationale for the selected method, the population and a sample are presented. This is followed by the data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the employee engagement practices that Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial human resources (HR) employees in four-year private institutions of higher education (IHEs) in southern California perceive as most important to their retention. A second purpose of the study was to determine whether a significant difference in preferred engagement practices existed between Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California and the engagement practices preferred by the Baby Boomer and Generation X generations.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the focus for this study:

1. What are the engagement practices that Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
2. What are the engagement practices that Baby Boomer HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
3. What are the engagement practices that Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California compared to the engagement

practices considered most important for retention by the Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in those same IHEs?

Research Design

Research design is the description of methods and procedures for obtaining information needed. The purpose of a research design is to make available the most valid and precise answers to the research question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) It is the overall operational pattern or framework of the project that stipulates what information is to be collected from which source and by what procedure (Best & Kahn, 2010). Quantitative research designs focus on numbers and relationships between variables, such as identifying a dependent variable and discovering if one or more independent variables result in a change to the dependent variable (Bryant, 2004). Additionally, quantitative research designs help researchers collect data from a broader range of participants, increasing the potential for study findings to generalize to a larger population (Bryant, 2004).

A quantitative descriptive, nonexperimental research design was selected for this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) defined nonexperimental designs as studies that explored the relationship between different phenomena without intervention or manipulation. To identify the employee engagement practices Millennial HR employees in four-year, private IHEs in southern California perceived as most important to retention, the nonexperimental design was chosen. This was more appropriate because the researcher was wanting to describe current perceptions rather than implement an intervention aimed at changing practices.

The descriptive, survey-based method allowed the researcher to explore what significances existed between the engagement practices considered most important to retention by the Millennial HR employees compared to the engagement practices considered most important by the Baby Boomer and Generation X HR employees in four-year, private IHEs in southern California. Quantitative methods were widely used for practical reasons, especially when selecting things that could be measured or counted to gain scientific credibility over the unmeasurable. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggested that in a quantitative study, the research problem might be stated as a question or a hypothesis, preferably using question format.

Much was written about descriptive research and its uniqueness because it could include multiple variables for analysis (Borg & Gall, 1989). Similarly, the natural process in contrasting two or more groups, according to Krathwohl (1998), was best addressed using the descriptive design. Furthermore, descriptive research included collecting data that illustrated events and then organized, tabulated, and depicted the data collected to offer a clear description of the content under study (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Visual aids such as graphs and charts helped in understanding the data presented.

One of the most prominent types of data collection was surveys (Malhotra & Grover, 1998). Survey research allowed for the quick collection of data from a larger group of people in a short amount of time. The structured format of surveys collected information by asking people to complete a questionnaire, which could be done using a paper and pencil, or through other methods such as online platforms, computer-assisted telephone interviews, or face-to-face interviews. In survey research, information was typically gathered from a sample of people reflective of the larger population being

investigated (Malhotra & Grover, 1998). Given these characteristics, aiming to gain a deeper holistic view the quantitative, descriptive, and survey-based method was the best option to examine employee engagement of HR employees in four-year, private IHEs in southern California.

Population

Creswell delineates a population as a “group of individuals having one characteristic that distinguishes them from other groups” (Creswell, 2008, p. 359). The population for this study was the 744,622 HR workers in the United States of America (Data USA, 2017). The most common industries that employed HR workers included employment services, hospitals, and colleges and universities (Data USA, 2017).

A target population was defined as a narrowing of the full population and the subset from which the researcher intended to draw a sample (Creswell, 2008). Target populations are typically selected based on convenience, accessibility, and proximity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For this study, the target population was HR professionals working in higher education. The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR, 2017), the largest professional organization for HR professionals in higher education, serves more than 20,000 HR professionals and other campus leaders across more than 1,900 member organizations around the country. The target population was further narrowed to private IHEs in southern California due to accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The target population consisted of the HR staff at 55 private IHEs in southern California.

Sample

A sample in research refers to the subset of individuals with the potential to be selected to participate in the study (Creswell, 2008). The sample for this study was HR professionals working in four-year private IHEs in southern California. The target population used for this study consisted of current HR professionals in southern California, either meeting a leadership (management/exempt) role or support staff (non-management/non-exempt) role. As a member of Higher Ed Direct, a professional association specific to IHEs, the researcher obtained a list of HR directors from all 55 IHEs located in southern California. The researcher then sent an email to all the HR directors asking them to forward the survey on to their HR employees at the IHE (Appendix C). As such, the sample for this study was all HR employees at the 55 private, non-profit four-year IHEs in southern California.

Instrumentation

Several previously administered and validated instruments were available for use in the current study. Through the literature review, the researcher identified multiple variables related to engagement and reviewed instruments for those variables. The researcher selected a survey instrument developed by Dr. Sharon Floyd (2015) for her dissertation work examining generational retention strategies among information technology employees. Floyd developed the questionnaire (Appendix A) aligned to the literature on workplace engagement and retention of employees. The interlinking of generational difference and understanding, and the development of related engagement approaches, supported the use of the Floyd's (2015) instrument as suitable in the measurement of employee engagement. Additionally, Floyd (2015) field-tested the

instrument to ensure it was valid and reliable, and it was successfully used in her dissertation work. With permission of the author (Appendix B), the researcher chose to use Floyd's (2015) survey.

Floyd's (2015) survey instrument consists of 18 statements that respondents rate using a six-point scale ranging from 1 = *Least Important* to 6 = *Most Important*. The survey items aligned to workplace practices reflected in research as instrumental in the engagement and retention of employees.

Reliability and Validity

The most important feature of designing and using a survey tool starts with showing it is "valid, reliable and unambiguous" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 438). Drost (2011) described reliability as the "extent to which measurements are repeatable – when different persons perform the measurements, on different occasions, under different conditions, with supposedly alternative instruments which measure the same thing" (p. 106). The researcher chose to use a pre-existing survey to help improve the reliability of the data collected.

Field Testing

Patten (2014) defined validity as an instrument that measures and "accurately performs the function it is supposed to perform" (p. 61). The survey selected for this study was used in a prior study and found to be valid and reliable. However, because the survey was used with a different population (i.e., information technology workers), the instrument was field tested on members of the current population (HR professionals). The researcher selected three people who met the study criteria to complete the survey and provide feedback about the clarity of the questions, time needed to complete the

survey, and appropriateness of the questions for the population. The data from the field test were not included in the study, but used to ensure the survey was valid with the current population.

Data Collection

Permission to conduct the study was attained from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) prior to the data collection. BUIRB approval ensured the study complied with the protections of human rights and the study instrument did not pose any unnecessary risk or burden on the participants.

As a member of Higher Ed Direct, a professional association for people in higher education, the researcher obtained the contact information for HR directors employed at IHEs in southern California. The researcher then emailed each of the HR directors explaining the purpose of the study and asking permission to conduct the study within the HR department at their IHE (Appendix C). The HR directors were then asked to forward the survey link to their HR employees. The specific method of data collection was the use of an online survey. The rationale for use of this sort of tool was to provide anonymity for participants and to allow for centralized data collection. To ensure confidentiality, the demographic data collected by the researcher did not include information that could be used to identify any of the participants.

The survey consisted of three segments: (1) an overview of the study and informed consent form (Appendix D), (2) 18 questions connected to the research questions, and (3) demographic questions. As part of the online survey (Appendix B), participants were asked to self-identify the generation to which they belonged. For this study, the generations were identified as: (a) Baby Boomer (born between 1943 and

1963), (b) Generation X (born between 1966 and 1980), or (c) Millennial (born between 1981 and 1997). Participants were asked to first read the informed consent (Appendix D) and agree to participate prior to accessing the survey.

Data Analysis

To analyze the results from the survey after the data were collected, the statistical software add-on in Microsoft Excel was used. More specifically, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics are used to “graph the data, to calculate means (averages) and to look for extreme scores or oddly shaped distributions of scores” (Howell, 2012, p. 5). Research questions one, two, and three were intended to identify the engagement practices perceived as most important to the three different generational cohorts and thus descriptive statistics were appropriate to address these research questions. Research question four intended to identify similarities and differences between the three generational groups. As such, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. ANOVA is a statistical test used to compute significant differences between three or more groups across multiple variables (Chawla & Sodhi, 2011). For variables that showed a statistical difference between the three groups, additional post-hoc comparisons were conducted to identify the specific differences.

Limitations

The main limitations of the study pertained to the sample of employees who were meant to represent the HR professionals employed by IHEs in southern California. The generalizability of the results was limited in its scope due to the limitation of the sample to the HR employees in higher education in the southern California region. Respectively, each geographic area and state may demonstrate a different region-specific sub-culture

infused by local values, traditions, or social norms. If the study was replicated in other regions of the United States, or even globally, it could find different results based on differences in where they lived or worked. Replication of the study in the other industries and geographic regions would augment the generalizability of the results

Summary

Chapter III described the methodology, purpose of the study, research questions, and design of the study. Furthermore, Chapter III included the purpose statement and research questions from Chapter I, in addition to the proposed research design, population, sample, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis procedures. The data were electronically disseminated and collected. The data collected was analyzed using statistical software add-on in Microsoft Excel. The chapter concluded with the limitations of the study. Chapter IV details the research findings and the analysis of data related to workplace engagement.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

This study sought to understand if a difference existed between the workplace engagement practices that provoked retention of human resources (HR) professionals in higher education. Additionally, the research studied if a correlation existed between the generational differences and retention among HR professionals in institutions of higher education (IHEs) in southern California. Chapter IV begins with an overview of the purpose of the study, followed by the research questions, a summary of the methodology, and detailed information about the population and sample. The chapter then provides a thorough analysis of the study findings by research question. The purpose of Chapter IV was to further examine each of the research questions and present the quantitative data analysis and findings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the employee engagement practices that Millennial HR employees in four-year private institutions of higher education IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention. A second purpose of the study was to determine whether a significant difference existed between the engagement practices that appealed to Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California and the engagement practices that appealed to HR employees from the Baby Boomer and Generation X generations.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the focus for this study:

1. What are the engagement practices that Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?

2. What are the engagement practices that the Baby Boomer generation HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
3. What are the engagement practices that Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California compared to the engagement practices considered most important for retention by the Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in those same IHEs?

Methodology

A quantitative, descriptive, survey-based research method was selected for this study. A quantitative research design was selected because of its focus on both numbers and relationships between variables. Bryant (2004) stated that quantitative research identified a dependent variable and discovered if one or more independent variables resulted in a change to the dependent variable. Quantitative data collection approaches also helped obtain data from a broader range of participants allowing for greater generalization (Bryant, 2004).

This study used a quantitative descriptive, nonexperimental research design, as such studies explore the relationship between different phenomena without intervention or manipulation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The nonexperimental design was chosen to describe current perceptions of the employee engagement practices Millennial

HR employees in four-year, private IHEs in southern California perceived as most important to retention. The descriptive, survey-based method allowed the research to delve into differences between the engagement practices considered most important to retention by the Millennial HR employees compared to the engagement practices considered most important by the Baby Boomer and Generation X HR employees in four-year, private IHEs in southern California. Quantitative methods were widely used for practical reasons, especially when selecting factors that could be measured or counted to gain scientific credibility over the unmeasurable. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggested that in a quantitative study, the research problem might be stated as a question or a hypothesis, preferably using a question format.

The survey was designed to collect data regarding the relationship between workplace retention and engagement practices. The researcher selected a survey instrument developed by Dr. Sharon Floyd (2015) for her dissertation work examining generational retention strategies among information technology employees. Floyd developed the questionnaire (Appendix A) aligned to the literature on workplace engagement and retention of employees. The researcher used an online survey developed by Floyd to gather the numeric data as the most preferred, unbiased, and accurate data collection method. This data collection method supported the internal validity, external validity, construct validity, and statistical conclusion validity of the study (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

The researcher selected the descriptive, survey-based method to explore similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important to retention by Millennial HR employees compared to Baby Boomer and Generation X

HR employees in four-year, private IHEs in southern California. The target population was narrowed to private IHEs in southern California due to accessibility and proximity to the researcher. The target population concentrated on 55 qualified institutions. The sample for this study was HR professionals working in four-year private IHEs in southern California. As a member of Higher Ed Direct, a professional association specific to IHEs, the researcher obtained a list of HR directors from all 55 IHEs located in southern California. The researcher contacted the HR directors by sending them an e-mail and asking them to forward the survey link to their HR employees at the IHE (Appendix C). The survey remained open for two weeks in December 2017. After the two-week period, a total of 50 responses were received. To ensure confidentiality of data, the researcher did not collect personally identifiable data such as name or institution. Furthermore, the researcher secured the survey data using a password protected file, accessible only to the researcher.

Population and Sample

This study used a geographically and collectively reachable population selected from a list of organizations provided by Higher Ed Direct, a professional association for people in higher education. The population for this study was all HR employees working at IHEs in California. The target population used for this study consisted of current HR professionals in southern California, either meeting a leadership (management/exempt) role or support staff (non-management/non-exempt) role. It was estimated that 255 HR professionals received the invitation to participate. Fifty participants answered, signifying a response rate of 20%. Of the 50 respondents 14 (28%) were Baby Boomers, 24 (48%) were Generation X, and 12 (24%) were Millennials (Table 1).

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Respondents by Generation

	n	%
Baby Boomer (born between 1946 and 1964)	14	28.0
Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980)	24	48.0
Millennial (born between 1981 and 1997)	12	24.0

The survey offered an opportunity to capitalize on the strengths of the total response rate of 20%, which was suitable for addressing the research questions. Visser, Krosnick, Marquette, and Curtin (1996) disclosed that “surveys with lower response rates (near 20%) yielded more accurate measurements than did surveys with higher response rates (near 60 or 70%)” (p. 199), demonstrating low response rate likely had little impact on the study.

Findings Reported by Research Question

This research used a quantitative, descriptive, survey method. The survey was administered using Qualtrics, and used a 6-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 = *Not Important* to 6 = *Extremely Important*. The survey consisted of 18 engagement statements and one demographic question regarding the participants’ generation. Due to the nature of this study, the survey was open to all HR employees currently working in four-year private IHEs in southern California, so other demographic factors were irrelevant.

Research Question 1: *What are the engagement practices that Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?* Millennial HR employees were asked to rank the 18 statements as related to their perception of engagement practices and retention. The online survey results for quantitative data analysis were downloaded into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The survey results were analyzed using descriptive statistics containing

data for means, frequencies, and standard deviations. The researcher calculated mean scores for the 18 statements and presented them in descending order. The statistical analysis included a presentation of the standard deviation and the mean.

A summary of the results of the first research question are presented in Table 1 presenting the mean and standard deviation of the results. The results include mean scores for all 18 statements perceived to be important to retention. Table 2 reveals the descriptive data statistics for the millennial HR employees.

Table 2

Millennial HR Employees Perceptions of Engagement Practices

	Mean	SD
6. Being fairly compensated for the work that I do	5.55	0.82
1. Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities	5.42	0.67
4. Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities	5.25	0.97
2. Having the resources to do work well	5.08	0.79
13. Working with people who value quality	4.92	0.79
17. Working for an organization that values professional growth and continuous learning	4.92	0.90
8. Knowing my welfare is important to someone at work	4.83	0.83
10. Being given challenging work	4.83	0.94
14. Being part of an organization where employees work well in teams	4.83	0.83
16. Receiving constructive and timely feedback	4.83	0.83
11. Knowing my opinion is valued	4.75	0.87
3. Being given appropriate decision-making authority	4.67	1.15
9. Having a colleague support my professional growth	4.58	1.56
12. Working for an organization whose mission and values place importance on my work	4.58	1.31
5. Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions	4.50	1.45
7. Knowing my company cares about customer satisfaction	4.42	1.08
18. Having opportunities to work with a mentor	4.00	1.41
15. Having a confidant in the workplace	3.92	1.44

Note. Ratings based on a 6-point Likert scale: 1 (*not important*) 2 (*slightly important*) 3 (*moderately important*) 4 (*important*) 5 (*very important*) to 6 (*absolutely essential*); n = 12.

The highest rated statement was *Being fairly compensated for the work that I do* ($M = 5.54$), followed by *Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities* ($M = 5.42$), *Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities* ($M = 5.25$), and *Having the resources to the work well* ($M = 5.08$). This aligned with findings from Pew Research Center (2010), which indicated Millennials had higher income. Millennials, better educated than their predecessors, had significantly higher incomes than previous generations had at the same age (Economist, 2017). Similarly, Twenge (2010) noted Millennials had greater self-esteem and a smaller need for social approval. Millennials were apprehensive with salary, welfare, and benefits (Barroon et al., 2007). Brown et al. (2015) found Millennials showed high satisfaction with their job, and emphasized positive attributes if they had training, development, and advancement opportunities (Brown et al., 2015).

These four highest rated statements all had mean ratings above 5.0, indicating they were the most important factors in terms of retention. In contrast, the two lowest rated items were *Having opportunities to work with a mentor* ($M = 4.00$) and *Having a confidant in the workplace* ($M = 3.92$), indicating these ally roles were less important to retention to Millennial employees. This finding was consistent with the research by Weingarten (2009) that Millennials paid attention to their personal goals and made decisions independent of others. This technological savvy generation relied on technology, as they used the internet to seek new job opportunities due to their lack of loyalty to a company (Brown et al., 2015; Weingarten, 2009).

Research Question 2: *What are the engagement practices that the Baby Boomer generation HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as*

most important to retention? For the second research question, responses to the survey were examined for the Baby Boomer generation of HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California. Mean scores and standard deviations for the 18 statements were calculated and organized by descending mean (Table 3).

Table 3

Baby Boomer HR Employees Perceptions of Engagement Practices

	Mean	SD
1. Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities	5.50	0.52
2. Having the resources to do work well	5.14	0.53
11. Knowing my opinion is valued	4.86	0.36
4. Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities	4.79	0.58
13. Working with people who value quality	4.79	0.58
3. Being given appropriate decision-making authority	4.71	0.47
10. Being given challenging work	4.71	0.47
12. Working for an organization whose mission and values place importance on my work	4.71	0.73
7. Knowing my company cares about customer satisfaction	4.64	0.84
6. Being fairly compensated for the work that I do	4.50	0.65
17. Working for an organization that values professional growth and continuous learning	4.36	0.93
14. Being part of an organization where employees work well in teams	4.29	0.61
8. Knowing my welfare is important to someone at work	4.21	0.80
16. Receiving constructive and timely feedback	4.14	0.95
5. Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions	4.00	0.78
9. Having a colleague support my professional growth	3.86	0.95
15. Having a confidant in the workplace	3.69	1.32
18. Having opportunities to work with a mentor	3.00	1.36

Note. Ratings based on a 6-point Likert scale: 1 (*not important*) 2 (*slightly important*) 3 (*moderately important*) 4 (*important*) 5 (*very important*) to 6 (*absolutely essential*); n = 14.

The highest rated statements were among the Baby Boomers were *Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities* ($M = 5.50$) and *Having the resources to do work well* ($M = 5.14$), which were the only items with mean scores above 5.0. The finding that Baby Boomers valued understanding of roles, responsibilities, and resources

was consistent with the literature. Waxer (2009) claimed Baby Boomers were motivated by different work values and ethics. Many Baby Boomers paralleled their work with self-worth (Nicholas, 2009). The term *workaholic* was originated to portray the work ethic of the Baby Boomers (Zemke et al, 2000). In contrast, four statements were rated 4.0 or below: *Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions* ($M = 4.00$), *Having a colleague support my professional growth* ($M = 3.85$), *Having a confidant in the workplace* ($M = 3.69$), and *Having opportunities to work with a mentor* ($M = 3.00$). The findings from the present study suggested each generational cohort had their own learning style and developed effective training alternatives and knowledge transfer approaches. Baby Boomers preferred classroom and instructor-led training methods, whereas Gen Xers and Millennials preferred technology-based learning (Lesser & Rivera, 2006). Similarly, Wagner (2009) stated knowledge transfer methods needed to be varied due to existing age-diversity of the workforce.

Research Question 3: *What are the engagement practices that Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?* For the third research question, responses to the survey were examined for the Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California. Mean scores and standard deviations for the 18 statements were calculated and organized by descending mean (Table 4).

Table 4

Generation X Perceptions of Engagement Practices

	Mean	SD
1. Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities	5.33	0.87
6. Being fairly compensated for the work that I do	5.04	0.81
4. Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities	5.00	0.93
3. Being given appropriate decision-making authority	4.96	0.86
2. Having the resources to do work well	4.92	0.97
17. Working for an organization that values professional growth and continuous learning	4.92	1.21
14. Being part of an organization where employees work well in teams	4.88	1.03
11. Knowing my opinion is valued	4.83	1.05
13. Working with people who value quality	4.83	0.70
7. Knowing my company cares about customer satisfaction	4.75	0.79
16. Receiving constructive and timely feedback	4.67	1.05
12. Working for an organization whose mission and values place importance on my work	4.54	1.14
9. Having a colleague support my professional growth	4.50	0.98
10. Being given challenging work	4.39	0.66
8. Knowing my welfare is important to someone at work	4.13	1.12
5. Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions	3.96	1.22
15. Having a confidant in the workplace	3.75	1.39
18. Having opportunities to work with a mentor	3.63	1.17

Note. Ratings based on a 6-point Likert scale: 1 (*not important*) 2 (*slightly important*) 3 (*moderately important*) 4 (*important*) 5 (*very important*) to 6 (*absolutely essential*); n = 24.

Among Generation X HR participants, the highest rated statements were *Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities* ($M = 5.33$), *Being fairly compensated for the work that I do* ($M = 5.04$), and *Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities* ($M = 5.00$). Similar to the Millennials and Baby Boomers, the lowest rated statements were *Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions* ($M = 3.95$), *Having a confidant in the workplace* ($M = 3.75$), and *Having opportunities to work with a mentor* ($M = 3.62$). The findings from this study suggested Generation X HR participants did not prefer working with a mentor. This contrasted with previous research indicating Gen Xers desired mentors; this disparity may have resulted from the fact

Generation X preferred technology for training, which fit the learning and lifestyles of this generation (Ware, Craft, & Kerschenbaum, 2007). Velentini (2014) stated social media and digital technology influenced interpersonal skills. Although mentoring was a valuable training method and knowledge transfer tactic (Parry & Tyson, 2011), a singular approach to training was less appealing among the multi-generational workforce (Ware et al., 2007).

Research Question 4: *What are the similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California compared to the engagement practices considered most important for retention by the Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in those same IHEs?*

A high level of consistency was found across the three generational groups. For example, three statements were rated in the top five for all three groups: *Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities*, *Having the resources to do work well*, and *Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities*. Similarly, three statements were also consistently rated in the bottom five across all three groups: *Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions*, *Having a confidant in the workplace*, and *Having opportunities to work with a mentor*. Overall, research well supported Millennials wanted instant feedback from their managers (Gibson, et al, 2009). Nevertheless, Leiber (2010) pointed out Millennials were ultra-collaborative managers. Zemke et al. (1999) alluded that praise and recognition motivated them.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to look for statistical differences between the three groups. As can be seen in Table 5, only one of the

statements showed a statistically significant difference between groups, *Being fairly compensated for the work that I do*. Using post hoc comparisons, the statistical difference on this item was between the Baby Boomers and the Millennials. The mean rating among Baby Boomers for this item was 4.50, whereas the mean for Millennials was 5.55, more than a full point higher.

Table 5

Differences in Perceptions of Engagement Practices Across the Generation Groups

	BB	Gen X	Mill.	F	p
1. Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities	5.50	5.33	5.42	0.23	0.80
2. Having the resources to do work well	5.14	4.92	5.08	0.37	0.69
3. Being given decision-making authority	4.71	4.96	4.67	0.61	0.55
4. Being able to leverage my skills and	4.79	5.00	5.25	0.95	0.40
5. Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions	4.00	3.96	4.50	0.91	0.41
6. Being fairly compensated for the work	4.50	5.04	5.55	5.77	0.01*
7. Knowing my company cares about customer satisfaction	4.64	4.75	4.42	0.57	0.57
8. Knowing my welfare is important to someone at work	4.21	4.13	4.83	2.23	0.12
9. Having a colleague support my professional growth	3.86	4.5	4.58	1.78	0.18
10. Being given challenging work	4.71	4.39	4.83	1.92	0.16
11. Knowing my opinion is valued	4.86	4.83	4.75	0.05	0.95
12. Working for an organization whose mission and values place importance on my work	4.71	4.54	4.58	0.11	0.89
13. Working with people who value quality	4.79	4.83	4.92	0.12	0.89
14. Being part of an organization where employees work well in teams	4.29	4.88	4.83	2.12	0.13
15. Having a confidant in the workplace	3.69	3.75	3.92	0.09	0.91
16. Receiving constructive and timely feedback	4.14	4.67	4.83	1.90	0.16
17. Working for an organization that values growth and continuous learning	4.36	4.92	4.92	1.37	0.26
18. Opportunities to work with a mentor	3.00	3.63	4.00	2.00	0.15

Note. Ratings based on a 6-point metric scale: 1 (*not important*) 2 (*slightly important*) 3 (*moderately important*) 4 (*important*) 5 (*very important*) to 6 (*absolutely essential*); n = 50

Gallup's (2010) research suggested Millennials were more likely than Gen Xers and Baby Boomers to change jobs for a benefit or perk. Additionally, Millennials did not recognize money as the only source of happiness, although they required large salaries to maintain their high standards of living (Pew Research Center, 2010). Millennials also valued work-life balance, were concerned about escalating their careers, wanted recognition and acknowledgment, and desired the ability to travel (Kyles, 2009). Millennials' distinctive characteristics were associated with comfortable lifestyles resulting from a comfortable childhood. Consequently, their careers were expected to provide sufficient financial compensation to maintain that lifestyle (Martin, 2005). Although the monetary compensation was important, other total rewards such as flexibility and technology are also appealing and important.

Summary

Chapter IV provided a systematic review of the research questions, data collection, and data analysis. The data were collected using an online survey and findings were presented separately for each of the four research questions. The study found work values were more influenced by individual preferences, historic events, economics, and social upheaval. Overall, the research delivered an interpretation of the complex world of multiple generations in the workforce. The coexistence of multiple generations impacted businesses and commands a change to the employment and compensation strategy.

Long-term rewards did not appeal to Millennials; they looked for an instant gratification (Deloitte, 2017). These workers aspired to negotiate each new position, including future opportunities for growth and training. The 2017 Deloitte Millennial

Survey revealed “Millennials appear to want the best of both worlds—freelance flexibility with full-time stability (p. 23). These findings echoed prior research suggesting Millennials appreciated working in a collaborative and consensual environment, which explained why having a mentor was rated so low. In summary, the data noted it was necessary to aligning business and talent management strategies to meet demands of the age-diverse workers. Each generation’s unique characteristics mandated a creative approach to total rewards, recruitment, and retention, which will affect long-term talent management strategies.

Chapter V presents the researcher’s conclusions based on the literature and data collected, followed by a summary of findings, unexpected findings, implications for actions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher organized Chapter V into three sections. Section I includes an overview of the study reiterating the (a) purpose statement, (b) research questions, (c) methodology and design, and (d) population and sample. Section II is an overview of major findings from the study, unexpected findings, and implications for action. Section III provides recommendations for further research and a concluding statement from the researcher.

Overview

Changeable demographics created a diverse workforce and multiple generations in the workplace. Two main forces are driving the tightening of the labor market: “the retirement of large numbers of Baby Boomers and a slowdown in labor productivity” (Babcock, 2016, para. 3). Aging Baby Boomers population caused massive retirements, and loss of skilled employees. Human Resources profession is not excluded of these phenomena. Understanding Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials generational differences, and embracing and leveraging them, enhance the need to help foster generational acceptance and productive work environment (Hammill, 2005).

Over the next twenty years, larger number of Baby Boomers are expected to stop working, which correlates for numerous opportunities for advancement for Millennials (Shellenback, 2016). The explaining dominance implies that shortages in many fields are forcing organizations to recognize the importance of attracting and retaining the talent. Arguably, for employers to understand the impact of employee engagement practices for retention.

Researchers suggested labor shortages are unescapable at all levels of education and skill levels (Dessler & Cole, 2011; Lacombe & Parsons, 2007). To retain employees, especially Millennial employees, leaders must understand how engagement practices affect retention. Research discovered many essential matters regarding Millennials, including engagement and retention. A higher education HR organization conducted exhaustive engagement-related research regarding jobs and working conditions (CUPA-HR, 2017). The research provided minimal information about how much effort the employee was willing to expend or whether the employee had an emotional commitment to the organization (CUPA-HR, 2017).

SHRM (2016) confirmed that maintaining high levels of employee engagement was the most pressing HR challenge in today's work and economic environments. However, a gap in the research existed as to specific actions that would lead to better engagement levels of the various generations of HR professionals in the higher education workplace. Additionally, more research was needed to determine the preferred engagement strategies of the Millennial generation of HR professionals compared to other generations of HR professionals in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the employee engagement practices that Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennial human resources (HR) employees in four-year private institutions of higher education (IHEs) in southern California perceive as most important to their retention. A second purpose of the study was to determine whether a significant difference in preferred engagement practices existed between Millennial, HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern

California and the engagement practices preferred by the Baby Boomer and Generation X generations.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided the focus for this study:

1. What are the engagement practices that Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
2. What are the engagement practices that Baby Boomer HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
3. What are the engagement practices that Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California compared to the engagement practices considered most important for retention by the Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in those same IHEs?

Methodology and Design

A quantitative, descriptive, survey-based research method was selected for this study. Quantitative research methods used numbers and statistical data. “Quantitative researchers seek explanations and predictions that will generate to other persons and places. The intent is to establish, confirm, or validate relationships and to develop generalizations that contribute to theory” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 102).

A nonexperimental design was selected to measure the relationships between different occurrences without an intervention. The nonexperimental design allowed the researcher to identify the engagement practices Millennial, Baby Boomer, and Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceived as most important to retention. Comparing the responses between the groups revealed the similarities and differences in the engagement practices considered most important for retention by these generational cohorts. A web-based survey was used to collect the data.

Population and Sample

For this study, the population was three generations of HR professionals working in four-year private IHEs in southern California. Tannenbaum's (2014) groupings for the generations were used: Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1980), and Millennials (born 1981-2000). This study used a geographically and collectively reachable population selected from a list of organizations provided by Higher Ed Direct, a professional association for people in higher education. The population for this study was all HR employees working at IHEs in California, either meeting a leadership role (management/exempt) or support staff role (non-management/non-exempt).

It was estimated 255 HR professionals received the invitation to participate. Of those, 50 participants responded to the survey, signifying a response rate of 20%. Of the 50 respondents 14 (28%) were Baby Boomers, 24 (48%) were Generation X, and 12 (24%) were Millennials.

Summary of Major Findings

Research Question 1. *What are the engagement practices that Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?*

Finding 1: Being fairly compensated was important for retention. The data collected from Millennial participants, the youngest in the workforce, presented a set of workplace trends associated with practices important for retention, satisfaction with career development and advancement. The highest rated statement was “Being fairly compensated for the work that I do” ($M = 5.54$), followed by “Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities” ($M = 5.41$), “Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities” ($M = 5.25$), and “Having the resources (tools, equipment, materials) to the work well” ($M = 4.91$). These statements showed the characteristics Millennials HR professionals in higher education perceived as important for retention.

Finding 2: Having a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities was important for retention. The findings from this study validated prior research about Millennials in the workplace. Millennials were more individualistic than other generations, well educated, and technology savvy (Festing & Schlafer, 2014). They were motivated by engaging activities, learning new things, and expanding their careers. This generation paid close attention to their work behaviors and in turn, they expected fulfillment of their personal goals and to develop their careers at their current workplace (Festing & Schlafer, 2014). Millennials performed best when their talents were identified and matched with challenging work; otherwise, they were more open to leaving for better opportunities (Eisner, 2005). This generation changed jobs easily and equated job

satisfaction with a positive work climate, flexibility, and the opportunity to learn (Eisner, 2005).

Research Question 2. *What are the engagement practices that the Baby Boomer generation HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?*

Finding 3: Having a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities was important for retention. Having the resources (tools, equipment, materials) to do work well are the most important to retention. The data collected from the Baby Boomer participants, the oldest in the workforce, presented a set of workplace trends among this generation. The highest rated statements were “Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities” ($M = 5.5$), and “Having the resources (tools, equipment, materials) to do work well” ($M = 5.14$).

The above findings were similar to those from prior studies. Baby Boomers showed loyalty, respect for organizational hierarchy, and stability in their jobs (Chi, Maier, & Gursoy, 2013). Jurkiewicz (2000) suggested Baby Boomers lived to work, placed a high value on understanding their roles and responsibilities, were willing to wait their turn for promotions and rewards, and were loyal. Baby Boomers had high stability and demonstrated lower job turnover (Benson & Bown, 2011; Chi et al., 2013; Festing & Schlafer, 2014).

Research Question 3. *What are the engagement practices that Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California perceive as most important to retention?*

Finding 4: Roles and responsibilities, compensation, leveraged skills, and decision-making authority were most important for retention. The data collected from the Generation X participants, the middle generation in the workforce, presented a similar set of workplace trends. The statements rated highest for retention were “Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities” ($M = 5.33$), “Being fairly compensated for the work that I do” ($M = 5.04$), and “Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities” ($M = 5.00$).

Members of Generation X were found to be a thoughtful, skeptical, independent, and autonomous in the workforce (Festing & Schlafer, 2014). Having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and being fairly compensated aligned with their concern to maintain a healthy work-life balance and desire to maintain their lifestyle without sacrificing an opportunity for promotion (Festing & Schlafer, 2014). Having the ability to leverage their skills aligned with the fact they paid more attention to their own perspective, looking for a perfect fit between work and leisure (Brown et al., 2015; Festing & Schlafer, 2014).

Research Question 4. *What are the similarities and differences between the engagement practices considered most important for retention by Millennial HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California compared to the engagement practices considered most important for retention by the Baby Boomer and Generation X employees in those same IHEs?*

Finding 5: All three generations showed being fairly compensated was important to retention. Overall, the three generations had similar ratings across the statements. Only one statement showed a statistical difference across the three groups:

“Being fairly compensated for the work that I do.” This finding was corroborated with Herzberg 1987s dual-factor motivational theory connecting self-actualization and meaningful work. Furthermore, Herzberg and Maslow’s theories stipulated a strong parallel between employee engagement and retention. Compensation was more important to Millennials than Baby Boomers for retention.

Unexpected Findings

Finding: All three generations indicated opportunities to work with a mentor and having a confidant in the workplace were not a priority nor important to retention. Overall, the data aligned with prior research findings for each of the generations. However, one finding was surprising. All three generations had the lowest ratings for opportunities to work with a mentor and having a confidant in the workplace would be the lowest rated items. This finding conflicted with a recent Gallup (2017) study that found employee interactions had strong potential to influence the engagement and retention of employees. However, for Baby Boomers this finding aligned with those of the Pew Research Center (2015) that showed because of their loyalty and lifetime employment, Baby Boomers were most likely to serve as mentor rather than needed to work with a mentor.

Conclusions

The study delineated a significant relationship between the changeable demographics, multiple generations at the workplace, and a correlation to engagement and retention. Despite the noteworthy statistics found in the present literature, an increased awareness of employee engagement, and considerable impact on workers’

productivity and efficiency, there remained disengaged employees who are less committed.

Resultantly, this study projected the employee engagement practices that Millennial, HR employees in four-year, private IHEs in southern California perceived as most important to retention. Further, this study determined whether a significant difference in preferred engagement practices existed between Millennial, HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California and the engagement practices preferred by the Baby Boomer and Generation X generations. Conversely, the quantitative data from this study did not corroborate this expectancy.

The analysis of the findings for this study validated prior research about Millennials in the workplace. Based on the findings of this study, Millennials want to be fairly compensated for the work that they do, having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, having the ability to leverage their skills and abilities, and having the resources to the work well. This research eased the gap between existing research, and engagement preference among generations, which indicated that Millennials are better educated than their predecessors, had significantly higher incomes than previous generations had at the same age (Economist, 2017), had greater self-esteem (Twenge, 2010) and showed high satisfaction with their job, and emphasized positive attributes if they had training, development, and advancement opportunities (Brown et al., 2015).

This conclusion was also supported by research done by Festing and Schlafer (2014) stating that Millennials are more individualistic than other generations, well educated, and technologically savvy.

Based on the literature, the researcher anticipated variances centered on generations, but the study failed to detect significant differences. Kahn's Employee Engagement Theory also supported this conclusion. "Engagement is being psychologically present when performing an organizational role. Engaged employees are more likely to have a positive orientation toward the organization, feel an emotional connection to it, and be productive" (Kahn, 1990, p. 464).

With the substantiation of previous research studies, this study estimated finding emerging employee engagement and retention trends among HR professionals in higher education, and impact on employee engagement, and retention. The study sought the interplay of perceived employees' workplace environments that encouraged and promoted support, trust, cooperation, better productivity, and increased engagement (Kahn, 1990).

The existing literature demonstrated similar patterns. Kahn's (1990) theory of employee engagement was founded on the employees' presence of three psychological conditions: (1) meaningfulness, (2) safety, and (3) availability. Engagement was enhanced when work was meaningful and valued, and employees felt they were not taken for granted (Kahn, 1990). Therefore, the findings of this study led to the conclusion that the presence of meaningful work, with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, resources, and compensation directly correlated to more positive employee engagement. The stronger the presence of resources, meaningful work, and compensation, the stronger the employee engagement.

In weighing options for measuring engagement and commitment, it was discovered that all three generations, regardless of employee demographics, differ across

generations. To further identify the correlation between workplace relations and employee engagement variables, the researcher examined the principal thematic variables emerging from the literature: loyalty, interaction with others, and mentorship.

Employees who are engaged in their work and committed to their organizations are not necessarily connected socially in the workplace. Based on the preponderance of all three generations respondents, *Working with a mentor* (Baby Boomers), *Knowing my welfare is important to someone at work* (Generation X), and *Having a confidant in the workplace* (Millennials) is contrary to popular belief and recent research conducted by Gallup (2017) that all employee interactions had potential to influence engagement and inspire effort. Millennials are known for their love of new technology as they easily communicate with others using technology and Internet. This could explain the low rating on the statement *Having a confidant in the workplace*.

The Pew Research Center (2015) examined the behaviors or phenomena of each generation currently at the workplace. Baby Boomers believe in lifetime employment and loyalty (Benson & Brown, 2011). Due to their longevity and loyalty to the single workplace, many have valuable knowledge and experience, and they are less likely to change their jobs. They become mentors to others at the workplace, therefore it was not surprising that for this generation *Having opportunities to work with a mentor* was the lowest rated statement.

Lastly, for Generation X, the statement *Knowing my welfare is important to someone at work* came as a surprise. Although Generation X is known for their lifestyle, and less loyalty to their employers, Generation X is also known for their loyalty and high stability in their jobs once they identify the place where they feel valued and respected

(Brown et al., 2015). Based on the findings of this study, outcomes indicated that individual contributions to organizations goals by Generation X, were equally important for productivity and producing positive workplace climate.

Based on previous studies, the researcher anticipated a higher ranking correlated to having a mentor and workplace engagement. But the study attested otherwise. Schultz in his Interpersonal Needs Theory, asserted the tendency to create and sustain relationships depended on how well the relationship met three basic needs: inclusion, control, and affection (Tsai, 2017). Having a mentor at the workplace continues to provide better understanding of the ongoing need to monitor employee engagement attributes, which fluctuated greatly among generations.

All three generation groups highly rated the statement regarding clear job roles and responsibilities. My results augment and expand previous research. The earlier study (Schaufeli, 2012) focused precisely on work engagement, organizational commitment, and synergy for the major generational cohorts in the workforce closely examining differences among generations.

Based on the findings of this research, while identified measureable differences for generations of HR professionals in a higher education, studying cohorts gave me an opportunity to observe similarities that existed within each group. While much of the emphasis of the research and interpretation has been on the negative impact of coexistence of multiple generations at the workplace, this close analysis provided insights into the changing demographic and dynamics. Workforce diversity transformed generational cohorts' experiences to the shared experiences to form an advantageous and

practical view regarding issues like retention, career progression, total rewards philosophy and overall wellbeing.

Studying similarities, and multigenerational patterns allowed me look for ways to close the discrepancy between workplace practices patterns to boost retention, differentiate talent management efforts, and initiatives, and to expand on the compensation and rewards methods to foster employee engagement. My findings add to the indication reported before that least engaged employees quit more often. Similarly, any employees who tend to have performance issues, could influence and shape the organizational culture. Understanding the generational effects, employee engagement stems from having tools, clearly identified roles, resources, and compensation. When executed efficiently, improving engagement among employees is one of the best ways to slow down turnover. This research is also keen for building a strong coaching culture.

- First, if not adequately compensated, employees may leave. Building an appropriate compensations structure stimulates engagement of employees and promotes the innovative workplace culture. Changing a culture involves critical, creative, and innovative environments.
- Second, addressing the needs and amending the employee concerns establishes the positive employee relation models, by which organizations create, sponsor and corroborate fluidity among constituencies.
- Third, without clarity of roles and responsibilities, there may be confusion and disengagement among human resources employees. To increase retention in the workplace, organizations could benefit of carefully shaped ongoing stimulation and engagement of ever changing human resources workplace

demographics. Strategic planning, technological demands, unique needs, and environments in each organization, necessitate an immediate organizations responsiveness in addressing and modifying their roles as human resources innovators, strategist, and a change champion.

- Fourth, employers need to invest time in hiring and onboarding of new talent, developing position descriptions and career progression possibilities to help employees understand their role and the relationship between the roles. With such as environment, employee engagement can focus on defining clear goals, building trust, and empowering employees.
- Fifth, organizations should provide regular and constructive feedback to encourage growth and development of new skills needed to expand the career path and growth.

Based on the findings of this study and literature review, employee engagement stems from having tools, clearly identified roles, resources, and carefully developed total rewards, and meaningful compensation structure. Lastly, establishing a strong, positive culture, wherein employee development and career development are the norm, is more promising for fostering employee engagement, regardless of employees' age or generation. In summary, it is concluded that organizations that do not provide fair and competitive compensation will not retain Millennial, Baby Boomer or generation X workers.

Implications for Action

Millennials top priority was fair compensation, which was also rated highly among members of Generation X. Therefore, to engage Millennials and Generation X,

and benefit from that engagement, an organization must invest in its compensation plan. Compensation strongly influenced employee engagement and commitment. To correctly address this important element of workplace engagement, employers need to design adequate compensation plans and continually evaluate their plans to keep compensation aligned with the market. Strategic planning of compensation entailed several financial and nonfinancial elements and perks. Through carefully selected mixes of compensation and perks, including pay and benefits, on-site day care, flexible and remote work hours, and wellness programs, employers could significantly impact employee engagement and retention. Additionally, incentive pay and pay-for-performance could directly impact productivity and engagement, and thus commitment to the organization.

1. Invest in hiring the right and diverse talent, and creative and innovative onboarding procedure. Transparent and attractive compensation structure provides an appealing workplace culture. A clear understanding of compensation and performance-based structure is reassuring in that a highly engagement is expected among employees inside the organizations, where diversity is supported and welcomed.
2. Analyze the current workforce, and structure a total rewards plan. Frequently evaluate rewards plan to keep compensation aligned with the market. Hold focus groups and collect data about current trends with emphasis on well-defined job responsibilities, career progression, and career path.
3. Through a carefully examination of current demographics, select mixes of compensation and perks, to significantly impact employee engagement and

retention. HR directors must continuously monitor employee perceptions of fair compensation through surveys and focus groups. This data should be used to develop optional compensation plans and then reviewed with employees prior to implementation. The adopted compensation plans would allow employees to match their needs with the appropriated plan.

4. Provide regular and constructive feedback to encourage growth and development of new skills needed to expand the career path and growth. Innovative organizations could develop an evaluation system that provides constructive feedback that is included in a professional growth plan. The organization must provide financial incentives that support the development of new skills internal to the organization and for those enrolled in advance training programs or universities.
5. Employers need to invest time to develop position descriptions and career progression possibilities to help employees understand their role and the relationship between the roles.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was purposely constructed to contribute to understanding the engagement practices of different generations in the workplace. The intention was to gain an overall understanding of the experiences and aspirations of Millennials compared to Generation X and Baby Boomers, and to assist in understanding, measuring, and increasing engagement. Despite the findings from this study, several gaps about employee engagement and retention among multiple generations in workplace remain and would benefit from further research. Based on the findings and limitations of this

study, and gaps identified in the literature, the following additional studies are recommended:

1. Conduct a phenomenological study across all three workforce generations to understand the value and contributions of employee coaching and study relationships in workplace. Examine “*Having a confidant in the workplace,*” and “*Having opportunities to work with a mentor*” and why mentorship was rated very low to all three generations.
2. Conduct a qualitative study with a smaller population to enable more personable and in-depth interaction that will allow critical questions to be asked during the interview process.
3. Conduct a qualitative study using a global workforce to address the rising trend of international expansion during times of economic growth.
4. Replicate this study with a larger population and include the variable of education level to determine the interaction between generational cohorts and education levels of factors that promote engagement.
5. Replicate this in study in five years as Generation Z enters the workplace and more Baby Boomers retire to assess changes in employee engagement practices due to the changing demographics.
6. Conduct this study with a different population such as HR executives, or with other populations outside of HR and in different industries such as entertainment and hospitality, and with telecommuting and remote workers.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Evidence showed a relationship between positive levels of employee engagement and retention, which supported the importance of positive workplace climates and employee control over workplace engagement. The direct link between workplace motivation and performance should serve as a valuable vehicle for refining engagement at all levels in organizations. The different viewpoints of the generations in the workplace could impact both individual effectiveness and organizational performance.

To foster a culture of engagement, an organization should not solely rely on the HR department to lead, design, support, and measure workplace engagement practices. This study offered practical information for future research and described current workplace engagement climate as perceived by Millennial, Baby Boomer, and Generation X HR employees in four-year private IHEs in southern California. My enthusiasm, insight, and desire to help workplace leaders with their direct challenge to lead a multiple generation of employees, resulted in development of the training program. Reflecting on the past professional experience, and a more recent scholarly experience, I recognize the ever-changing topic of multiple generations and engagement always interested me. Having the opportunity to research and learn about the similarities and differences, fully understanding workplace challenges, allows me to continue to encourage new ideas. I recognize the valuable impact for empathetic, hands-on, and purpose-driven leaders ready to adopt enlightened practices, ensuring each employee is fostered with determination and career-driven path; a *people-first* guidance was a natural outcome.

Applied research in the field of employee engagement and similarities and differences of each generation inspired me to convert research and knowledge into a

sustainable coaching technique. This method is meant to assist leaders in changing work environments where uniqueness, experience, and expertise of each employee are recognized and branded increase retention at the workplace. To guarantee a greater work purpose, understand its internal mechanisms, and boost positive impact, a new strategic methodology is needed. The LOVE method endorses the input and merges a compensation strategy with effectiveness:

- **Look** for the new ways of effectiveness and observe other organizations
- **Optimize** existing compensation and with greater resources to adapt to new work conditions
- **Vivify** the current work systems by bringing new systems of compensation and supporting innovation to increase attractiveness and satisfaction
- **Engage** using a total rewards strategy to increase commitment to the work and be resourceful with workplace tools, forming the opportunity to learn and to grow; broaden the positive effects on job attractiveness

Given the high level of interest in generational differences, this research creates numerous opportunities for building a strong strategic methods and coaching culture. As a Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) in higher education, this research allows me to utilize the findings and share them with other HR leaders. By being an effective strategic partner, and utilizing the research findings, I can collaborate with leadership in strategic planning to effect employee engagement, retention, productivity, and other evolving trends and issues crucial for organizational success.

Besides personal development, research findings and trends necessitate staying abreast of the ever-changing and evolving human resource field and higher education

landscape. Likewise, other CHROs can benefit from utilizing the research findings in addressing the emerging trends and ensuring their institutions develop proficiencies and tactics for managing the increasing complexity of higher education. CHROs demonstrate mastery and understanding of the workforce, multiple generations, and the unique environment of higher education; they should use their ability to build a competitive organization, develop competencies and strategies for continuous process improvements, and advocate for constituents and stakeholders.

Furthermore, it is my hope sharing the research and findings will encourage networking and collaboration with HR colleagues from local organizations, such as SHRM and Professionals in Human Resources Association. Actively participating in discussions and research, and collaboration with industry specific professional associations such as CUPA-HR and National Association for College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), will encourage partnership with academic and administrative leadership teams of other IHEs.

Changing a culture involves critical, creative, and innovative environments. Consequently, organizations could benefit by establishing positive employee relation models to sponsor and corroborate fluidity across organizations. To meet the demands and unique needs of environments in each organization, organizations must devote attention to increasing retention through ongoing stimulation and engagement. Overall, the research provided an understanding of the complex world of multiple generations of HR professionals in higher education. In summary, the data showed each generation had a different set of needs, yet all three generations embraced special attention to compensation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of this study is to examine the engagement practices the different generations of HR employees perceive as most important to retention. The information you give, along with others completing this survey, hopefully will provide a clear picture of the preferred engagement practices of Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials working in HR at colleges and universities. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential and all the data will be reported without reference to any individuals or institutions.

Before beginning the survey, please take a moment to review the [Informed consent form](#) and the [Research participants bill of rights](#) by clicking the links to download the documents. If you have any questions prior to completing the survey, you can contact me at basi0601@mail.brandman.edu.

Before beginning the survey, please take a moment to review the informed consent

- By checking this box and continuing to take the survey, I agree to voluntarily participate in the study. I have read the informed consent and participant bill of rights. All my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can skip any questions or stop taking the survey at any time without consequences.

Having a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities.

- 1 Not Important
 2 Slightly Important
 3 Moderately Important
 4 Important
 5 Very Important
 6 Absolutely Essential

Having the resources (tools, equipment, materials) to do work well.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Being given appropriate decision-making authority.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Having the ability to leverage my skills and abilities.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Receiving regular acknowledgement for positive contributions.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Being fairly compensated for the work that I do.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Knowing my company cares about customer satisfaction

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Knowing my welfare is important to someone at work.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Having a colleague support my professional growth.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Being given challenging work.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Knowing my opinion is valued.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Working for an organization whose mission and values place importance on my work.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Working with people who value quality.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Being part of an organization where employees work well in teams.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Having a confidant in the workplace.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Receiving constructive and timely feedback.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Working for an organization that values professional growth and continuous learning.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

Having opportunities to work with a mentor.

- » 1 Not Important
- » 2 Slightly Important
- » 3 Moderately Important
- » 4 Important
- » 5 Very Important
- » 6 Absolutely Essential

1. In which of the following generations does your birth year fall: (choose one)

- Baby Boomer (born between 1946 and 1964)
- Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980)
- Millennial (born between 1981 and 1997)

APPENDIX B – PERMISSION TO USE INSTRUMENT

From: Floyd, Sharon
To: Lamiya (Mia) Basic
Cc: Margaret Moodian
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2017, 3:20:11 PM PDT
Subject: RE: Seeking Permission to Use Survey/Questionnaire Tool

Hi Mia,

It's wonderful to hear from you, and I would be honored to have you use my survey for your research. This is actually very exciting for me. Please move forward with a confident yes!

Kind Regards,

Sharon

Dr. Sharon (Cheri) Floyd, SHRM-SCP
Associate Dean for Student and Faculty Affairs,
Assistant Professor of Human Resources
School of Business and Professional Studies
Brandman University, San Diego Campus
A Member of the Chapman University System

APPENDIX C – EMAIL TO HR DIRECTORS

Dear HR Colleague:

My name is Mia Basic and I am a doctoral candidate conducting my dissertation on the engagement strategies preferred by the different generations in the HR workforce at institutions of higher education (IHEs) in southern California. I am writing to request your assistance by both taking the survey and forwarding the survey link to your HR team.

The purpose of this survey is to identify generational differences in which employee engagement practices HR employees perceive as most important to retention. Participation and response of you and your HR team members to this survey is crucial in providing the necessary information to formulate the findings of this study.

It would be greatly appreciated if you take the survey by clicking the link below, and by forwarding the survey link to your HR employees. The link also explains the purpose of the study and provides information about participation and informed consent.

[INSERT LINK HERE]

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors.

Mia Basic

APPENDIX D – INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION ABOUT: Examining Generational Differences in The Workplace: Employee Engagement Practices and their Impact on Retention of Different Generations of Human Resources Employees in Higher Education

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY 16355
LAGUNA CANYON ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92618

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Mia Basic

PURPOSE OF STUDY: The purpose of this is to examine the preferred employee engagement practices among the different generational cohorts.

By participating in this study, I agree to complete a brief survey. The survey should take between 10–20 minutes.

I understand that:

_____ a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the investigator will protect my confidentiality by collecting anonymous data. I understand the no individual names or institution names will be collected or presented.

_____ b) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and I may be provided the results of the available data and summary and recommendations. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

_____ c) Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by **Mia Basic**. She can be reached by e-mail at xxxx@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at **XXX-XXX-XXXX**.

_____ d) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

_____ e) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data are to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the **Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641**.

_____ f) I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Participant's Bill of Rights. I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature, Mia Basic

Date