HOW GENERATION Z INFLUENCES MULTI-GENERATIONAL

PROJECT TEAM DYNAMICS AND ENGAGEMENT

by

Karah Sprouse

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Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

This research study sought to explore and provide deeper understanding of how Generation Z, the newest, youngest workforce generation, is influencing intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward successful performance. To provide insight to this inquiry and fill an existing gap in the academic and professional literature surrounding Generation Z, a qualitative, single-site case study research method and design was selected. Accordingly, the researcher conducted interviews containing semi-structured, open-ended questions based on the literature's prevailing components of team dynamics and engagement with seven Generation Z project professionals and ten project professionals representing older generations who currently serve on teams with Generation Z members at a global technology organization located in the southeastern United States. Together these 17 project team professionals provided a holistic, insightful account of how this youngest generation of professionals is impacting intergenerational project team dynamics and is best motivated and engaged. Accordingly, participant interview responses revealed 11 salient themes that provided deeper understanding of the business problem guiding this inquiry. Findings are particularly applicable to the field of project management, which is heavily comprised of project teams working together to accomplish strategic deliverables for business organizations and their customers. Furthermore, these findings help provide insight to strategic business organizations and leaders to effectively develop this next generation of professionals as they increasingly represent their employee population.

Keywords: Generation Z, intergenerational project team, multi-generational project team, team engagement, team dynamics

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Dr. Julia Frankland, Committee Member   Date

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to Granddaddy, who passed away during my first year of doctoral coursework and instructed me one last time in his final days to complete my degree. This was not surprising to me as he, along with my grandmother, Goggin, instilled in me a deep desire for education and life-long learning that has carried me throughout this doctoral journey. More importantly, they along with my paternal grandparents, perpetuated a legacy of love and devotion to God and service to others. This legacy was inspired by generations of family members that preceded them and continues in those of us trying to follow in their footsteps. It is the blessing of their legacies that inspires so much of my life, including this research effort exploring how generations can be cultivated professionally and spiritually in the workplace.

I would also like to dedicate this study to the love of my life, Ryan, who has whole-heartedly supported me through every step of the last four years. He is my greatest blessing and a steadfast partner to me in every dream that we pursue together.

Lastly, this study is dedicated to our two children who were babies when I started this journey and have been in bed asleep most nights while I stayed up late completing my coursework and this dissertation. Completing this effort as they begin their most formative childhood years was my ultimate inspiration and one of my greatest joys in this accomplishment.

Acknowledgments

This study is a testament to my incredible support system of family and dear friends. My parents and sister have been an unwavering source of encouragement and strength. They have always been my biggest advocates and cheerleaders, which has carried me throughout my whole life and especially throughout this effort. I am also extremely blessed by many close friendships that have lifted me over the last four years. God had blessed me with an extraordinary community of friends that sharpen me spiritually, intellectually, and professionally. I am eternally grateful for how this community has strengthened and encouraged me in this journey.

I would also like to thank the chair of my committee, Dr. Russell Fail, who has played an extremely significant role in my academic journey. I could not have asked for a more responsive, supportive advisor and I am exceedingly grateful for his continual feedback and encouragement. I am also grateful for the support and coaching provided by my committee member, Dr. Julia Frankland, and my program director, Dr. Edward Moore. I sincerely appreciate all of the guidance that this team provided me.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Today's business organizations employ five generations (Veterans/ Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z) with each cohort embracing different work values, professional development considerations, and leadership styles (Lawson & De Aquino, 2016). With the oldest of these generations retiring over the next decade, Generations Y and Z are together becoming the most represented workplace cohorts. Generation Y, also nicknamed the Millennial Generation, was born between 1981 and 1994, and comprises more than 35% of today's workplace (Fry, 2018).

Generation Z was born along with the Internet in 1995, with the oldest of this generation beginning college in 2013 (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). While many workplace studies have been published on Generation Y and its predecessor generational cohorts, little research exists on Generation Z since this group only recently began entering the workplace (Burton et al., 2019). However, while this generation is young in their professional career, Fatemi (2018) predicts that they will comprise the majority of the workplace by the end of 2030.

According to Yildirim and Korkmaz (2017), project-based industries, such as software implementation and development, are popular career choices for these youngest generational cohorts. Such industries heavily rely on engaged project team performance as the main driver for successful project execution. However, little is known about how Generation Z interacts and performs in a team setting, especially when put together with other generational cohort groups (Burton et al., 2019). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance.

Background of the Problem

Each generation has encountered unique lived experiences that have shaped their values and beliefs, which in turn affects their views and approaches to career and leadership development (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Paris (2008) warned that the inability of leaders to lead a multi-generational staff could be catastrophic. However, organizations that understand what motivates each generational group can cultivate their unique experiences and talents to build stronger engagement and commitment to organizational strategies and goals (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016).

Five generations currently coexist in the professional workplace (Burton et al., 2019). Veterans, also known as Traditionalists, were born between 1922 and 1946 and comprise approximately five percent of the current workforce (Wiener, 1982). Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, comprise approximately 25% of the current labor force (Fry, 2018), however large numbers of Baby Boomers are expected to retire in the next few years (Brien, 2018; Na'Desh, 2015). Members of Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, comprise approximately 33% of the current professional workforce (Fry, 2018).

In 2016, the Millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1996, became the largest employee-represented generation, comprising more than 35% of the U.S. workforce (Fry, 2018). The children of Baby Boomers, this generation was the first to be born into a technology-based world (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). As each of these generations is well into their professional careers, scores of research studies have explored how these generations' life encounters and experiences have shaped a multitude of workplace considerations, including team dynamics, engagement, and leadership.

Conversely, with Generation Z cohort's first graduating college in 2017 and launching their professional careers (Seemiller & Grace, 2017) there is little research on how this youngest generation is influencing age-diverse organizational cultures (Burton et al., 2019). Research does reveal that this generation has unique attitudes, values, and beliefs that separate it from all previous generations (Bencsik et al., 2016; Goh & Lee, 2018; Stewart, 2017), however, studies exploring how these differences translate to the workplace are in their infancy. Goh and Lee (2018) found that family most influences career choice for this youngest generation. Studies also show that Generation Z cohorts more strongly guard against employee burnout from mental, emotional, or physical exhaustion than predecessor generations (Hills, 2018). Furthermore, Lanier (2017) found that Generation Z cohorts expect and value workplace diversity more than previous generations. While these and other studies give some insight into how this Generation is assimilating in the workplace, little to no research could be found linking Generation Z cohorts to multi-generational work team collaboration and performance.

The creation and formation of teams to accomplish critical objectives are inherent to almost any organization (Yrle et al., 2005). As project-based industries such as information technology are popular career choices for younger generations of professionals (Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017), project managers and other organizational leaders must prepare for how Generation Z will impact project team dynamics when working with older generational cohorts. However, little is known about how this generation interacts and engages in a team setting (Burton et al., 2019). As engaged team performance plays a critical role in successful project outcomes (Starbird & Cavanagh, 2011), a deeper understanding of how Generation Z cohorts can positively impact multigenerational team dynamics is beneficial to project and organizational leadership across a multitude of industries and disciplines.

Although members of this generation are just beginning their professional careers, estimates suggest that Generation Z is 23 million strong, outnumbers Millennials by nearly one million, and will comprise a significant portion of the workforce by the end of the decade (Stewart, 2017). As such, it is vital that businesses understand these young professionals and how they are best motivated toward collaboration and teamwork with their predecessor generational colleagues. Burton et al. (2019) called for more empirical research to provide an in-depth investigation into multigenerational team dynamics, especially teams containing Generation Z representatives. Therefore, this study helped fill a gap in the multigenerational team literature in both its research method and design as well as its exploration of how this youngest and newest professional group interacts and performs in a project team setting.

Problem Statement

The general problem addressed is the lack of knowledge in how Generation Z, the newest and youngest workforce generation, influences multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement (Bencsik et al., 2016; Burton et al., 2019; Wang & Wang, 2017). Based upon recent comprehensive literature review research, Burton et al. (2019) found that the most dominant request for future multi-generational team research was how Generation Z interacts and performs in a team setting, as there is little known about this generation's preferences and capabilities or how it will interact with others. As the majority of multi-generational team research is focused on the U.S. healthcare industry, there was a need to study multi-generational teams in other industries (Burton et al., 2019). The IT industry, specifically the project-based software industry, is among the most popular employment areas for the youngest generational cohorts (Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017). As such, company leaders and project managers must prepare for how this youngest cohort is best motivated and engaged in a multi-generation project team environment.

Therefore, the specific problem addressed is the lack of knowledge in how Generation Z cohorts influence multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement, resulting in potentially different approaches to team communication, group decision-making, leadership, and conflict management at a multinational technology organization located in the southeastern United States.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study analysis was to add to the body of knowledge by exploring how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. This larger problem was explored through an in-depth investigation of how Generation Z cohorts influence multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement at a multinational technology organization located in the southeastern United States. Gelbtuch and Morlan (2015) called for project leaders to understand how multi-generational teams can best work together effectively. Anantatmula and Shrivastav (2012) contended that insights into how generations work best together enable project managers to effectively lead and motivate project teams. Zhang and Guo (2019) espoused that project leaders must manage knowledge and skill diversity on cross-functional teams to break down communication and cooperation barriers. By gaining a deeper understanding of how Generation Z professionals are best motivated toward team synergy, project managers can better influence buy-in and cohesion for successful project outcomes.

Motivation for this proposed study was based on past research findings that suggested differences exist between the two youngest workforce generations, however little was known about how Generation Z impacts workplace team dynamics (Bencsik et al., 2016; Stewart, 2017). Furthermore, there is little research published on Generation Z in a project team setting, as the

newest generational cohort to launch their professional careers. Therefore, this research effort will help project managers strengthen their leadership skills to lead and motivate teams comprised of multiple generations that include Generation Z representatives.

Research Questions

With Generation Z launching their professional careers in 2017, the research community is beginning to explore how this youngest workplace cohort is both impacting and affected by various aspects of business. For instance, researchers such as Goh and Lee (2018) and Hills (2018) studied human resource management considerations for this generation, while Opfer (2018) explored this cohort's workplace technology expectations. Hesselbein (2018) examined this generation's propensity for leadership and Stewart (2017) studied how Generation Z values workplace diversity. Chillakuri and Mahanandia (2018) discovered workplace knowledge-sharing and collaboration preferences for Generation Z, however, no research was found exploring how this generation is engaged in project teams or how it influences team dynamics when working with older generational teammates. Therefore, the following research questions and sub-questions were designed to better understand and explore how this newest professional generation is impacting multi-generational project teams:

RQ1. How do Generation Z cohorts influence project team dynamics on multi-generational project teams?

RQ1a. How do communication styles and preferences for Generation Z cohorts influence project team dynamics?

RQ1b. How do members of Generation Z approach conflict resolution?

RQ1c. How do Generation Z cohorts interact with project team members representing older generations?

RQ2. How are Generation Z cohorts best engaged on multi-generational teams?

RQ2a. What are the most influential factors that motivate Generation Z project

team members toward active team engagement and project success?

RQ2b. How do Generation Z cohorts view and value other generations on the

project team?

RQ2c. How do other generations view and value Generation Z project team

members?

RQ3. How can project managers best lead multi-generational project teams that include

Generation Z team members?

RQ3a. What leadership actions or behaviors best resonate with Generation Z

project team members?

Nature of the Study

This study utilized a qualitative research method and case study design to examine,

interpret, and understand how Generation Z project team members influence multi-generational

project team dynamics and are best motivated and engaged in a project team setting. Qualitative

research methods pursue deep understanding of human experience in the context of historical,

social, and political settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Little is known about how this youngest

professional generational cohort performs in a project team setting. Therefore, the study required

an in-depth understanding of perceptions and experiences that could best be obtained through

qualitative research (Yin, 2014).

The goal of flexible, qualitative research design is an exploration and deep understanding

of how individuals describe their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While there are several

different qualitative research approaches, case study design is best suited for "how" and "why"

questions that investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context

(Yin, 2014). Since this study sought to understand how generational differences between

Generation Z cohorts and team members representing older generations impacted various aspects

of project team dynamics, case study design was most appropriate for exploring this

phenomenon. The following sections further discusses alternative methods and designs

considered as well as justification for the method and design deemed most suitable to provide

insight into this business problem.

Discussion of Design

Qualitative research designs include narrative research, phenomenological research,

grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Narrative design is best

suited for exploring the life of an individual as told from stories of individual experiences

(Chase, 2005). This design places emphasis on how humans narrate their personal versions of

reality as well as consideration of the story's content and how the story is delivered (Taylor et

al., 2015). Therefore, this qualitative design did not align with this study's goals.

Phenomenological design explores common meaning for several individuals of their lived

experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design seeks to explore the essence

of the lived experience shared by a heterogeneous group about a particular event or concept

(Creswell, 2014). While the researcher within this study initially considered this design

approach, it was ultimately determined ineffective since multigenerational project team

dynamics do not involve a significant shared event or phenomenon.

Grounded theory design begins with the researcher generating a general explanation, or

theory, of a process, action, or interaction that might help or explain the practice or provide a

framework for future research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, this design focuses on a

process or an action that has distinct steps or phases that occur over time (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Grounded theory design is most appropriate when a theory is either not available or incomplete to explain or understand a process (Creswell & Poth, 2018), making this design inapplicable to this inquiry's purpose.

Ethnographic research design explores the shared patterns of behaviors, beliefs, and language of an entire culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2014). This approach involves intense participant observation, requiring the researcher to be immersed in the daily lives of group participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Primary procedures for conducting ethnographies include participant observation and non-participant observation as well as interviews that require an active listening technique (Silverman, 2015). While interviews were included in this study, it did not necessitate immersion and direct observation in the day-to-day lives of study participants.

The research design methodology selected for this qualitative inquiry was a single site case study, which is well suited for conducting in-depth investigations and research pertaining to current events (Yin, 2014). This design involves the study of a case within its real-life, contemporary context or setting (Yin, 2014), such as a small group or organization (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case study research is particularly effective when the study seeks to explain a contemporary phenomenon and when research questions require a thorough description of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2015).

Case study design relies on direct observation, interviews, and artifacts to collect data and seek understanding (Yin, 2014). The key to the case identification is that it is bounded within parameters such as certain people, location, and timeframe in which the case is studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While some case studies involve several cases for data analysis, research

involving multiple case studies are used to reveal support for theory replication or to provide

contrasting results (Yin, 2014).

For the purposes of this analysis, research involving team dynamics in both academic and

professional settings has widely utilized case study research design (Burton et al., 2019; Dixon,

2017; Ohlsson, 2013; Zhao et al., 2019). Ohlsson (2013) selected case study design to explore

team collaboration and willingness to learn collectively. Dixon (2017) deemed case study most

ideal to investigate team dynamics in geographically dispersed virtual teams. Finally, Burton et

al. (2019) found that case study was the most widely used qualitative design in exploring multi-

generational team dynamics for previous professional workplace generations. Each of these

efforts and findings provides a precedent for case study design as an effective means of

exploring multiple facets of project team dynamics and engagement.

Discussion of Method

Researchers must identify their philosophies and worldviews as well as the core goals of

each research design (fixed, flexible, and mixed-method) when approaching research problems

(Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research was not selected for this inquiry as this fixed design

relies heavily on linear attributes, measurements, and statistical analysis to aggregate data and

examine large groups from a distance (Stake, 2010). This research design most often involves

survey research utilizing structured interviews or questionnaires for data collection and/or

experimental research to determine whether a specific treatment influences an outcome

(Creswell, 2014). Since this study required exploration and understanding within a real-world

setting and context, quantitative design was determined ineffective for this study.

Furthermore, quantitative research requires random sampling to test theories about cause

and effect relationships (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative studies are comprised of hypotheses set in

advance, strict procedures, selected instruments and statistics, and are absent of researcher bias (Creswell, 2016). Furthermore, fixed research design methods are implemented in an artificial lab or administered through surveys sent at a distance (Creswell, 2016). However, this study required targeted and purposeful sampling to understand how generational differences for a particular cohort influence team dynamics that are best understood within the project team's natural environment.

Mixed methods research design combines both fixed and flexible research methodologies to design an approach that best addresses the research problem. The most common approaches associated with mixed method research design are convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, and exploratory sequential mixed methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, a quantitative method was not feasible for this study because the business problem requires in-depth understanding that can only be achieved through open-ended, qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2016). Therefore, as mixed methods research design includes both qualitative and quantitative methods, it was also inappropriate for this research effort.

Flexible, qualitative research designs are aimed at microanalysis and seek to understand the intricacies of personal experience and human interaction (Stake, 2010). This approach explores a central phenomenon (or topic) by reporting participants' voices, going to the setting (or context) to collect data, watching a process unfold, focusing on a small number of people or sites, developing complex understanding, lifting the voices of marginalized populations, and creating multiple views of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). The most common approaches associated with this design are narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study designs (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Qualitative research design does not begin with a hypothesis. Instead, research questions and data collection evolve throughout the study which includes quotations from participants and author remarks as to how their own experience and background influences study interpretations (Creswell, 2016). Furthermore, instead of collecting data in a lab or through surveys, data are gathered on-site in the research setting discussed.

The approach selected for this study aligns with an interpretivist research paradigm that views reality as subjective and co-constructed through human experiences (Ramoglou & Tsang, 2016) and utilizes flexible, qualitative research design methods to interpret, explore, and discover new concepts and meanings (Chandra & Shang, 2017). Researchers who utilize this approach seek to understand (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interpretivists (also referred to as constructivists) believe that humans make sense of the world based on their own experiences and explore the complexity of ideas by proposing open-ended research questions to encourage research participants to share their views (Stake, 2010). Interpretivists also acknowledge that interpretations are shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background (Creswell, 2014).

For the purpose of this study, findings were primarily collected through open-ended interviews which are commonly utilized in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2016) and have the potential to provide in-depth information and understanding of research participant perspectives (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). Interviews were conducted with participants including both Generation Z and other generational team cohorts who work on project teams containing Generation Z members to ensure that findings represented multiple perspectives on the topic as well as diverse views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, as qualitative research typically involves multiple forms of data for triangulation and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018), data were

collected through observation, verbatim transcripts, and field notes to create a holistic approach to the problem explored.

Summary of the Nature of the Study

This study utilized a qualitative research method in an effort to fulfill its intended purpose. The chosen design, a single case study, allows for a deeper understanding of a current event or phenomenon within its real-world setting and context by garnering the perspectives of individuals who are currently experiencing the researched event (Yin, 2014). As such, this design methodology was well-suited to provide insight into how Generation Z impacts multi-generational team dynamics and is best engaged in a project team setting.

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study originated with Mannheim's (1952) theory of generations, which understood a generation to be a cohort of a population who have experienced noteworthy events in their youth during a distinct period of time. According to this theory, older generations form the social context with which new generations make fresh contact, causing the younger generation to slightly alter the context by selecting or emphasizing particular aspects of it (Mannheim, 1952). As a result, each generational cohort's truths and ideas are related to and influenced by the social context from which they stem (Mannheim, 1952). The following subsections discuss additional theories advanced based on Mannheim's (1952) work as well as workplace and team concepts and theories relevant to this research effort.

Generational Cohorts

Following Mannheim's (1952) seminal work, other theories have been advanced that address how social and cultural changes affect the ways generations are framed and understood. Inglehart (1977) advanced the generational cohort theory, holding that generations are social

constructs of individuals born during a similar time period who experience and are influenced by historic and social contexts which differentiate each group from another. Similarly, Kupperschmidt (2000) poised that each generation, demarcated by birth year, has experienced related economic conditions and opportunities as well as life-shaping events that influence the general mindset of each cohort.

Workplace Motivation and Performance

Foundational to most research exploring workplace motivation is Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy theory which holds that human needs are arranged in a hierarchical system beginning with physiological needs (food, water, warmth, rest) to self-actualization (achieving one's full potential which includes creative activities). Furthermore, as long as lower-level needs are not satisfied, higher-level needs are not relevant (Maslow, 1943). On the other hand, once a lower-level need is completely satisfied, it no longer works as a motivator (Maslow, 1943). Also synonymous with workplace motivation and performance is Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation which divides motivational factors into two large groups – motivators, which are intrinsic to work and increase employee satisfaction and motivation and hygiene factors, which are extrinsic to work and cause dissatisfaction when unfulfilled (Herzberg et al., 1967). Examples of motivators are challenging work, meaningful work, and involvement in decision making, while examples of hygiene factors include salary, job security, and interpersonal work relationships (Herzberg et al., 1967).

As generational identity is primarily constructed when individuals begin transitioning into adulthood (Mannheim, 1952), researchers have extended seminal theories to how each cohort develops particular attitudes and perceptions in the workplace (Lester et al., 2012). Such research reveals that a better understanding of each unique cohort as well as how cohort groups

interact in multi-generational organizational settings supports both managerial and organizational efforts to recruit, develop, and retain each generation of workers (Edge, 2013). As this is the first time in history where five generations have co-existed in the workplace (Burton et al., 2019), understanding how each cohort approaches and values various aspects of workplace performance is particularly relevant for today's business organizations.

Project Team Motivation and Performance

The popularity of project teams to accomplish a wide variety of organizational initiatives and tasks is common throughout a vast array of industries and disciplines (Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017). Furthermore, the prevalence of team-based work has generated a multitude of research inquiries and theories to better understand various challenges and considerations for work teams such as communication, collaboration, and both individual and team level motivational processes (Chen & Kanfer, 2006). Both Maslow's (1943) and Herzberg's (1967) motivational theories have also underpinned team management and performance research. Most relevant to this study, Chen and Kanfer (2006) proposed a multilevel view of work team motivational processes that consider contextual influences for both individual and team motivation and how these considerations interplay with one another to impact team performance. According to Chen and Kanfer's (2006) multi-level systems theory of team motivation, managers should focus resources toward motivating both the individual and the collective group (or team) to maximize their team's potential.

Furthermore, multi-generational team research has become increasingly important in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, as generational "gaps" are commonly contributing to work team diversity (Burton et al., 2019). Research reveals that differences among team members can positively influence team performance through enhanced creativity and problem-

solving (Cox & Blake, 1991; Hambrick et al., 1996). However, team diversity can also

negatively impact performance when similar members are drawn to one another and develop

dislike and distrust for non-similar team members or groups (Byrne et al., 1966). Given the

potential for today's project teams to encompass widely diverse generations and age groups, this

research effort explored the extent to which Generation Z cohorts positively or negatively impact

team cohesion and engagement.

Figure 1

Relationships Between Concepts
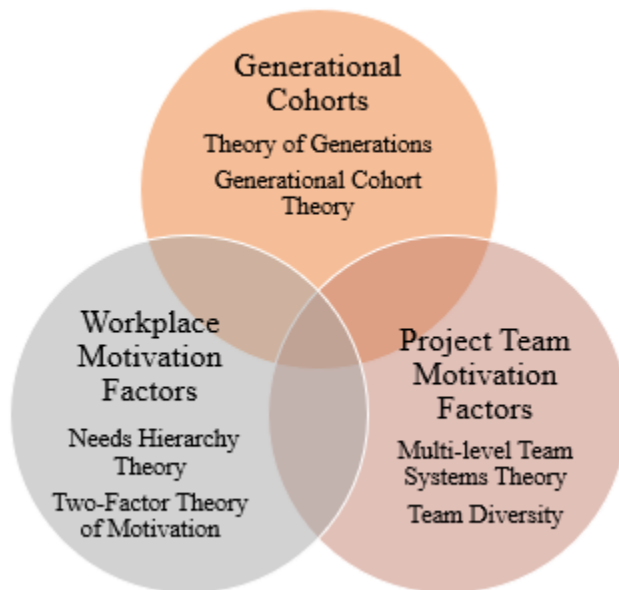
Relationship Between Concepts

For the purposes of this study, the goal of this research effort was a deeper understanding

of how Generation Z professionals, who have experienced similar opportunities, economic

conditions, and life-shaping events engage with project teammates who ascribe to older

generational cohorts. Like other generations, these newest, youngest workplace professionals not

only identify with similar influential events but are also subject to both workplace and team

motivation factors and considerations. Both Maslow's (1943) and Herzberg's (1967)

motivational theories provided a foundation for most workplace and team motivation research and are also relevant to this research framework. For instance, Hertzberg (1967) explained that interpersonal work relationships and involvement in decision making influence an employee's workplace motivation and performance. Such considerations are also critical to inspiring engaged project team performance (Starbird & Cavanagh, 2011).

Atkinson (2016) agreed that engaged teams are comprised of members who understand and deliver to their critical roles and responsibilities. When this occurs, team diversity, including generational differences can have a positive impact on team dynamics and performance. Therefore, while generational theories and concepts founded by Manheim (1952) and further developed by other researchers provided a framework for understanding how Generation Z approaches various aspects of work performance, the extent to which these considerations overlap with other seminal workplace and team motivation factors provided a holistic picture of how this generation is best engaged and influences team dynamics.

Summary of the Research Framework

The selected framework allowed the research to be guided by the concept that each generation has encountered unique lived experiences that have shaped their values and beliefs, which in turn affects their views, motivations, and approaches to various aspects of a person's life, including workplace performance. Furthermore, research supported that various personal and workplace considerations can both positively and negatively affect individual and team performance in organizational settings. Therefore, the aforementioned workplace and team motivation theories, in conjunction with seminal generational theory research, provided an appropriate framework for this research effort.

Definition of Terms

Generational cohort: A generational cohort is an age group of persons who identify through birth years and similar life-shaping events, economic conditions, and other significant experiences (Inglehart, 1977; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Lester et al., 2012).

Veterans (Traditionalists): Veterans are individuals born approximately between 1922 and 1946 (Burton et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2012; Wiener, 1982).

Baby Boomers: Baby Boomers are individuals born approximately between 1946 and 1964 (Burton et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2012).

Generation X (Gen X, Gen Xers, latchkey kids, sandwich generation): Generation X are individuals born approximately between 1965 and 1979 (Miranda & Allen, 2017).

Millennials (Generation Y, Gen Y): Millennials are individuals born approximately between 1980 and 1994 (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Fry, 2018).

Generation Z: Generation Z are individuals born approximately between 1995 and 2010 (Fatemi, 2018; Seemiller & Grace, 2017).

Project teams: groups of people that share responsibility for delivering either tangible or intangible items to some kind of customer in either a production or service environment (Starbird & Cavanagh, 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Assumptions are considered unproven beliefs related to the research (Dillard, 2017) that add relevancy to the study and are outside of the researcher's control (Simon & Goes, 2013). Limitations describe the weaknesses of the study that are also outside the researcher's control (Dillard, 2017). Delimitations refer to the scope or boundaries of the study (Simon & Goes,

2013). The following subsections address the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations specific to this research effort.

Assumptions

The first assumption relevant to this study was that project team engagement positively influences performance (Starbird & Cavanagh, 2011). This assumption was based on multiple studies involving workplace team motivation and performance. Therefore, interview questions aimed at exploring how Generation Z project team cohorts are best engaged and influence team dynamics assumed that responses would enable a deeper understanding of how multi-generational teams can improve performance.

The second assumption relevant to this study was that all participants will answer interview questions truthfully. Risks associated with truthful participant feedback can be mitigated by guaranteeing research participant anonymity (Simon & Goes, 2013). Therefore, to mitigate the risk associated with this assumption, project team member names and position titles were not published.

Limitations

The first limitation of this inquiry was the application of the study based on the chosen research design. According to Yin (2014), a case study does not represent a sample to extrapolate probabilities, but instead allows researchers to expand and generalize theoretical propositions. A single case study has been chosen for this research effort. Therefore, while findings may be relevant to multiple industries and multi-generational project teams containing Generation Z representatives, research discoveries were specifically applicable to the researched organization.

The second limitation of this study is the time related to the research effort. The project team participant perspectives explored in this study may only be relevant to the current time

period in which the research effort took place. However, while time is a limitation, this limitation is inherent to case study design which is most appropriate for investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context (Yin, 2014).

Delimitations

The first delimitation was the criteria for selecting research participants. For this research effort, participants were selected based on their assignment to a project team and their associated generational cohort. Participants represented Generation Z, Generation Y (Millennial generation), and Generation X who are currently employed in the professional workplace.

The second delimitation of this study was the boundary of time. The past and future was not researched as this effort explored multi-generational project team dynamics within the current, real-world context. Geography was the third delimitation of this study, since the researched organization was located in the southeastern United States. Finally, the researched organization's industry served as a delimitation since the company studied is an information technology business organization.

Significance of the Study

The current professional workforce now spans five generations for the first time in history (Burton et al., 2019). As the youngest workplace generation, Generation Z began graduating from college and launching their careers in 2017 (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Therefore, this study was significant because it provided deeper insight into how the newest generation to enter the workforce is influencing dynamics in project teams comprised of multiple generational representatives and how these teams are engaged to improve performance. This section elaborates on this study's significance including reduction of gaps, biblical implications, and relationship to the field of study.

Reduction of Gaps in the Literature

Findings from this study filled an existing gap in project management and project team literature as little is known about how Generation Z engages with others in a team setting (Burton et al., 2019). Bencsik et al. (2016) and Stewart (2017) agreed that differences exist between Generation Z and its predecessor generation, Generation Y, however, few studies have explored how the preferences and capabilities of Generation Z cohorts influence multiple aspects of workplace and team dynamics. Therefore, this research effort will help project managers strengthen their leadership skills to lead and motivate teams comprised of multiple generations, including this youngest professional generational group.

Furthermore, as this is the first time that five generations have coexisted in the workplace, literature surrounding how each of these generations interacts is quite limited (Burton et al., 2019). While many studies have focused on each generation individually, few have explored how these five generations collectively participate in a collaborative workplace setting. By exploring how Generation Z influences multi-generation project team dynamics, project managers and practitioners will gain deeper insight into how generationally diverse teams can best communicate, collaborate, and improve buy-in for successful performance.

Finally, most research exploring multi-generational team dynamics focused on the healthcare industry, especially nursing teams, and employed a quantitative research design. Few studies focused on project teams in business organizations. As project teams are inherent to multiple business industries and disciplines, this study broadened the scope of multi-generational team research to include an in-depth exploration of team dynamics in the software industry, which heavily relies on project management for critical endeavors (Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017).

Implications for Biblical Integration

From the creation story, Van Duzer (2010) concluded that the material world matters to God and that humans are called to stewardship of his creation. This is consistent with scriptures such as Genesis 2:15 which reads, "The Lord God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to take care of it" (NIV). Similarly, Keller and Alsdorf (2012) described how Christian professionals should view work opportunities for "culture-making with God" (p. 58). The authors further describe the world as having underdeveloped potential that God's people should continue cultivating after his pattern of work (Keller & Alsdorf, 2012). When project team dynamics and engagement are viewed within these foundational biblical frameworks, the significance of this study broadens to how multi-generational project teams fulfill God's desire for business organizations to participate in kingdom cultivation. By gaining deeper insight into how this youngest workplace generation is best engaged in a project team setting, project leaders can more effectively engage in talent cultivation activities that enhance the lives of team members, the business organization, and various stakeholder groups.

Project Team Implications. Based on biblical teachings, Keller and Alsdorf (2012) discussed how God casts gifts of wisdom, talent, beauty, and skill in an unmerited way to "enrich, brighten, and preserve the world" (p. 191), citing scripture such as 1 Peter 4:10 which reads, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in various forms." Similarly, Hardy (1990) asserted that businesses enrich the world by allowing employees to realize and live out their God-given callings. When project leaders assume this posture toward project team member development, they not only invest in employees as the organization's most valuable asset (Mello, 2015), but more importantly honor their employees' God-given talents. As such, this study will provide new

opportunities for project team members to realize and live out their God-given gifts and talents by providing a deeper insight into how generational considerations inform various aspects of team performance.

Furthermore, scripture reveals God's desire for humans to thrive in community with one another. Proverbs 27:17 teaches that humans sharpen one another, just as iron sharpens iron. Furthermore, the Hebrews author encourages man to meet together to lift up one another and spur love and good deeds (Hebrews 10: 24-25). These teachings reveal the contagious nature of community encouragement and performance both inside and outside the workplace. When multi-generational project team members honor the unique gifts, talents, and perspectives that both younger and older generations possess, the project team forms a community that enriches and brightens the organization spiritually and fiscally.

Project Leadership Implications. Project management experts Moran and Youngdahl (2014) emphasized the importance of project leaders effectively influencing team members and other project stakeholders for whom they have no formal authority. The authors provide many different strategies, citing the "platinum rule" (p. 132) of treating others according to their needs and preferences. Holding this project leadership principle in high esteem is important for coordinating and inspiring generationally diverse teams toward successful outcomes.

While authors such as Moran and Youngdahl (2014) recommend such project leadership approaches for professional and organizational growth, this leadership posture ultimately fulfills God's desire for Christian men and women to reflect his image in the workplace. Genesis 1:27 teaches that God created both male and female in his own image and as God's image-bearers, Christian professionals must carry on his pattern of work. By providing insight into how

Generation Z's life-shaping experiences inform their workplace and team behaviors, project managers can better reflect and reveal God's image with deeper empathy and authenticity.

Benefit to Business Practice and Relationship to Cognate

Findings from this research study will aid project managers in understanding, motivating, and leading multi-generational project teams comprised of Generation Z professionals and older generational cohorts. Project team experts Starbird and Cavanagh (2011) espouse the importance of engaged team performance in project success. Atkinson (2016) contended that when project team members understand their role and the unique value they deliver, teams are synergized to produce winning results. By gaining a deeper understanding of how Generation Z professionals best engage and interact in a multi-generation project team setting, project managers can better influence team buy-in and cohesion for successful project outcomes.

Gelbtuch and Morlan (2015) called for project leaders to understand how multi-generational teams can best work together effectively. Anantatmula and Shrivastav (2012) also contended that insights into how multiple generations work best together enable project managers with valuable knowledge to effectively lead and motivate project teams. Zhang and Guo (2019) espoused the importance of project leaders managing knowledge and skill diversity on cross-functional teams to break down barriers to communication and cooperation. Therefore, exploring how this youngest workplace cohort influences project team dynamics and engagement added to the project management knowledge base for project managers to better understand and inspire generationally diverse teams toward better collaboration, creativity, and performance.

Summary of the Significance of the Study

This research effort not only added to the professional project management body of knowledge but also entailed important secular and biblical implications. As workplaces and project teams are in the beginning stages of hiring and motivating Generation Z professionals, this study was well-timed and filled an existing gap in project management literature. Furthermore, by providing a deeper understanding of how this new generation of employees can be understood, engaged, and valued provided business and project leaders with a unique opportunity to participate in kingdom cultivation.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The following review of the literature, including professional and scholarly sources, grounded this study. Significant research has been dedicated to the presence of generational cohorts as groups of people who experience similar life-shaping events, economic conditions, and other impactful experiences, which in turn affect various aspects of workplace satisfaction and performance. As such, generational research has become a popular area of concern in the last several decades with scores of studies, books, and professional literature published on this important topic. However, while many studies could be found that explored generational differences and how they pertain to organizational work environments, relatively little research has focused on how these differences impact performance on intergenerational project teams. Furthermore, as Generation Z professionals have only recently entered the professional workforce, this generation's impact on organizational work environments is relatively unknown.

According to Burton et al. (2019), generational gaps are one of the most dominant factors seen in today's workforce, as this is the first time in history that five generations have co-existed. The oldest generation, Veterans/Traditionalists (1922-1946) currently accounts for only two

percent of the U.S. Workforce (Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Next is the

Baby Boomer generation (1946 – 1964), which comprises approximately 25% of the current

labor force (Fry, 2018; Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Generation X (1965 –

1979) follows Baby Boomers and accounts for 33% of the workforce, which is the second-

largest generation represented (Fry, 2018; Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020).

Generation Y/Millennials (1980 – 1994) are now the largest represented generation, comprising

approximately 35% of the U.S. workforce (Fry, 2018; Generational Differences in the

Workplace, 2020). Finally, Generation Z (1995 – 2010) is the newest generation to enter the

workforce and currently accounts for approximately five percent of the labor force population

(Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Figure 2 depicts the current composition of

the U.S. workforce by generation.

Figure 2

Percentage of U.S. Workforce by Generation
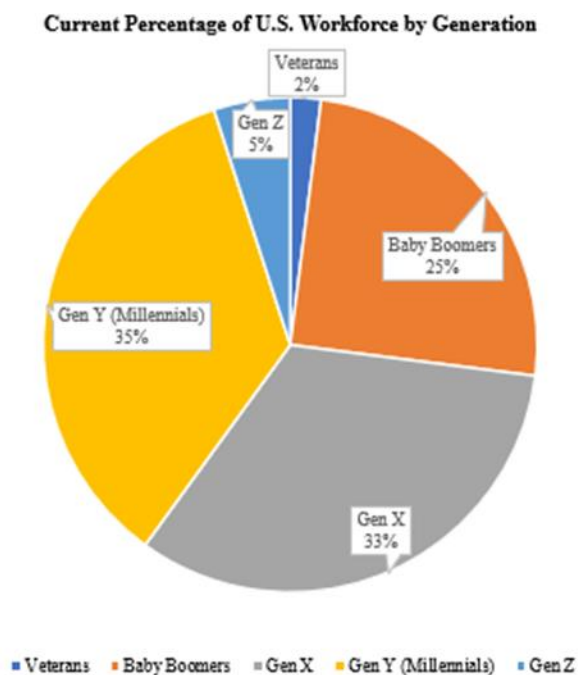
While significant attention has been afforded to the topic generational cohorts in the workplace, research concerning Generation Z professionals is in its infancy (Burton et al., 2019). While this newest, youngest generation is just now launching their careers, experts estimate that it is 72.8 million strong (Stillman & Stillman, 2017) and predict that it will become one of the largest represented workplace generations within the next decade (Stewart, 2017). Therefore, this research study was well-timed in its significance and helped fill a gap in the existing generational workplace research.

Literature Review Overview

Organized thematically, the literature presented in this review depicts the most salient topics and considerations pertaining to each of the currently represented workplace generations as well as pertinent research concerning project teams. Special focus was given to research concerning intergenerational project teams comprised of project leaders and team members representing diverse generational cohorts. Guiding this review was the central purpose of exploring how Generation Z impacts intergenerational project team dynamics as well as how this newest professional cohort is best engaged in a project team environment. Specifically, this review sought to examine what currently available scholarly and professional literature identifies as significant for how each generation uniquely values and approaches various aspects of workplace and project team engagement, collaboration, and performance.

Scholarly peer-reviewed and professional journals, books, and articles were reviewed and analyzed within this section. Furthermore, all literature reviewed and discussed is directly related to this study's three guiding research questions and sub-questions:

RQ1. How do Generation Z cohorts influence project team dynamics on multi-
generational project teams?

RQ1a. How do communication styles and preferences for Generation Z cohorts influence project team dynamics?

RQ1b. How do members of Generation Z approach conflict resolution?

RQ1c. How do Generation Z cohorts interact with project team members representing older generations?

RQ2. How are Generation Z cohorts best engaged on multi-generational teams?

RQ2a. What are the most influential factors that motivate Generation Z project team members toward active team engagement and project success?

RQ2b. How do Generation Z cohorts view and value other generations on the project team?

RQ2c. How do other generations view and value Generation Z project team members?

RQ3. How can project managers best lead multi-generational project teams that include Generation Z team members?

RQ3a. What leadership actions or behaviors best resonate with Generation Z project team members?

As such, the review is divided into four major sections and designed to review the most salient themes and topics related to each of these over-arching components most relevant to this study. The first section, Generational Workplace Research, individually discusses each of the four generations preceding Generation Z that are currently represented in today's workplaces. Emphasis is placed on their unique, shared life-shaping experiences as well as how research reveals these shared experiences have shaped each cohort's workplace values, satisfaction, motivation, and performance. This section concludes with a discussion of research that

challenges the concept of generational cohorts as well as evidence that these groups have similar workplace values and preferences. This section is followed by a review of the current body of workplace research surrounding Generation Z as the main focus of this research effort.

While the aforementioned sections discuss each of these five generations individually, the Intergenerational Project Team Research section focuses on how these five generations interact within workplace and team settings. The final major section, Engaged Team Performance Research, focuses on the most significant research surrounding engaged team collaboration and performance, including group decision-making and other relevant project team best practices and pitfalls. Taken together, these four sections provide a holistic picture of the research most relevant to the current body of knowledge surrounding generational workplace values, intergenerational project team engagement, and various aspects of project team performance.

One area of focus in generational workplace literature is how generation gaps influence various aspects of work team motivation and performance (Burton et al., 2019). For instance differences among team members can positively influence team performance through enhanced creativity and problem-solving (Cox & Blake, 1991; Hambrick et al., 1996), but negatively impact performance when similar members develop dislike and distrust for non-similar team members or groups (Byrne et al., 1966). Therefore, this review not only examined each cohort individually, but also discussed the available literature surrounding intergenerational project team engagement, collaboration, and performance. As such, the literature supported the purpose of this study and revealed that there is a need to examine how Generation Z professionals influence intergenerational project team dynamics and are best engaged in a project team environment.

Theories

Seminal generational and workplace performance theories provided the foundation for this study's purpose as well as the business problem that it seeks to explore. The first major theory forming the basis of this study is Mannheim's (1952) theory of generations, which understood a generation to be a cohort of a population who have experienced noteworthy events in their youth during a distinct period of time. Furthermore, Manheim (1952) theorized that each generational cohort's truths and ideas are related to and influenced by the social context from which they stem.

Building on Manheim's (1952) work, Inglehart (1977) advanced the generational cohort theory, holding that generations are social constructs of individuals born during a similar time period who experience and are influenced by historic and social contexts which differentiate each group from another. Following Inglehart (1977), Kupperschmidt (2000) extended the concept of generational cohorts to groups of individuals that are demarcated by birth year and have experienced related economic conditions and opportunities as well as life-shaping events that influence the general mindset of each cohort. Together, each of these theories provided the guiding principle that generational groups are demarcated by birth year and share similar life-shaping events and experiences that shape each cohort's mindset and values, including various aspects of workplace satisfaction and performance, in unique ways.

Utilizing Manheim's (1952) and other generation research, other studies have expanded to how each cohort develops particular attitudes and perceptions in the workplace (Lester et al., 2012). Such research can aid organizational efforts to attract, motivate, and retain each generational group of professionals (Edge, 2013). As such, a major portion of this literature

review focuses on the current body of scholarly and professional research surrounding workplace values for each of the five generations that currently co-exist in today's workforce.

Generational Workplace Research

The first major section of this literature review examines existing research that overwhelmingly supported the presence of workplace considerations unique to each of the generations currently represented in the U.S. workforce and focuses on each generation preceding Generation Z. It is organized by beginning with the oldest represented workplace generation, Veterans/Traditionalists, and synthesizes workplace research for each subsequent generational cohort. Important life events shaping each generation's attitudes and values are revealed as well as how such experiences influence various aspects of workplace preferences, expectations, and performance. Finally, the section reviews and discusses the small body of research that criticizes the concept of generational cohorts possessing shared experiences and attitudes that influence professional endeavors.

Veterans (Traditionalists). Veterans, also called Traditionalists, were born approximately between 1922 and 1946 (Burton et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2012; Wiener, 1982). This cohort of professionals is the oldest and smallest represented workplace generation, comprising approximately two percent of the current workforce (Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Formative, life-shaping experiences for this generational cohort include exposure to the Great Depression and the events surrounding World War II (Zemke et al., 2000). Furthermore, the majority of men in this generation are war veterans and possess a high sense of patriotism (McNamara, 2005). Such experiences have contributed to this generation's reputation for being dependable, straightforward, tactful, and loyal (Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020).

Comparatively little workplace literature exists on this oldest generation, as cohorts are quickly exiting the existing workforce (Burton et al., 2019). However, research reveals that Veterans possess a dedicated work ethic and a respectful view of authority (Zemke et al., 2000). Research also reveals that this generational cohort values seniority, hierarchical leadership, and personal sacrifice in relationships (Zemke et al., 2000). Furthermore, studies show that this generation is best motivated in the workplace by respect, recognition, and opportunities to provide long-term value to the organization employing them (Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Based on these findings, intergenerational project teams comprised of Veteran representatives should ensure that these oldest members are provided opportunities to contribute ideas and work products that are not only meaningful in the short-term but also have the potential to create long-term value.

Baby Boomers. The Baby Boomer generation was born approximately between 1946 and 1964 (Burton et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2012) and comprises approximately 25% of the current labor force (Fry, 2018; Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). However, large numbers of this generational cohort are expected to retire in the next few years (Brien, 2018; Na'Desh, 2015). Important life events that shaped this generation's attitudes and values include the U.S. Women's Civil Rights Movement, the Quebec crisis in Canada, and the long period of political unrest and tension associated with the Cold War (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Such experiences have led this generation to be best motivated by company loyalty, teamwork, and duty in the workplace (Generational Differences In The Workplace, 2020).

Research reveals that this generation seeks personal growth and is ambitious to "put their stamp on things" (Kovary & Buahene, 2012, p. 6). They value management experience and particularly excel at "big picture" thinking to identify possibilities, opportunities, and solutions

(Burton et al., 2019). Although Baby Boomers are one of the oldest workforce generations and many are approaching the end of their professional careers, organizations such as universities and those in the healthcare industry are strategically hiring members of this cohort for their experience, leadership, and dependability (The value of hiring Baby Boomers, 2015). Studies also show that while members of this generation are approaching retirement age, many are choosing not to retire for fear of decreased productivity and sense of accomplishment (There's a Generation Gap in Your Workplace, 2013). Such actions are consistent with findings that Baby Boomers report lower levels of stress and burnout than younger generations (Stevanin et al., 2018) and are more likely to place an extremely high value on workplace loyalty and hard work (The value of hiring Baby Boomers, 2015).

While loyalty and hard work motivate some members of this generation to continue working past retirement age, they are also motivated by fiscal and economic considerations. Increased life-expectancy rates and strains on public safety nets such as Social Security and Medicare cause many Baby Boomers to fear that their life will outpace their retirement savings (Kayser, 2014). Furthermore, the oldest of this generational cohort began approaching retirement age when the U.S. economic crisis began, which forced many to delay retirement (There's a Generation Gap in Your Workplace, 2013). All of these contributing factors have led Baby Boomers to prioritize financial stability, even if it requires working into their later life years. While it is estimated that around 10,000 Baby Boomers reach retirement age every day, one study found that approximately 65% of these professionals plan to work past the age of 65 (Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Given the wealth of experience that this generation has to offer as well as the value it places on hard work and teamwork, these professionals will respond well to specific goals and deadlines as well as opportunities for

coaching and mentoring when participating in or leading intergenerational project teams with younger colleagues.

Generation X. Members of Generation X were born approximately between 1965 and 1979 (Miranda & Allen, 2017). This cohort comprises approximately 33% of the labor force (Fry, 2018; Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020) and is much smaller in number than its predecessor Baby Boomer generation. Life shaping events for Generation X cohorts include increased numbers of women professionals and evolving women's rights movements, and emerging energy crisis, heightened emphasis on cultural differences, and the introduction of the personal computer (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Members of Generation X have a reputation for being skeptical, independent, and entrepreneurial due to exposure to economic, political, and social upheavals (Maas, 2000). As the smallest generation, there was relatively little current research on Generation X's workplace values compared to Baby Boomers, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z.

Generation X cohorts are most motivated when they feel engaged in the organization's mission and purpose (There's a Generation Gap in Your Workplace, 2013). Research reveals that they will quickly grow skeptical of leadership and authority if they do not feel adequately engaged (Brown, 2017). Furthermore, Generation X cohorts will question methods and procedures that seem antiquated and misaligned with company objectives to validate relevancy and push for necessary change (Brown, 2017). Similarly, Generation X professionals value efficient communication through phone calls and face-to-face interaction (Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Based on these findings, intergenerational project teams comprised of these professionals will benefit from their aptitude for efficient processes and collaboration to meet project deadlines and goals.

Generation X employees also tend to be more self-reliant than other workplace generations (Boyd, 2009). This trait is largely attributed to the fact that a significant number of Generation X had parents who were either divorced or both worked outside of the home (Taylor, 2018). Such experiences caused members of this generation to grow up quicker than preceding and subsequent generations and garner their reputation for independence (Taylor, 2018). As such, these professionals are likely to value opportunities for independent work when completing project tasks.

Generation X cohorts also differ from their predecessor generations in the value they place on work-life balance. While Veterans and Baby Boomers place a premium on hard work, members of Generation X are more likely to view work as means and opportunity to fund leisure activities and enjoyment outside of the workplace (Taylor, 2018). Generation X was also the first generation to become comfortable utilizing technology to work remotely, allowing members to utilize such capabilities to balance work and other activities of interest (Taylor, 2018). Therefore, project team leaders can likely motivate Generation X team representatives by providing flexible work arrangements such as the ability to work remotely or alternate workday schedules to allow room for work-life balance.

Similar to its predecessor generations, Generation X cohorts value hierarchy and authority (Brown, 2017), but are often granted fewer management opportunities than Baby Boomer and Millennial employees, as they are sandwiched between these two ambitious workplace generations (Urick, 2017). Members of Generation X also value visible and participative management involvement (McNichols, 2010). Urick (2017) suggested that organizations who have fewer Generation X employees in formal leadership positions, engage these cohorts in informal leadership capacities such as mentoring younger generational

colleagues. Such opportunities would fulfill this generation's desire to enact authority and bring value to the organization.

Generation Y (millennials). Generation Y, also called the Millennial Generation or Millennials, were born approximately between 1980 and 1994 (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016; Fry, 2018). This group is currently the largest represented workplace generation, comprising approximately 35% of the U.S. workforce (Fry, 2018; Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Millennials are the children of Baby Boomers and were the first to be born into a technology-based world (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). This generation is also the first to have large numbers of both males and females in the workplace as the millennial full-time employee population is comprised of approximately 54% male and 45% female (Machado, 2018). Significant life-shaping experiences and events for this generation include high levels of high school violence, major government scandals, the September 11 terrorist attack, and technology and media proliferation where everyone can have a voice and be made famous (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). More workplace research exists for millennials than any other generation due to them being the largest represented workplace generation and the increasing popularity of generational research in the last few decades (Burton et al., 2019).

Generation Y/Millennial cohorts are considered more educated than their predecessor generations with different attitudes and approaches to leadership (Hall, 2016). They are described as energetic and engaged, looking for opportunities for upward mobility and professional development (Brien, 2018; Machado, 2018). This generation understands that many members of its preceding generations are soon retiring, which will result in more career opportunities for this cohort. As such, millennial employees place a high value on opportunities for professional development such as associations and networking programs (Brien, 2018).

The emphasis that Generation Y employees place on career development has also earned them a reputation of "job-hopping," as they are more known to readily seek growth opportunities in other companies if not satisfied in their current employment situation (Bushardt et al., 2018). However, while members of this generation do not prefer to leave their current employer in search of job growth, they are willing to do so if they perceive they are limited in development opportunities (LaCore, 2015). One study estimated that more than 80% of Generation Y professionals are willing to relocate for advancement opportunities, with 71% desiring or expecting an international assignment in their career (LaCore, 2015). Such considerations highlight the importance of organizations catering to this generation's need for professional development through upward advancement and learning opportunities.

Members of the millennial generation also place a high value on frequent, relevant communication (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018). Hall (2016) found that Generation Y employees desire regular communication with coworkers. This generation is very comfortable with technology and uses it as a primary communication medium (Bushardt et al., 2018). Millennial professionals also value meaningful conversations with mangers and place a high priority on instant performance feedback (Chillakuri & Mogili, 2018). Therefore, Millennial project team members are likely to value frequent project communication, preferring electronic mediums (email, text, instant messaging) for less important items requiring quick responses and in-person meetings for higher-stake project affairs.

Millennial employees also wish to engage as individuals and in a team setting (LaCore, 2015). While they are more team-oriented than Generation X employees, a trait that they share with their Baby Boomer colleagues (LaCore, 2015), some studies find that millennials tend to emphasize individual values more than organizational values (Bushardt et al., 2018). Members of

this cohort want to have a voice in organizational affairs as well as an immediate impact on their organizational culture (Murphy, 2012). Similar to older generations, this cohort desires to make an impact on the organizations that employ them and may seek employment elsewhere if they feel ineffective. As such, these project professionals are likely to value immediate feedback, being managed based on results, and flexibility in their work schedules and assignments.

Challenges to Evidence of Generational Workplace Differences. While an overwhelming amount of research supports generational differences and key workplace considerations, some research was found that challenges these theories. Much of the literature agrees that each employee possesses their own unique values, skills, attitudes, and talents and therefore cannot be solely assessed by their generational association. However, some researchers argue that the idea of generational representations should not be applied to workplace values and professional development decisions. For instance, Parry and Urwin (2011) conducted a literature review of generational research before 2009 and concluded that evidence surrounding meaningful differences in the workplace was conflicting and inconclusive. Martin and Gentry (2011) also found that generations may be more similar than different in the workplace in regards to signs of derailment due to interpersonal relationships, difficulty changing or adapting, difficulty leading teams, or difficulty changing and adapting. Some researchers postulate that the widespread perception of generational differences rather than the reality of generational differences causes most intergenerational workplace tensions (Hirsch, 2020).

Rudolf et al. (2018) argued that studies of generational differences influencing individual outcomes are flawed and based upon theories that cannot be precisely measured and tested. The authors also espouse that there is no absolute standard for birth years that separate generations, citing some authors who categorize a generation based on one range and others who cite a

slightly different range (Rudolf et al., 2018). Such discrepancies lead Rudolf et al. (2018) to conclude that these ambiguous age parameters make the idea of generational cohorts inherently flawed. However, as Stillman and Stillman (2017) pointed out, while generational experts may slightly disagree on birth years demarcating each cohort, they do agree that an understanding of how each cohort shares a common history is paramount to understanding generations and the unique perspectives and values these groups possess. Therefore, while birth years are helpful, they are more a tool to generally distinguish groups of people who have shared similar formative life experiences.

Zacher et al. (2015) and Rudolf et al. (2018) make a case for alternatives to various generational workplace and leadership theories such as the lifespan model of leadership. With this model, the researchers argue that leader traits and characteristics change and develop with age, which subsequently affects leadership effectiveness. The authors also theorize that this same age-difference model can influence follower attribution and identification processes (Zacher et al., 2015). As such, these studies espouse that the age and life phase of the employee more significantly affects their motivations and leadership propensity than their associated generational cohort.

Generational Workplace Research Summary

A comprehensive review of the scholarly and professional literature surrounding workplace generations overwhelmingly revealed that these groups possess unique, lived experiences that influence workplace values and performance. While some research exists refuting these studies, such studies also acknowledge that there are a specific age and experience component that significantly influences workplace and leadership motivation, propensity, and behaviors. Therefore, while it is commonly accepted that individuals each possess their own

unique lived experiences, talents, and skills that influence both personal and vocational endeavors, an understanding of the prevailing shared experiences and values that shape each generation may also provide insight for organizations and leaders charged with recruiting, motivating, engaging, and retaining professionals in each cohort group.

Research also revealed that today's workforce spans a wide age range and will continue to do so for the next five to ten years. While many Veterans and Baby Boomers are soon expected to retire, others plan to work well into their retirement age. On the other side of the workplace age spectrum, Generation Z is poised to become one of the largest in decades as more of these professionals are entering the professional workforce each year. Research agrees that this generation gap has important implications for a myriad of human resources, project team, and leadership concerns. Therefore, strategic organizations must address and manage this unique generation gap with the breadth of generations currently co-existing in organizations across the country.

Generation Z Workplace Values and Considerations

As the main focus of this research effort, the following major section addresses the unique lived experiences and the small body of research surrounding Generation Z in the professional workplace. Some studies glean insight from values studied and observed of college-going Generation Z cohorts, while others are the result of studying the oldest of these professionals who are young in their professional careers. Most research agrees that Generation Z cohorts were born approximately between 1995 and 2010 (Fatemi, 2018; Seemiller & Grace, 2017) and comprise of five percent of the current U.S. professional workforce (Generational Differences in the Workplace, 2020). Life-shaping experiences for this cohort include growing up in a world of smartphones and free Wi-Fi, watching parents and grandparents struggle during

the Great Recession, and multi-tasking through constant updates from multiple smartphone and tablet apps (Patel, 2017). As the workforce's youngest generation of employees, Generation Z members are just beginning to form and develop their professional skills and knowledge.

Research reveals that this youngest professional workforce generation possesses different values when evaluating professional and career opportunities than predecessor generations (Fatemi, 2018; Iorgulescu, 2016; Stewart, 2017). While professional workplace research for Generation Z is still in its infancy (Burton et al., 2019), studies show that these professionals uniquely consider matters such as work-life balance, technology utilization, and employee diversity when approaching professional endeavors. Therefore, the following section discusses relevant career and workplace values, leadership characteristics, psychological considerations, technology preferences, and collaboration and communication styles in detail for Generation as the main focus of this research effort.

Career and Workplace Values. Studies reveal that younger generations of professionals are willing to accept lower-paying, less prestigious positions in favor of greater opportunities to engage with friends and loved ones outside of work (Mello, 2015). For instance, research shows that the role of family is the most important social group influencing Generation Z members' career choice (Goh & Lee, 2018). Additionally, Hills (2018) found that Generation Z cohorts more strongly guard against employee burnout from mental, emotional, or physical exhaustion than predecessor generations. Similar to their predecessor Millennial generation, this research suggests that Generation Z project team members are likely to value opportunities for work-life balance. However, whereas Millennial professionals are likely to emphasize work-life balance in the form of remote working capabilities, Generation Z professionals may place more value on the ability to engage in self-care through exercise and opportunities for mental health. As such,

this generation of project professionals may be particularly motivated by workplace exercise facilities, wellness programs, and opportunities to engage with project teammates in relaxed, informal settings.

Iorgulescu (2016) found that Generation Z cohorts uniquely value job security and generous pay when compared to older generations. Castellano (2016) and other researchers attribute these values to this generation's experience watching both parents and grandparents experience career setbacks, job loss, and decreased retirement amidst the U.S. financial crisis that occurred during their adolescent years. Castellano (2016) added that these life-shaping events also contributed to Generation Z's tendency to set career goals that are both ambitious and realistic. For instance, a Robert Half survey of college students between ages 18 and 25, revealed that 79% of Generation Z members want to work for large to mid-sized organizations and 32% want to be managing employees within five years of employment (Castellano, 2016). Stillman and Stillman (2017) found that 72% of Generation Z cohorts believe that they are competitive with people doing the same job. From these studies, it can be inferred that Generation Z professionals seek opportunities for job security and growth, but also realistically assess necessary experience and timelines to accomplish such goals.

According to a March 31, 2018 Forbes.com report by Cone Communications (2017), 94% of Generation Z professionals believe that companies should address social and environmental issues (Fatemi, 2018). This percentage was higher than both Millenials and members of the general population surveyed who favorably responded 87% and 86%, respectively (Fatemi, 2018). Additionally, research reveals that Generation Z highly values social entrepreneurship (Stewart, 2017) and a significant portion of Generation Z professionals are willing to take a pay cut in return for working toward a mission that they identify with (Fatemi,

2018). Such values reveal the emphasis this generation places on corporate social responsibility and opportunities to either volunteer or work on initiatives that positively impact society and the environment.

Finally, Generation Z professionals have higher expectations for workplace diversity than previous generations. Stewart (2017) noted that members of this generation were taught in classrooms that focused on diversity and collaboration. Additionally, Generation Z has come of age in an era of social media platforms that provide access to different cultures, backgrounds, and circumstances in an unprecedented way (Lanier, 2017). Due to this exposure, one PR Newswire article described that over half of Generation Z members surveyed aspired to work in more than one country in the future (Despite the tech revolution, 2016). Therefore, Generation Z professionals desire collaboration with multiple cultures and backgrounds, as well as opportunities for cultural emersion when engaging in workplace and team endeavors.

Leadership Characteristics. Hesselbein (2018) postulated that Generation Z professionals are career-focused with a high propensity for leadership. Such theories are supported by a 2016 report by The Hartman Group that stated "Generation Z in on its way to becoming one of the most fully participation-oriented generations we've come to know." Moreover, Adecco (2015) found that Generation Z cohorts enjoy entrepreneurial initiatives, are self-confident, and are optimistic about their career goals (Adecco, 2015). Stillman and Stillman (2017) referred to this generation as "hyper-custom" (p. 106), finding that they strongly desire to customize and tailor their brands, career paths, and job descriptions. Furthermore, research reveals that Generation Z members aspire to run their own business and seek opportunities for hands-on experience through internships, college classes, and industry experience before attempting to launch their own business (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Such findings

overwhelmingly indicate that Generation Z professionals are driven and motivated to perform in their careers and provide unique leadership to the organizations that employ them.

Generation Z professionals not only possess their own unique leadership characteristics, but also have distinct expectations of the leaders that manage them. In a PR Newswire survey, Generation Z members overwhelming selected "communication" as the most important leadership quality (Despite the tech revolution, 2016). Furthermore, studies show that this generation desires continuous feedback over yearly performance reviews (Despite the tech revolution, 2016) and values leaders who can provide meaningful engagement and open dialogue (Lanier, 2017). Such findings indicate that Generation Z professionals value a workplace and team environment that prioritizes advancement opportunities and collaboration with supervisors and higher management.

Psychological Considerations. Gupta and Gulati (2014) studied 145 college-going teens and examined the psychological and demographic factors that correlated with how they selected and utilized mobile applications. The results showed that these teens utilized mobile applications based on five psychographic factors: leisure, boredom, loneliness, sensation, and shyness (Gupta & Gulati, 2014). Fatemi (2018) similarly noted that members of this generation are more engaged in technology gadgets and social media that previous generations, and have therefore placed less priority developing a social support system (Fatemi, 2018). Given these experiences, research postulates that Generation Z professionals will be more partial to employment organizations that offer strong mental support services such as yoga and personal counseling (Fatemi, 2018).

Stillman and Stillman (2017) discussed how members of Generation Z share a syndrome nicknamed "FOMO" (p. 196), which stands for Fear of Missing Out. The experts attributed this

shared trait to the reality that members of this generation have grown up with immediate access to news, social media, texts, and other digital sources that keep them constantly informed on real-time information and updates (Stillman & Stillman, 2017). Such constant connectivity makes this generation particularly aware that the world is constantly moving at a fast pace, and creates anxieties that unplugging for any amount of time may cause them to miss something important. The experts also warned that FOMO can lead to Generation Z professionals becoming easily distracted at work, since they have never had a reason to be bored or disconnected (Stillman & Stillman, 2017). To manage this propensity for distraction, organizations and managers will need to be prepared with creative, engaging ways to capture Generation Z's attention.

Workplace Technology Preferences. Seemiller and Grace (2017) studied how 750 Generation Z students from 15 different organizations utilized technology. The researchers found that unlike older generations who seek information from search engines such as Google, Generation Z cohorts prefer learning through video websites like YouTube where they can watch demonstrations on various processes and endeavors (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). The study also revealed that Generation Z cohorts prefer to multi-task across up to five screens and would rather communicate via text than by email or phone (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Therefore, organizations employing these professionals may need to adapt workspaces and communication criteria to fully engage this group.

Furthermore, this youngest generation has grown up with smartphones, tablets, 3-D, 4-D, and 360-degree photography (Stewart, 2017). Such prolific smart technology access has translated to an average attention span of eight seconds, as compared to an estimated twelve-second attention span of Millennials (Stewart, 2017). Stillman and Stillman (2017) postulated

that Generation Z has experienced and therefore expects a "phigital" world (p. 76), where the line between physical and digital is almost obsolete. The generation experts cite examples such as GPS applications with real-time traffic updates and arrival time calculations as well as the proliferation of e-commerce as the only realities that Generation Z cohorts have experienced in their lifetimes (Stillman & Stillman, 2017). As the first generation born into a digital world, these generations of professionals are likely to expect workplaces to be innovative and processes to be technologically sophisticated.

Given the emphasis that Generation Z place on technology, one HR Focus magazine article discussed how Canon, Inc. planned to change its workplaces to accommodate Generation Z's attention span and digital expectations. In the company's research, Canon, Inc. found that Generation Z employees are likely to prioritize collaboration, speed, and sharability as much or more than the value of the content that they are sharing (Opfer, 2018). The study concluded that companies must provide information access that is quickly accessible and sharable when designing job roles for Generation Z professionals (Opfer, 2018). As such, employers must consider the caliber and quality of organizational information technology systems to recruit, retain, and provide advancement opportunities for this generation.

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing. Workplace research also showed that Generation Z has specific team knowledge-sharing and knowledge-transfer styles that differ from previous generations. Chillakuri and Mahanandia (2018) found that Generation Z employees prefer multi-tasking and like to learn information and processes independently. Furthermore, members of this youngest generation are motivated by opportunities to be efficient and express their individuality (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018). Generation Z has also been called the "DIY (do-it-yourself) generation" (p. 225), which may collide with the more

collaborative preferences of older generational cohorts (Stillman & Stillman, 2017). However, while self-teaching and self-expression are important to Generation Z cohorts, they do not prefer to work in isolation and instead favor open-space offices near groups (Iorgulescu, 2016). From these findings, it can be inferred that while this generation may not prefer working as part of a group, they do prefer working in social office environments where they are physically located near groups of colleagues.

Bencsik et al. (2016) found that Generation Z cohorts prefer knowledge sharing easily, rapidly, and publically on virtual platforms. However, despite their comfort with virtual platforms, Castellano (2016) found that this generation would rather work in an office environment than from home or other remote locations. Similarly, Lanier (2017) found that 51% of surveyed Generation Z cohorts preferred in-person communication with leaders to discuss feedback and other employee performance-related matters. Therefore, while digital social communication tools still engage Generation Z, they prefer in-person contact for meaningful conversations.

Generation Z Workplace Values and Considerations Summary. A thorough review of the existing literature on Generation Z revealed that this newest cohort possesses unique characteristics relevant to work performance. However, given the relatively small amount of time members of this generation have been in the professional workplace, little is known about the preferences and capabilities of Generation Z or how it will interact with others (Burton et al., 2109). As the workforce's youngest generation of employees, Generation Z members are just beginning to form and develop their professional skills and knowledge, making workplace research concerning this generation particularly well-timed and relevant for a wide breadth of business organizations.

Intergenerational Project Team Research

Based on a thorough review of project team research, Burton et al. (2019) concluded that generational diversity plays a role in team performance. Therefore, the third major section of this review discusses the most salient research related to various aspects of intergenerational project team engagement, collaboration, and performance. Five sub-themes were identified from the scholarly and professional literature: multi-generation team dynamics, multi-generation team conflict, multi-generation team leadership, multi-generation team wages, and work environment, and multi-generation team commitment. Therefore, the following sub-sections address these important intergenerational project team considerations and topics.

Multi-Generational Team Dynamics. Literature is somewhat varied on each generation's preference for working individually versus working in teams in the workplace. Based on literature review findings, Lyons and Kuron (2014) concluded that the appeal of teamwork is generally lower for younger generations, although the researchers also acknowledged that there are conflicting studies that refute this claim. For instance, some studies indicated that the Millennial generation prefers to work in teams (Wessels & Steenkamp, 2009), whereas others concluded that younger generations are more individualistic in their work preferences than previous generations (VanMeter et al., 2013). Most studies also concluded that Generation X professionals tend to be less team-oriented than predecessor generations (Burton et al., 2019) and consider individual satisfaction to significantly influence team performance (Sirias et al., 2007). Conversely, members of the Baby Boomer generation prefer to meet in groups for collaboration and problem-solving (Burton et al., 2019). The literature on Generation Z's approach to teamwork in the workplace was minimal, which supports the need for this study and the gap that it will help fill in current professional multi-generation team research. Furthermore,

as this research effort sought a deeper understanding of how Generation Z influences multi-generation project team dynamics, findings not only provided insight to interaction and teamwork preferences for this youngest generation, but also helped resolve conflicting research concerning how other workplace generations approach teamwork as well.

Intergenerational team literature does reveal that team dynamics are significantly influenced by how each generation views and values teammates representing different generational cohorts (Burton et al., 2019). Wok and Hashim (2013) found that young professionals have positive teamwork relationships with older colleagues and enjoy learning from their experiences in decision-making. Conversely, Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) found that while Millennial professionals are more accepting of diversity than previous generations, they have garnered a bad reputation for ineffectively communicating and collaborating with older workforce colleagues. Research also shows that Generation X, Millennial, and Generation Z professionals are more motivated by praise (Wok & Hashim, 2013), whereas older generations do not have the same need and may not as readily affirm younger colleagues and subordinates in the way that they prefer (Burton et al., 2019). As such, it is helpful for both project teammates and project leaders to understand these preferences and potential pitfalls as well as how such considerations can affect motivation for team engagement and performance.

Horwitz and Horwitz (2007) found that age diversity can have both positive and negative effects on teams and organizations. For instance, intergenerational teams can enjoy benefits such as enhanced creativity and decision-making as well as increased productivity due to the diversity in skills and backgrounds represented (van Knippenberg & Schnippers, 2007). On the other hand, Anderson and Morgan (2017) found that age-diverse groups can experience intergenerational hostility in the workplace that sometimes causes communication barriers and

negative perceptions. These studies highlighted the reality that generational diversity in organizations and teams can present some important challenges, but can also result in many advantages when understood and managed correctly.

Multi-Generation Team Conflict. Several studies were found in the multi-generation team literature that addressed how conflict can arise within intergenerational teams as well as how different generations approach and manage workplace conflict when it occurs. Zhu et al. (2016) studied the intergenerational conflict between superiors and subordinates and found that younger generations are more likely to allow task and procedural conflict to become relationship conflict, which can negatively affect job performance. Additionally, Lower (2008) found that Veterans, Baby Boomers, and Generation X professionals often perceive Millennial colleagues to be less professional in their appearance, less skilled in face-to-face interactions, and sometimes rude in their communication. Conversely, other studies have revealed that younger generations can exhibit ageist thoughts and behaviors towards older colleagues and superiors (King & Bryant, 2017).

Age diversity in teams has also been linked to negative or unproductive behaviors such as social categorization processes that emphasize age-subgroup formation and age discrimination (Kunze et al., 2011). For instance, the Millennial generation is often viewed as over-confident, anxious, and hyperactive (Hirsch, 2020). However, not only are Millennial employees viewed in this light by other generations, but one study by the Pew Research Center found that 59% of Millennials describe their fellow cohorts as self-absorbed, 49% as wasteful, and 39% as greedy (Hirsch, 2020). Such perceptions and behaviors may increase the chance of intergenerational team conflict as well as hinder the conflict resolution process.

Multi-Generation Team Leadership. Kilduff et al. (2000) found that organizations with intergenerational top management teams perform better with respect to market share outcomes. A popular way for older and younger generations to work together in a leadership capacity, as well as develop the next generation of organizational leaders is the idea of "reverse mentoring," which involves pairing a younger employee as a mentor to share the experience with an older, senior colleague as a mentee (Murphy, 2012). This method has gained traction in the last several years as many industry leaders such as General Electric, Estee Lauder, and Pricewaterhouse Coopers have emphasized the importance of reverse mentoring initiatives that have allowed older generations of leaders to better understand and utilize tools such as social media and knowledge-sharing portals for exchanging ideas (Hirsch, 2020). Murphy (2012) found this practice particularly impactful when pairing Millennial and Baby Bommer colleagues, exposing participants to different generational perspectives, and building on the strengths of each cohort group.

Banwany (2014) postulated that companies are increasingly pressured to deliver the next generation of "ready-now" leaders (p. 30) as older generations are soon retiring and younger generations are taking on new management roles. One methodology is called "transition coaching" (p. 31), which aims to provide advice and counsel that accelerates the transition process, prevents mistakes that may harm the business and leader's career, and assists the leader in developing and implementing a leadership transition plan that delivers results (Bawany, 2014). As such, this intergenerational leadership transition approach allows meaningful knowledge-sharing and collaboration that is mutually beneficial to leadership participants and the organization.

Madrid et al. (2016) found that project team leaders with a higher positive affective presence inspire a larger amount of creative ideas generated in generationally diverse teams. Another study found that leaders who are more sensitive to the needs of their employees tend to have a more productive, intergenerational workforce (Carver & Candela, 2008). Such findings reinforce the importance and value of project and organizational leaders gaining deeper insight and understanding into the unique perspectives and values of each generational cohort for increased engagement and performance.

Multi-Generation Team Wages, Work Environment, and Commitment. Lipscomb (2010) administered a work satisfaction survey to a 77-member intergenerational team asking them to rank, in order of importance, the following five elements of the work environment: pay, autonomy, task requirements, organizational policies, interaction, and professional status. The researchers found that Generation Y professionals ranked pay as their first priority, as compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X professionals who ranked autonomy as their first priority (Lipscomb, 2010). Such findings were consistent with other studies that reveal Millennial professionals to expect their pay, benefits, and work schedules to be aligned with more experienced workplace generations (Lower, 2008). Such research indicates that older generations may be more motivated toward engaged team performance in a more autonomous work environment, whereas younger generations may lack team engagement if they perceive their wages and benefits to be lower than those of older teammates and colleagues.

Singh and Gupta (2015) studied intergenerational team commitment utilizing the survey questionnaire methodology. The researchers found that younger generations had higher professional commitment than predecessor generations, however they had less organizational commitment than older colleagues (Singh & Gupta, 2015). Furthermore, Orlowski et al. (2017)

found that younger generations who perceive conflict associated with tasks and processes have decreased organizational commitment. Together, both of these studies suggest that while Millennial and Generation Z professionals are driven and dedicated to their own professional development, they may be more fragile in their commitment to the organizations and project teams that they belong to

Intergenerational Project Team Research Summary. In reviewing the literature surrounding intergenerational team dynamics, most studies centered around the topics of dynamics and conflict. Therefore, while the body of scholarly and professional literature surrounding intergenerational project teams is relatively small, the research discussed in this section provided significant insight to potential advantages and pitfalls associated with generationally diverse teams as well as how each group values various aspects of team collaboration, engagement, and performance differently. Such insights are beneficial to both team members and leaders to create and motivate positive and productive teams in the workplace. These insights can also allow project managers and team members to find effective ways to collaborate and work with one another.

A review of intergenerational project team research also revealed that few studies addressed how Generation Z interacts and engages in generationally diverse teams. Therefore, while the literature discussed in this section provides insight into how older generations interact in a team setting, team members and leaders will need to closely and iteratively assess the needs, preferences, and values of these youngest project professionals. Findings from this study helped reveal such considerations for Generation Z and provide a deeper understanding of how intergenerational project team members and leaders can best collaborate toward engaged buy-in and performance.

Engaged Team Performance Research

The most successful projects are executed through teams that are collaborative and engaged to produce winning results (Starbird & Cavanagh, 2011). Consequently, many project team professionals and research studies focus on best practices and lessons learned to inspire team cohesion and engagement. Plenert (2012) discussed how engaged teams recognize problems that they identify as improvement opportunities, prioritize strategic objectives, select the most impactful course of actions, and develop an implementation plan. Furthermore, Atkinson (2016) espoused the importance of project leaders ensuring that key stakeholders know and deliver to their critical roles and responsibilities. The researcher contended that when strategic players understand the value they can uniquely deliver in carrying out strategy, teams are synergized and empowered to produce winning results (Atkinson, 2016). While these team performance experts did not specifically address generational considerations in their findings, such theories are applicable to project teams comprised of multiple diverse individuals.

Furthermore, project team experts Starbird and Cavanagh (2011) proposed many theories and best practices for engaged team performance. For instance, the experts recommend that the most effective teams should be comprised of a "diagonal slice" (p. 81) through business unit groups to ensure that diverse organizational roles are appropriately represented (Starbird & Cavanagh, 2011). They also contended that teams should be ideally comprised of approximately twelve or fewer leaders and producers, warning that larger groups are more prone to inefficient behaviors and practices (Starbird & Cavanagh, 2011). Based on these recommendations, not only should generational diversity be considered in project team composition, but also the diverse number of organizational roles represented.

As an important component of engaged team performance, the following subsections address the most recent literature surrounding group decision processes as well as the role of the project manager in team leadership. While this research does not specifically address group decision-making and leadership for generationally diverse teams, findings provide insight into processes and leadership behaviors that cultivate effective collaboration and performance. Therefore, the literature reviewed in these sub-sections provides insight into this study's research questions and sub-questions related to the most influential factors of team engagement and leadership.

Group (team) Decision-Making. Group decision processes can aid or impede effective decision-making (Krogerus & Tschappeler, 2017), which is relevant to generationally diverse project teams who must collaborate and make decisions as a group. Therefore, the following discussion evaluates the role of decision-making and associated processes in light of traditional, co-located project teams as well as special considerations for virtual teams that communicate remotely. Whether decision-making involves project teams of company executives or employees charged with implementing an organization's project or strategic plan, the following research reveals best practices and potential pitfalls to the group decision process.

Squara (2013) argued for the importance of a rational, systems-based approach to team decision-making. The researcher contended that teams will enjoy more cohesion and efficiency when following traditional decision models (Squara, 2013). Conversely, Organ and O'Flaherty (2016) explored decision-making processes in teams that balanced intuition with rational, analytical thinking. The researchers found that the uncertainty inherently associated with entrepreneurial ventures called for a greater reliance on intuitive decision-making approaches (Organ & O'Flaherty, 2016). At the conclusion of their study, the researchers found that

intuition-inspired decisions resulted in some positive team attributes such as confidence and cohesion, while other intuitive tendencies influenced negative team attributes and team conflict (Organ & O'Flaherty, 2016). Taken together, these studies supported the value of efficient, process-oriented decision models that allow room for intuition when project teams engage in decision-making that requires group buy-in and consensus.

However, Cervone (2015) warned that project teams can have a difficult time navigating the decision-making process, even when processes are well-defined. This is because teams sometimes find themselves failing to set priorities or undervaluing the significance of decisions in relation to the project's scope (Cervone, 2015). Therefore, while defined processes certainly support efficient group decision-making, teams should thoughtfully consider time constraints, the novelty of the situation, and the importance of a particular decision when making determinations as a group (Cervone, 2015). These findings provide a good litmus test for problem-solving and evaluating alternatives, especially in complex project circumstances.

Group Decision-Making in Virtual Project Teams. Studies also revealed that collaboration and decision-making can look differently in virtual project teams where members are not physically co-located. For instance, Acai et al. (2018) found that virtual teams enjoyed scheduling flexibility, the inclusion of members at remote sites, and enhanced idea generation. Alternatively, the researchers also found that virtual teams face unique decision-making challenges such as issues with planning and coordination, relational conflict, and perspective integration (Acai et al., 2018). Based on these results one can infer that generationally diverse project teams that collaborate virtually can enjoy many benefits that enhance creativity and provide opportunities for work-life balance. However, team members and leaders must also be careful to manage potential challenges for groups that are not able to meet face-to-face.

O'Neill et al. (2016) conducted a study on 65 teams performing a decision-making task to compare and contrast traditional and virtual teams. Study results showed that virtual teams were less efficient at decision-making than face-to-face teams when presented with the same decision-making task (O'Neill et al., 2016). Therefore, the researchers concluded that virtual teams may be at a disadvantage when approaching decision-making for scenarios where there is a known, objectively correct solution (O'Neill et al., 2016).

Finally, Zakaria (2017) researched special decision-making considerations for global, culturally diverse virtual teams. The researcher found that culture and cultural values play an increased role in influencing decision processes for problem identification, proposal making, and solutions in global virtual teams (Zakaria, 2017). While globally disperse virtual teams may be comprised of generationally diverse project team members, cultural diversity also plays a significant role in such teams.

The Role of the Project Manager in Project Team Leadership. Successful teams must be lead by a project or program manager that acts as both an internal support person and a visionary idea generator (Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2018). As one of the most cited studies in team leadership, Burke et al. (2006) examined the relationship between leadership behavior in teams and behaviorally-based team performance outcomes, finding that both task and person-focused leadership behaviors significantly influenced specific team performance outcomes. Such findings support the link between leaders who inspire team engagement and buy-in and positive team performance results.

Many recent research studies explore the role of emotional intelligence in leadership and project management. For instance, Alawneh and Sweis (2016) explored how the project manager's emotional intelligence influences successful project outcomes. The researchers found

that the emotional intelligence attributes of leadership behavior and self-awareness were most influential in predicting a project manager's effectiveness in approaching strategic project decision-making (Alawneh & Sweis, 2016). As such, these attributes are likely to be especially effective for project managers tasked with leading multi-generational teams.

Rezvani et al. (2016) also explored the role of the project leader's emotional intelligence in strategic project decision-making. After collecting data from 373 project managers, the authors found overwhelming support for their theory that the project manager's emotional intelligence greatly impacts their ability to navigate complex project situations and stakeholder relationships to produce successful project outcomes (Rezvani et al., 2016). Furthermore, the researchers also found that the emotional intelligence attributes of job satisfaction and trust were the most significant qualities for leaders to increase a project's chance of success in complex situations (Rezvani et al., 2016). As team communication and conflict resolution are among top research considerations for multi-generational teams, this study indicates the importance of the project leader's emotional intelligence in navigating such complexities.

Engaged Team Performance Research Summary. The previous discussion highlighted applicable research supporting best practices and considerations for engaged team performance. Many studies also established the link between team engagement, team performance, and successful project outcomes, which is significant to this research effort. Therefore, while most of the literature reviewed in this section did not specifically address intergenerational project teams, these studies support the importance of this research effort in exploring how Generation Z professionals are best engaged in multi-generational project teams as well as how project leaders can optimally lead intergenerational teams comprised of these youngest professionals.

Anticipated and Discovered Themes

Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed the importance of qualitative researchers practicing reflexivity to convey their background and experiences and how their experiences may anticipate or inform study interpretations. Accordingly, the researcher conducting this inquiry has a birth year that designates her as part of the Millennial generation. The researcher has also taught undergraduate business classes to Generation Z college students over the last seven years. Given the researcher's background and experience, themes were anticipated surrounding Generation's Z preferences for the prevailing influences of team dynamics revealed in the academic and professional literature.

For instance, the researcher anticipated Generation Z professionals' preference to communicate, at least in many instances, with teammates using technology, as Bencsik et al. (2016) found that Generation Z cohorts prefer knowledge sharing easily, rapidly, and publically on virtual platforms. Similarly, the researcher also anticipated that Generation Z project professionals preferred a creative approach to problem-solving and value open communication with teammates and project team managers. Accordingly, Lanier (2017) found that 51% of surveyed Generation Z cohorts preferred in-person communication with leaders to discuss feedback and other employee performance-related matters. Conversely, as a review of the literature did not reveal findings related to this youngest generation's approach to conflict management, the resesearcher did not anticipate themes in accordance with this component of team dynamics and engagement. Finally, the researcher anticipated that Generation Z professionals would value opportunites to advance social and envrionmental causes in their job roles as Generation Z highly values social entrepreneurship (Stewart, 2017), and a significant

portion of Generation Z professionals are willing to take a pay cut in return for working toward a mission that they identify with (Fatemi, 2018).

Summary of the Literature Review

This review sought to examine the current scholarly and professional literature surrounding generational workplace considerations for the five generations that currently co-exist in today's professional workforce, intergenerational project teams and engaged project team performance. Furthermore, while research pertaining to all five workplace generations was discussed, special emphasis was given to Generation Z, as the main focus of this research effort. As such, findings related to these generational cohorts, topics, and themes were thoroughly reviewed and summarized within this section.

The literature revealed that Veterans/ Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z each embrace different work values, professional development considerations, and leadership styles (Lawson & De Aquino, 2016). Due to these generations' life encounters and experiences, each cohort possesses its own uniqueness, morals, and attitudes regarding their careers and employment (Miranda & Allen, 2017). With a significant number of Baby Boomers expected to soon retire (McCollum & Na'Desh, 2015), and Generation Z predicted to outnumber Millennial employees by nearly one million (Stewart, 2017), organizations must prepare project leaders to effectively motivate and manage age-diverse project teams that span multiple generations.

While the literature is varied on the birth years delineating each generational cohort, most research references Generation Z as born between 1995 and 2010, with the youngest members graduating college in 2017 (Bencsik et al., 2016; Fatemi, 2018; Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Estimates suggest that Generation Z is 23 million strong, outnumbers Millennials by nearly one

million, and will comprise a significant portion of the workforce in the next decade (Stewart, 2017). While similarities exist between Generation Z and its predecessor Millennial generation, research also reveals significant differences (Bencsik et al., 2016; Stewart, 2017). Anantatmula and Shrivastav (2012) and Yildirim and Korkmaz (2017) studied project team evolution for Generation Y, however, there is a research gap in how Generation Z performs in a team setting (Burton et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Stanton (2017) stated that there is a need to examine cohort differences and implications for the behavior of multi-generational teams. Project management experts Gelbtuch and Morlan (2015) also espoused the importance of "generational competence" (p. 1) as part of the project team leadership component of the Project Management Institute (PMI) Talent Triangle™. Therefore, this study helped fill a gap in the current project management body of knowledge by providing deeper insight into how the youngest generation of project professionals influence intergenerational project team dynamics and are best engaged for collaboration and success.

The literature also revealed important considerations and themes for intergenerational project teams. Such considerations included multi-generation team dynamics, multi-generation team conflict, multi-generation team leadership, multi-generation team wages, and work environment, and multi-generation team commitment, with most studies focusing on dynamics and conflict. However, given the relatively small amount of time that Generation Z has been able to participate in the professional workforce, few studies addressed how Generation Z interacts and engages in generationally diverse teams. Furthermore, while the body of scholarly and professional literature surrounding intergenerational project teams is relatively small, the research discussed in this section provided significant insight to potential advantages and pitfalls

associated with generationally diverse teams as well as how each group values various aspects of team collaboration, engagement, and performance differently.

Finally, this review focused on the most salient literature surrounding engaged project team performance and best practices. While most of the research in this section did not specifically relate to generationally diverse teams, findings supported the importance of this research effort in exploring how Generation Z professionals are best engaged in multi-generational project teams as well as how project leaders can optimally lead intergenerational teams comprised of these youngest professionals. This research effort was thus firmly supported by the scholarly and professional literature reviewed in this sub-section.

This review provided a holistic picture of the current body of knowledge supporting the purpose of this study. Furthermore, the literature reviewed provided an essential foundation for solving the problem associated with this exploratory research effort. As such, the literature revealed that there was a significant need to examine how Generation Z professionals influence intergenerational project team dynamics and are best engaged in a project team environment.

Summary of Section 1 and Transition

This section examined the foundation for this research effort as a single site case study and explained its significance to project management academicians, practitioners, and persons of biblical faith. The rationale for selecting this inquiry design and methodology was also discussed, including assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The problem addressed by this study, the lack of knowledge in how Generation Z professionals influence multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement, was well established along with the study's intended purpose to add to the body of knowledge by exploring how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. In

addition, Section 1 provided the focus for the research effort by stating the research questions, sub-questions, conceptual framework, and key terms associated with the study. Finally, this section concluded with a thorough review of both scholarly and professional literature. The next section will discuss the research project in detail and reveal the research design, research method, and reliability of data collected.

Section 2: The Project

This qualitative case study investigated how the youngest workforce generation, Generation Z, impacts intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. The research effort sought to understand the perspectives of both Generation Z project team professionals as well as project team members and leaders representing other generational cohort groups who work on project teams with Generation Z members. Open-ended personal interviews were conducted with project team members and leaders through a single site case study research design. As such, the following section describes the research project and role of the researcher, research participants, the research method, and the research design. Additionally, this section will discuss the population sample, data collection methods, and data analysis methodologies in detail. The section will conclude with a discussion of the reliability and validity of the data to be collected.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study analysis was to add to the body of knowledge by exploring how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. This larger problem was explored through an in-depth investigation of how Generation Z cohorts influence multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement at a multinational technology organization located in the southeastern United States. Gelbtuch and Morlan (2015) called for project leaders to understand how multi-generational teams can best work together effectively. Anantatmula and Shrivastav (2012) contended that insights into how generations work best together enable project managers to effectively lead and motivate project teams. Zhang and Guo (2019) espoused that project leaders must manage knowledge and skill diversity on cross-functional teams to break down

communication and cooperation barriers. By gaining a deeper understanding of how Generation Z professionals are best motivated toward team synergy, project managers can better influence buy-in and cohesion for successful project outcomes.

Motivation for this proposed study was based on past research findings that suggested differences exist between the two youngest workforce generations, however little was known about how Generation Z impacts workplace team dynamics (Bencsik et al., 2016; Stewart, 2017). Furthermore, there is little research published on Generation Z in a project team setting, as the newest generational cohort to launch their professional careers. Therefore, this research effort will help project managers strengthen their leadership skills to lead and motivate teams comprised of multiple generations that include Generation Z representatives.

Role of the Researcher

A hallmark characteristic of qualitative studies is the researcher's role as a key data collection instrument (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2014) postulated that case study research design places more demands on the intellect, ego, and emotion of the researcher than any other design. The case study research expert attributes these demands to the dynamic nature of the research process and its inability to be routinized for an assistant or other party to assist in data collection (Yin, 2014). While quantitative studies typically rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers, qualitative researchers personally collect data through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants utilizing open-ended questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Given these recommendations, the researcher played a prominent role in this study and was responsible for identifying and contacting research participants as well as scheduling participant interviews. The researcher also practiced the attributes recommended by Yin (2014)

of asking good questions, being a good listener, having a good grasp of the issues being studied, staying adaptive to newly encountered situations, and avoiding research bias. To accomplish this, interview questions were developed by the researcher to moderate semi-structured interviews that also allowed for follow-up interview questions and the collection of insightful data. The researcher also made every effort to ensure that initial interview questions were consistent throughout the interview sessions. Additionally, the researcher utilized data provided by the researched institution's human resources department to determine the selection of participants according to generational cohort to mitigate the potential for research bias in selecting the population. The researcher also collected and analyzed data within the confines of the conceptual framework and in comparison with the scholarly and professional literature.

While the researcher played a prominent role in data collection and analysis, she made every effort to mitigate research bias and remain objective throughout the research effort. As Creswell and Poth (2018) described, qualitative researchers must continually focus on the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or phenomenon, not the meaning that the researcher brings to the study or writes from the literature. While qualitative researchers do position themselves in the research study, they must take special care to identify and convey multiple diverse participant perspectives and views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, the researcher in this study committed to reporting diverse perspectives, identifying multiple contributing factors to emerging situations, and providing a holistic picture of findings that are founded in participants' viewpoints and experiences.

To further mitigate research bias, Yin (2014) stressed the importance of case study researchers utilizing an analytic strategy that harnesses the researcher's rigorous empirical thinking along with sufficient presentation of evidence and thorough consideration of alternative

interpretations. The case study research expert also recommends the use of research software for storing text, audio, and video data as well as coding and categorizing large amounts of data (Yin, 2014). As such the researcher utilized the qualitative software tool NVivo for data collection, storage, and coding. However, while such tools assisted in data management and analysis, rich and full data exploration and interpretation was still the researcher's primary responsibility.

Finally, since case studies explore human affairs as a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context (Yin, 2014), qualitative researcher experts emphasize the importance of conducting case study inquiry in a manner that stresses the highest ethical standards (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). As such, the researcher took every precaution to ensure the ethical protection of participants. Yin (2014) recommended that case study researchers take extra care and sensitivity when protecting participants by gaining informed consent from all persons who might be associated with the study as well as ensuring that participants are selected equitably so that no groups are unfairly included or excluded from the research. As discussed, the researcher utilized data provided from the organization's human resource department to recruit participants based on their associated generational cohort group and alleviate the potential for bias.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research method and case study design to examine, interpret, and understand how Generation Z project team members influence multi-generational project team dynamics and are best motivated and engaged in a project team setting. Qualitative research methods pursue deep understanding of how humans describe their experiences in the context of historical, social, and political settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For the purposes of this study, little is known about how this youngest professional generational cohort performs in an intergenerational project team setting. Therefore, the study required an in-depth understanding

of perceptions and experiences that can best be obtained through qualitative research (Yin, 2014).

Of the multiple approaches to qualitative inquiry, Yin (2014) recommends case study design for "how" and "why" questions that investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context. As such, case study design was deemed most appropriate to explore how generational differences between Generation Z cohorts and team members representing older generations impact various aspects of project team dynamics. The following subsections further discuss and justify the method and design deemed most suitable for providing insight into this business problem.

Discussion of Flexible Design

This qualitative research study employed a single site case study design. This design is well-suited for conducting in-depth investigations and research pertaining to current events (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, this design explores a case within its real-life, contemporary context or setting (Yin, 2014), such as a small group or organization (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Case study research is particularly effective when the study seeks to explain a contemporary phenomenon and when research questions require a thorough description of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2015). While some case studies involve several cases for data analysis, research involving multiple case studies are used to reveal support for theory replication or to provide contrasting results (Yin, 2014). As such, the business problem underlying this research effort were explored through a single site case study.

When selecting a single site case study, Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended that researchers identify a case that is that it is bounded within parameters such as certain people, location, and timeframe in which the case is studied. Therefore, an organization that utilizes

project teams comprised of multi-generational cohorts for software implementation and training was identified for this research effort. As information technology is a popular career choice for younger generations of professionals (Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017), the organization and project team selected for this research effort provided valuable insight to the business problem explored.

Case study design relies on direct observation, interviews, and artifacts to collect data and seek understanding (Yin, 2014). As such, this design is commonly utilized in both academic and professional literature exploring team dynamics. For instance, based on a comprehensive literature review analysis, Burton et al. (2019) cited case study design as the most widely used research methodology in studies involving intergenerational team dynamics for previous workplace generations. Furthermore, case study design has been utilized to explore team collaboration and collective learning (Ohlsson, 2013) and team dynamics in geographically dispersed virtual teams (Dixon, 2017). This design has been utilized in research studies exploring information technology project teams as well (Aza, 2017). These and other examples found in multiple facets of project team research provide a precedent for case study design as the most appropriate methodology for this effort.

Discussion of Method

According to Stake (2010), flexible, qualitative research methods are aimed at microanalysis and seek to understand the intricacies of personal experience and human interaction. Such methods explore a central phenomenon (or topic) by reporting participants' voices, going to the setting (or context) to collect data, watching a process unfold, focusing on a small number of people or sites, developing complex understanding, lifting the voices of marginalized populations, and creating multiple views of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2016). Furthermore, qualitative researchers do not begin with a hypothesis. Instead, research questions

and data collection evolve throughout the study which includes quotations from participants and author remarks as to how their own experience and background influences study interpretations (Creswell, 2016).

While certain design methods cannot be pinpointed to any one business industry or discipline, fixed methods designs are more often seen in logistics planning and certain aspects of operations management that rely on numerical data analysis to improve production and efficiency (Briskorn & Dienstknecht, 2018; Hosseini et al., 2019). Conversely, flexible design is more commonly associated with exploring topics related to human resource management (Hargrove et al., 2015), leadership development (Anthony, 2017), team dynamics (Wang & Wang, 2017), and business ethics (Reinecke et al., 2016). As such, a qualitative approach was best suited to gain a deeper understanding of how Generation Z is best engaged in multi-generational project teams and draw conclusions from a practical perspective.

Data for this qualitative study was primarily be collected through open-ended interviews that have the potential to provide in-depth information and understanding of research participant perspectives (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). Interviews were conducted with participants including both Generation Z and other generational team cohorts to ensure that findings represent multiple perspectives on the topic as well as diverse views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, as qualitative research typically involves multiple forms of data for triangulation and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018), data were also collected through observation and meaningful project documentation such as interview transcripts and field notes to create a holistic approach to the problem explored.

Summary of Research Methodology

A qualitative, single-site case study method and design were selected for this research effort, as this approach is well-suited for exploring and understanding human perspectives. Furthermore, case studies are most often concerned with understanding current events from the perspectives of participants that have experienced the researched event or phenomenon within its real-world context or setting (Yin, 2014). As such, this method and design were necessary for satisfying the research questions and sub-questions guiding this inquiry.

Participants

Unlike quantitative research analysis, qualitative research design necessitates the purposeful selection of research participants (Creswell, 2014). Such intentionality in participant and site selection best helps the researcher to understand the problem and the research question to collect meaningful data (Creswell, 2016). Furthermore, research participants must possess meaningful experience with the phenomenon being explored as well as be qualified to answer the research question (Sargeant, 2012). As such, participants were qualified for this study based on the generational cohort group that they represent as well as their organizational assignment to a project team comprised of multiple generational representatives, including Generation Z.

The organization's human resources department provided the information required to identify research participants as well as gain access to the members of the research population. For the purposeful selection of both Generation Z project team professionals as well as project team members representing other generational cohort groups, employee names and email addresses of intergenerational project team members were included in the data provided by the human resources department, with Generation Z employees designated. Furthermore, while Creswell (2014) recommended limiting case study inquiries to approximately three to ten

qualified research participants for an in-depth analysis of significant details and data, the researcher selected a participant sample size of 17 participants to allow room for saturation to occur.

Finally, Creswell (2014) recommended that the researcher disclose their role in the study to research participants as well as ensure that participants understand the true reason and purpose of the study. Such disclosure helps to ensure that the study is conducted in a highly ethical manner. Therefore, the researcher complied with these recommendations. Creswell (2014) also advised that researchers notify participants of the level and type of participant involvement as well as any potential benefits or risks of participating in the study. Participants should also receive guaranteed confidentiality and assurance that they can withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell, 2014). As such, the researcher ensured that all participants were provided these assurances both in writing on the participant consent form and verbally at the beginning of each participant interview to ensure that expectations were appropriately communicated and understood.

Population and Sampling

This section provides an in-depth discussion of the research population, sample population, and sampling method for this research effort. It also describes and defends the sample size and type of research methodology utilized for an in-depth exploration of the business problem that this study addresses. Eligibility criteria, screening methods, and associated rationale are also revealed to ensure the satisfaction of established criteria in selecting study participants. Finally, this section explains the relevance of characteristics for the sample to be collected to satisfy the research questions and sub-questions guiding this study.

Discussion of Population

The population of interest for this study was intergenerational project team members representing Generation Z as well as other generational cohorts currently represented in the professional workforce who currently served on project teams with Generation Z members. Such intergenerational project team members provided the knowledge, opinions, and insights required to explore how Generation Z influences intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged in a project team setting. While literature is somewhat varied on the exact birth years demarcating each generational group, Table 1 outlines the population birth years utilized for this study based on literature review findings. As such, research participants were selected and categorized according to generational cohort based on these birth year demarcations.

Table 1

Generational Cohorts by Birth Year

Generation	Birth years
Generation Z	Individuals born between 1995 and 2010.
Generation Y / Millennials	Individuals born between 1980 and 1994.
Generation X	Individuals born between 1965 and 1979.
Baby Boomers	Individuals born between 1946 and 1964.
Veterans / Traditionalists	Individuals born between 1922 and 1945.

Discussion of Sampling

Unlike quantitative studies that rely on probability samples to determine statistical inferences to a population, qualitative research necessitates purposeful sampling that

intentionally selects individuals or sites that best inform the researcher about the research

problem under examination (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, the focus in qualitative research

was less on the size of the sample and more on selecting the sample that gives the best and most

in-depth information about the researched event or phenomenon (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). Given

this qualitative research notion of sampling, there is no rule of thumb for selecting the

appropriate sample size for a certain design (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). Instead, qualitative

researchers may sample at the site level, event or process level, and at the participant level to

collect extensive detail about each site or individual studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

When conducting a single-case study, defining the unit of measurement (the case itself) is

a significant step in selecting the sample that most appropriately allows in-depth exploration of

the researched event or phenomenon within its real-world context (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2014). As

such, the selected case must be relevant to and representative of the issues and questions of

interest (Yin, 2014). Information technology organizations commonly utilize projects to

accomplish various internal and client-centered objectives and are also a popular career choice

for younger generations of professionals (Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017). Therefore, the single case

determined most appropriate for this study was a technology organization that utilizes project

teams comprised of Generation Z and older generational cohorts to accomplish organizational

objectives and client deliverables in the southeastern region of the United States.

Given the emphasis on representative case selection over sample size in case study

design, there is no standard participant sample number for conducting case study research (Njie

& Asimiran, 2014; Stake 2010; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) recommended at least one participant for

conducting case study research whereas other case studies have involved interviews or surveys

from over 100 participants (Stake, 2010). Many research efforts utilizing case study design

include between fifteen and thirty participants (Creswell, 2016; Yin, 2015). As such, the researcher must not only determine the most appropriate case but also the number of participants that best provide insight into the real-life contemporary phenomenon. Therefore, to effectively explore this phenomenon, the researcher will selected seven generation Z project professionals and ten non-generation Z project professionals representing other generational cohorts that are current members of intergenerational project teams that include Generation Z project team members. This participant goal allowed the researcher to interview 17 participants with interviews continuing until saturation was achieved.

The researcher defined the eligibility criteria for study participants to engage in purposeful sampling as recommended by Stake (2010) and Creswell and Poth (2018) as it is necessary to collect data from project team individuals that represent both Generation Z and other generational cohorts. Research participants were first selected based on their associated generational cohort according to the birth year demarcations previously established in this study. Generation Z research participants were further selected according to the following criteria established by the researcher: (a) at least 18 years old or older, (b) verified employment at the selected research organization, (c) active participation in an intergenerational project team that contains employees representing at least one other generational cohort group, and (d) willingness to share perspectives and experiences in an honest and detailed manner. Non-generation Z research participants were further selected according to the following criteria established by the researcher: (a) at least 18 years old or older, (b) verified employment at the selected research organization, (c) active participation in an intergenerational project team that contains at least one Generation Z employee, and (d) willingness to share perspectives and experiences in an honest and detailed manner.

The researcher also engaged in purposeful sampling by screening participants. Accordingly, two levels of participant screening were utilized. Acting as a gatekeeper, the research institution's human resources department pre-screened the participant population according to the required criteria and provided the researcher with a list of names and email addresses of full-time employees to recruit via email communication. While the research institution did not supply the birth dates or years for the participant population, project team members whose birth years designated them as Generation Z were provided to the researcher prior to beginning recruitment. This allowed the researcher to identify the number of Generation Z versus Non-Generation Z project team professionals who volunteered to participate in the study prior to scheduling and conducting participant interviews.

The researcher was then responsible for implementing and fulfilling the second level of screening by sending email messages to the project team members provided by the human resources department. A copy of the participant consent form was attached to the recruitment email for participants to review and return with their signature. Potential research participants were asked to respond via email if they were willing to participate in a one-hour interview. Upon receiving the participant response email and signed consent form, the researcher coordinated with the participant to schedule the interview date and time via email. A copy of the participant recruitment email template can be found in Appendix B. The researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to receiving the list of potential participants from the research institution's human and resources department and beginning participant recruitment. All IRB protocols for obtaining participant consent and data security were followed accordingly.

Summary of Population and Sampling

The population of interest for this study was intergenerational project team members representing Generation Z as well as other generational cohorts currently represented in the professional workforce who served on teams with Generation Z members. As a critical component of case study research design, the researcher selected a site (or case) that most appropriately allowed in-depth exploration of the researched event or phenomenon within its real-world context (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2014). The researcher also engaged in purposeful sampling, as consistent with previous scholarly case study research to ensure the selection of participants that best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination. Finally, a two-level screening process as well as eligibility requirements were implemented to ensure that participants are well-positioned to share their perspectives and experiences applicable to this effort.

Data Collection and Organization

Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasized the importance of thoughtful, ethical data collection when conducting qualitative research. Furthermore, Yin (2014) and Creswell and Poth (2018) stressed the significance of purposeful sampling that allows the researcher to select a site and participants that best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination. Accordingly, the following sub-sections discuss the instruments, data collection techniques, and data organization techniques that will best provide insight into how Generation Z, project professionals influence multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement.

Instruments

One of the fundamental characteristics of qualitative design is the role of the researcher as a key instrument in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, qualitative researchers are

responsible for collecting data through interviewing participants, observing behaviors, and examining documents. Unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers do not rely on survey questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers but instead use an instrument comprised of interview questions that are designed by the researcher themselves (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Accordingly, the researcher in this study served as the sole data collection instrument and utilized personal interviews and field notes as primary data collection methods.

The researcher designed interview guides and initial interview questions which can be found in the appendices section of this study. Two separate interview guides and question sets were developed so that Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals were asked different questions. This allowed a rich understanding of how Generation Z approaches multiple facets of intergenerational project team dynamics and engagement as well as how other generational cohorts experience and perceive intergenerational project teams to be influenced by this youngest workforce generation. Separate interview guides and questions were also best suited for addressing the research questions and sub-questions guiding this study. While complete interview guides can be found in Appendices C and D, the following subsections discuss specific interview questions and how they relate to this study's research questions, sub-questions, and problem statement.

Interview Questions. Creswell (2104) and Yin (2014) observed interviews as the primary method for understanding a contemporary event, case, or phenomenon within its real-world context. As such, interview questions were determined based on this study's problem statement that there is a lack of knowledge in how Generation Z, the newest and youngest workforce generation, influences multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement. To

gain insight into this problem, the researcher chose a semi-structured interview format that began with established questions but allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions that are unique to the interviewee's response (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Accordingly, interview questions were designed to allow both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals the opportunity to share in-depth information about their experience with the researched phenomenon.

The first research question guiding this study inquired as to how Generation Z cohorts influence project team dynamics on multi-generational project teams. Sub-questions related to this question explored multiple considerations of intergenerational project team dynamics such as communication styles and preferences, conflict resolution, and interaction with project team members representing older generations. To gain insight into these inquires, the following interview questions were be asked of Generation Z project professionals:

1. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your communication styles and preferences for project team communication?

2. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your preferences for effective team/group decision-making?

3. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your preferences for effective team conflict management?

The second research question guiding this study inquired as to how Generation Z cohorts were best engaged on multi-generational project teams. Sub-questions related to this question explored multiple considerations of intergenerational project team engagement such as motivation for team engagement, how Generation Z cohorts view and value other generations, and how other generations view and value Generation Z project professionals. To gain insight

into these inquires, the following interview questions were asked of Generation Z project professionals:

1. Please describe the project team environment that you work best in and how you may or may not have experienced this environment as a Generation Z project professional on an intergenerational team.

2. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding communication with project team members belonging to other generations.

3. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding team/group decision-making within intergenerational project teams.

4. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding conflict with project team members belonging to other generations.

To gain further insight to these questions and sub-questions, the following interview questions were asked of Non-Generation Z project professionals:

1. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding communication within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

2. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding team/group decision-making within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

3. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding conflict within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

4. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding effective project leadership actions or behaviors in motivating an intergenerational project team that contains Generation Z project professionals.

The final research question guiding this study inquired as to how project managers can best lead a multi-generational project team that includes Generation Z team members. Sub-questions related to this question explored leadership actions or behaviors that resonate with Generation Z project professionals. To gain insight into these inquires, the following interview questions were asked of Generation Z project professionals:

1. As a Generation Z project professional, what project leadership actions or behaviors do you find most effective?

2. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding effective project leadership actions or behaviors in motivating an intergenerational project team.

The researcher also asked follow-up questions based on initial dialogue and collected responses. Responses to initial and follow up questions were transcribed verbatim for data collection and analysis. Additionally, the researcher developed and collected field notes, observed participants, secured data, and ensured participant confidentiality.

Field Notes. Creswell and Poth (2018) and Yin (2014) also observed the collection of field notes as an important source of data collection in qualitative research design. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), field notes assist in proper data analysis by allowing the researcher to share their thoughts and observations throughout interview sessions and add depth to each interview. Accordingly, field notes were collected as an opportunity for the researcher to document thoughts and observations that provide meaningful context to interview sessions.

Data Collection Techniques. The researcher conducted all participant interviews via Zoom video conferencing software, due to workplace and social restrictions associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic. Interview sessions were scheduled in advance and the researcher ensured that participants have signed and returned the consent form found in Appendix B before the start of the interview. While data surrounding the effectiveness of utilizing online videoconferencing services to collect qualitative interview is in its infancy, recent studies suggest the viability of Zoom for such analysis due to its ease of use, data management features, and security options (Archibald et al., 2019). Accordingly, Zoom's videoconferencing capabilities allowed the researcher to conduct interview observations similar to an in-person setting.

The researcher served as the sole interviewer and recorded each session for thorough data collection and analysis. Interview sessions followed a semi-structured interview format per the interview guides found in Appendices C and D. Accordingly, interviewees were informed of the official beginning and conclusion of each session and associated recording. Upon completion of the interview, sessions were transcribed verbatim for data collection and analysis. Additionally, research participants were provided a copy of the verbatim interview transcripts to review for accuracy and, if necessary, provide additional information or clarifying statements. A copy of the interview transcripts for all Generation Z participant interviews is found in Appendix G and a copy of the interview transcripts for all Non-Generation Z participant interviews is found in Appendix H.

Field notes that accompanied each interview session were also documented and collected. Such field notes were dated and connected to each interview and allowed the researcher to share meaningful thoughts and observations throughout the interview, as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). To assist in this data collection process, the researcher created two field note

documentation forms to be utilized before, during, and immediately following each participant interview. Two separate field note documentation forms were developed since interviews for Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals contain different questions. Copies of the field note documentation forms can be found in Appendices E and F.

Data Organization Techniques. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) evangelized the importance of considering data organization strategies in advance of data collection. Such strategies allow the researcher to collect, organize, and retrieve data in an efficient manner that enriches findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Accordingly, the data collected in this study through interviews and field notes was organized in a way that allow the researcher to manage findings efficiently and securely. The researcher also utilized Zoom's data management and security options to securely record interviews and aid in the development of verbatim interview transcripts.

Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) and Yin (2014) recommended computer programs such as NVivo as an effective tool for assisting researchers in organizing, managing, and coding qualitative data in an efficient manner. Therefore, the researcher in this study selected NVivo to assist in the storage, organization, and analysis of all collected data. The researcher used this computer program based on its functionality to edit text, record notes and memos, retrieve text, and manipulate nodes and categories (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

Before beginning the data collection phase of this study, file folders were created on the researcher's individual computer to organize interview and field note data. Folders were first organized according to participant type (Generation Z or Non-Generation Z project professional). Subfolders were then be created for each interview and associated field notes. To secure data, the personal computer was password protected and a second password was required to open file folders containing interview and field note data. Access to the secure data was limited to the

researcher and, upon request, the program director and members of the researcher's doctoral committee.

Interviews were recorded via Zoom's secure recoding capabilities and stored within the researcher's password-protected personal computer. Field notes were handwritten during interview sessions and scanned to appropriate password-protected sub-folder upon interview completion. Original field note documents will be kept in a lockable desk drawer in the researcher's personal home office and shredded approximately three years after the research study's conclusion, in accodance with IRB's recommendation. In summary, primary data organization strategies and techniques for this study involved the use of a computer program and database that prioritized secure data storage and efficient retrieval and analysis.

Summary of Data Collection and Organization

The qualitative researcher conducting this inquiry acted a key instrument in this study and was solely responsible for collecting data through semi-structured participant interviews and accompanying field notes. Interview questions were designed to allow both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals the opportunity to share in-depth information about their experience with the researched phenomenon. Upon participant consent, all interview questions and responses were recorded and transcribed verbatim for thorough review and analysis. Field notes were also collected as an opportunity for the researcher to document thoughts and observations that provided meaningful context to interview sessions and enriched the collected data. Finally, all data will was organized securely through multiple password protection to ensure the anonymity and protection of study participants.

Data Analysis

Case study research design allows the qualitative researcher to explore a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context (Yin, 2014). The context of this research effort was a division of a global information technology company located in the southeastern United States where the researcher collected and interpreted data. Furthermore, collected data must be evaluated in light of the study's research question and help explain the experienced phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Accordingly, the purposeful sampling of research participants allowed data to be collected and interpreted in an effort to satisfy this study's research questions and sub-questions as well as fulfill its intended purpose.

Before conducting qualitative data collection and analysis, qualitative researchers must practice personal bracketing to preserve data integrity (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017). The researcher must also engage in bracketing throughout the data collection and analysis process in an effort to set aside personal experiences and much as possible so that participants' experiences and perspectives of the researched phenomenon transcend (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Accordingly, the researcher conducting this study engaged in personal bracketing before and throughout data collection and analysis efforts.

In addition to bracketing, qualitative researchers must also practice reflexivity when conducting data analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this practice, researchers "position themselves" (p. 44) within the study to convey their background and experiences, how their experiences inform study interpretations, and what they have to gain from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, the researcher conducting this case study practiced reflexivity as recommended by Yin (2014) as well as Creswell and Poth (2018).

While data collection and analysis are emergent when employing qualitative research design (Stake, 2010), Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended the "Data Analysis Spiral" (pp. 186-187) when examining and interpreting data. As such, this process entails managing and organizing data, reading and memoing emergent ideas, describing and classifying codes into themes, developing and assessing interpretations, and representing and visualizing the data. Accordingly, the researcher conducting this inquiry followed this model when engaging in data analysis activities. Data were managed and organized, as previously outlined, in a way that allowed the researcher to manage findings efficiently and securely. Password-protected data file folders were created on the researcher's individual computer to organize interview and field note data. Folders were first be organized according to participant type (Generation Z or Non-Generation Z project professional). Subfolders were then created and organized by participant and then by interview question to identify emerging patterns and themes resulting from interview verbatim transcripts.

The use of semi-structured interview questions allowed for real-time data analysis as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). Field note forms found in the appendices sections of this document were utilized for documenting emergent ideas during and immediately following participant interview sessions. The researcher also used these forms for sketching reflective thinking and identifying themes as they emerged. In addition to real-time data analysis, the researcher reviewed verbatim interview transcripts and field notes to identify commons issues, patterns, and themes. Research participants were also provided a copy of verbatim interview transcripts to review for accuracy and, if necessary, provide additional information or clarifying statements. Additional interview information and clarifying statements were also included in data analysis if provided by the participant. Transcript data, clarifying statements,

and any additionally provided information were compared to the researcher's field notes to triangulate data as advocated by Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014). Field note and interview data were analyzed in light of this study's framework and informed the data coding process as recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018).

Coding Themes

Case study researchers may organize themes chronologically, according to similarities and differences, or within a theoretical model (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Stake (2010), a detailed description of the case emerges through data collection and analysis as the researcher details certain aspects such as day-to-day activities and chronology of events. Yin (2015) recommended identifying issues within the case and looking for common themes when conducting case study analysis. Creswell and Poth (2018) also asserted that the identification of case themes is key when evaluating case study data. Accordingly, the researcher conducting data analysis for this study identified issues and common themes that evolved from participant interviews, including verbatim interview transcripts, and associated field notes.

Creswell and Poth (2018) described the "constant comparative" method of data coding and analysis whereby information from data collection is continually compared to emerging categories. To begin this process, the researcher begins with open coding for major categories and information (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Glaser (1992) advocated the importance of open coding in qualitative research to allow processes, concepts, and interactions to emerge before applying an organizing framework. Strauss and Corbin (1998) advocated the use of axial coding where the researcher identifies one open coding category of focus (the phenomenon) and then creates categories around the core phenomenon. Such categories consist of causal conditions (factors that caused the researched phenomenon), strategies (actions in response to the

researched phenomenon), contextual and intervening conditions (situational factors influencing the strategies), and consequences (outcomes from the strategies; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

While Strauss and Corbin (1998) asserted that these predetermined categories improve data analysis and reliability, Glaser (1992) argued that an open coding approach more accurately and organically allows common themes to develop. Accordingly, the researcher conducting this study utilized an open coding approach to allow codes to be driven by conceptual interests that emerged from the data, as recommended by Glaser (1992). This process allowed the researcher to reduce interview and field note data into meaningful segments and accordingly assign names for data comparison and analysis. Codes were assigned to units of text, images, and recordings as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018). The use of NVivo qualitative data software assisted the researcher in the coding process for rich data exploration and evaluation.

As themes and associated codes emerged, the researcher will interpreted findings to provide deep insight into how Generation Z influences intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged in a project team environment. Semi-structured interview questions were written for both Generation Z and non-Generation Z project professionals to inquire about the aspects of project team dynamics found in the literature including intergenerational project team communication, team/group decision making, conflict management, and leadership actions and behaviors. Accordingly, interview questions asked of Generation Z project professionals explored the essence of this generation's preferences and experiences as members of intergenerational project teams as well as their perceptions of how other generations are engaged and interact in project team settings. Semi-structured interview questions for non-generation Z project professionals sought to understand how older generational cohorts observe, perceive, and experience the same aspects of project team engagement found in the literature with Generation

Z teammates. Responses to interview questions were examined for common issues and themes and interpreted in light of the research question and sub-questions to fulfill the purpose of this study.

Summary of Data Analysis

The goal of this study's data analysis strategy was the identification of core themes that helped explain individuals' observations, experiences, and perceptions of the research phenomenon. Accordingly, common patterns and themes were identified through triangulation of real-time interview field notes, interview transcript analysis, participant interview transcript comments and approval, and field note review. Utilizing an open coding strategy, emerging patterns were coded, organized, and evaluated utilizing NVivo qualitative data software in a way that allowed the researcher to manage findings efficiently and securely. Finally, the researcher engaged in bracketing and reflexivity before and throughout the data collection and analysis to minimize personal experiences and perceptions related to the research phenomenon.

Reliability and Validity

In scholarly research, reliability and validity are correlated with the credibility and quality of the research study (Yin, 2014). While quantitative research studies utilize statistical methods for demonstrating reliability and validity, such methods are not suitable for qualitative research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2014) recommended that case study research be judged through a four-test framework of construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. This framework, as well as many others proposed by the qualitative research community is aimed at ensuring the trustworthiness, authenticity, dependability, and confirmability of the research effort (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Accordingly, this section will address reliability and validity strategies for this study and its associated findings.

Reliability

According to Yin (2014), case study research design defines reliability as the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the operations of the study, such as data collection procedures, can be repeated with the same results. To accomplish this, Yin (2014) recommended that the researcher make as many steps as operational as possible to "conduct the research as if someone were looking over your shoulder" (p. 49) and able to repeat the procedures to arrive at the same results. The researcher in this study constructed separate interview guides, found in the appendices of this document, for Generation Z and non-Generation Z project professionals to operationalize the data collection process. Such guides provided a script for the researcher to follow to ensure that questions were asked of participants in a consistent manner and allowed participants the opportunity to answer the same initial questions.

Furthermore, the participant recruitment and selection process for this study was operationalized to follow these procedures in a consistent manner. As such, the participants were recruited and selected by utilizing the recruitment email template also found in the appendix section of this document. This process enabled the consistent application of purposeful sampling that provided rich data exploration and analysis.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized the importance of triangulation of data sources and methods to establish credibility. Yin (2014) also espoused the importance of multiple data sources to enhance the understanding of the research phenomenon's context. Accordingly, the researcher utilized this technique through triangulation of real-time interview evaluation, field notes, interview transcript analysis, participant interview transcript comments and approval, and field note review. Such practices enabled the researcher to provide thick descriptions that ensured findings were transferable between the researcher and those being studied.

Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasized the use of coding to enhance reliability in qualitative research. As such, the experts recommend that the researcher establish a common platform for coding and developing a primary code list that is consistently administered through a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software package (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher in this study utilized NVivo to facilitate the coding and subsequent organization of all collected data including interview transcripts and field notes.

Finally, the researcher engaged in data collection until enough information was gathered to saturate the model. Creswell (2014) postulated that saturation for qualitative inquiry is achieved between 15 and 60 participant interviews. Accordingly, the researcher selected seven Generation Z project professionals and ten Non-Generation Z project professionals representing other generational cohorts that were current members of intergenerational project teams that included Generation Z project team members. This participant goal allowed the researcher to interview 17 participants, with interviews continuing until saturation was achieved.

Validity

The qualitative research community has many differing perspectives on the importance of validation, as well as the procedures for establishing it (Creswell, 2014). Lather (1991) identified four types of validation: triangulation, construct validation, face validation, and catalytic validation. Wolcott (2008), on the other hand, prioritizes "understanding" over validation in his qualitative research efforts. Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended that qualitative researchers engage at least two levels of validation strategies in any given study. According to the qualitative research experts, these validation strategies are categorized by the researcher's lens, participant's lens, and the reader's or reviewer's lens, according to the group the strategy represents (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The researcher conducting this effort engaged in all three levels of validation strategy. Validation was achieved through the researcher's lens by triangulation of multiple data sources and engaging in reflexivity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher engaged in triangulation by corroboration and consistent coding of evidence and themes that emerge from interview transcripts and field notes. As such, insights emerging from triangulation of data informed the researcher's interpretation and writing. The researcher also practiced reflexivity by disclosing her own biases, values, and experiences that she brought to the study as a former project manager in the technology industry who also works with members of Generation Z in her current vocation. By clarifying any possible research bias from the outset of the study, the reader can understand the position from which the researcher approaches inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Such validation techniques allowed readers for this study to gain perspective of any experiences that may have shaped the researcher's approach and interpretation.

Validation was be achieved through the participant's lens by seeking participant validation and feedback (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered this technique to be "the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Accordingly, participants were asked to review interview transcripts and the researcher's interpretation of interview responses. To facilitate this process, research participants were provided a copy of the verbatim interview transcripts to review for accuracy and, if necessary, provide additional information or clarifying statements. By engaging in this level of validation strategy, the researcher made every effort to reflect participants' experiences, opinions, and interpretations in an accurate manner.

Finally, validation was achieved through the reader's lens by generating a rich, thick description of the researcher's interpretation and findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to

Stake (2010), "a description is rich if it provides abundant, interconnected details" (p. 49) that allow the reader to transfer information to other settings. Accordingly, the researcher engaged in this practice by describing participants and the research setting in a detailed manner as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). This practice allowed readers the opportunity to connect and apply the findings associated with this study to similar project management team environments.

Summary of Reliability and Validity

While quantitative research relies on statistical methods for demonstrating reliability and validity, this study implemented a series of reliability and validation techniques consistent with qualitative research methodology. A standardized participant recruitment process, as well as scripted interview guides, ensured that participants were given the same opportunity to express their perspectives and experiences working on intergenerational project teams. Furthermore, the participant interview transcript review process as well as triangulation of data sources aided the researcher in collecting and interpreting data in a way that accurately reflects the perspectives and experiences of both Generation Z and non-Generation Z participants. These and other reliability and validity practices discussed within this section supported the credibility and quality of this research effort.

Summary of Section 2 and Transition

This section provided an in-depth discussion of how the research study will be conducted and fulfill this study's purpose to explore how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. Since this effort sought to understand the perspectives of both Generation Z project team professionals as well as project team members and leaders representing other generational cohort groups, great care was taken to

describe the role of the researcher as well as the careful, unbiased recruitment and selection of participants. Furthermore, this section provided a rich discussion of the qualitative method and design selected for this inquiry as well as population and sampling, data collection, and data analysis techniques. The section concluded with a comprehensive analysis of the reliability and validity procedures to be implemented that support the credibility and quality of this study and its associated findings. Each of the research study techniques and strategies discussed in this section is founded in both scholarly and professional literature as consistent with qualitative case study research best practices and seek to fulfill the purpose of this study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

This section culminates the findings and formative implications of this qualitative single site case study. Furthermore, Section 3 outlines how this study attempted to address the research problem that inspired this research effort. The research problem under examination was that there is a lack of knowledge in how Generation Z, the newest and youngest workforce generation, influences multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement. To address this problem and gain deeper insight, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews containing open-ended questions with seven Generation Z project professionals (birth years 1995 – 1998) and 10 project professionals representing older generations who currently work on teams with Generation Z colleagues at a division of a global information technology company located in the southeastern United States.

Accordingly, Section 3 begins with an overview of this study and how it was conducted utilizing a flexible qualitative research design. Findings are presented with important themes identified from both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals. To further illustrate and communicate findings, these themes are interpreted as well as detailed and represented visually for deeper understanding. Key relationships within the identified themes that emerged from this effort are also discussed within this section. Finally, Section 3 concludes with key applications for professional practice as well as recommendations for future study as well as personal reflections and critical conclusions elicited by this research effort.

Overview of the Study

This qualitative case study analysis examined how Generation Z, the newest, youngest generation of project professionals, is influencing intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. Little is known about how Generation Z

interacts and performs in a team setting, especially when put together with other generational cohort groups (Burton et al., 2019). Today's business organizations may employ up to five generations: Veterans/ Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z, with each cohort embracing different work values, professional development considerations, and leadership styles (Lawson & De Aquino, 2016). With the oldest of these generations retiring over the next decade, Generations Y and Z are together becoming the most represented workplace cohorts (Lawson & De Aquino, 2016). However, while many workplace studies have been published on Generation Y and its predecessor generational cohorts, little research exists on Generation Z since this group only recently began entering the workplace (Burton et al., 2019). While Generation Z professionals are young their professional careers, Fatemi (2018) predicted that they will comprise most of the workplace by the end of 2030. Such data suggests the significance of today's business organizations understanding how to best motivate and engage this formative generational cohort of professionals.

To justify the significance, purpose, and goal of this study, the researcher conducted a thorough review of the existing academic and professional literature surrounding workplace generations and the major components of project team engagement. Most journal articles were obtained from online academic databases such as ProQuest and EBSCO. The researcher also gathered data from doctoral dissertations and various scholarly and business print publications. Approximately 100 articles, doctoral dissertations, and print publications were reviewed, with the majority published no later than 2016. Together these publications overwhelmingly supported the gap proposed by Burton et al. (2019) that calls for more empirical research to provide an in-depth investigation into multigenerational team dynamics, especially teams containing Generation Z representatives.

Consistent with qualitative case study research supported by Stake (2010), Yin (2014), and Creswell and Poth (2018), data were collected though semi-structured interviews with both Generation Z project team professionals and Non-Generation Z project professionals who currently served on teams with Generation Z colleagues. Interviews were conducted with participants including both Generation Z and other generational team cohorts to ensure that findings represented multiple perspectives on the topic as well as diverse views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Research participants were required to be at least 18 years old or older, a full-time employee of the research institution. Qualified participants could either represent Generation Z as demarcated by their birth year (1995 – 2003) or serve on a project team that also contained Generation Z colleagues.

Acting as a gatekeeper, the research institution's human resources department pre-screened the participant population according to the required criteria and provided the researcher with a list of names and email addresses of full-time employees to recruit via email communication. While the research institution did not supply the birth dates or years for the participant population, project team members whose birth years designated them as Generation Z were provided to the researcher prior to beginning recruitment. This allowed the researcher to identify the number of Generation Z versus Non-Generation Z project team professionals who volunteered to participate in the study prior to scheduling and conducting participant interviews.

The researcher was responsible for implementing and fulfilling the second level of screening by sending email messages to the project team members provided by the human resources department. A copy of the participant consent form was attached to the recruitment email for participants to review and return with their signature. Potential research participants were asked to respond via email if they were willing to participate in a one-hour interview. Upon

receiving the participant response email and signed consent form, the researcher coordinated with the participant to schedule the interview date and time via email. A copy of the proposed participant recruitment email template for Generation Z participants can be found in Appendix A, and a copy of the proposed participant recruitment email template for Non-Generation Z participants can be found in Appendix B. The researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to receiving the list of potential participants from the research institution's human and resources department and beginning participant recruitment. All IRB protocols for obtaining participant consent and data security were followed accordingly.

Consistent with Creswell and Poth (2018), the researcher served as a key instrument in the study and was responsible for collecting data through interviewing participants, observing behaviors, and examining verbatim interview transcripts and field note documents. The researcher designed interview guides and initial interview questions which can be found in the appendices section of this study. Two separate interview guides and question sets were developed so that Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals were asked different questions. This allowed a rich understanding of how Generation Z approaches multiple facets of intergenerational project team dynamics and engagement as well as how other generational cohorts experience and perceive intergenerational project teams to be influenced by this youngest workforce generation. Accordingly, interviews were conducted with seven Generation Z project team professionals (birth years 1995 – 1998) and ten project team professionals representing Millennial (Individuals born between 1980 and 1994) and Generation X (Individuals born between 1965 and 1979) cohorts. Generation Z participants were assigned pseudonym codes GZ and Non-Generation Z participants were assigned pseudonym codes NGZ to identify the participant generational group but keep personal identities anonymous.

Interviewees were informed of the official beginning and conclusion of each session and associated recording. Upon completion of the interview, sessions were transcribed verbatim for data collection and analysis. Additionally, research participants were provided a copy of the verbatim interview transcripts to review for accuracy and, if necessary, provide additional information or clarifying statements. The researcher recorded field notes for each interview session. Such field notes were dated and connected to each interview and allowed the researcher to share meaningful thoughts and observations throughout the interview, as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). To assist in this data collection process, the researcher created two field note documentation forms to be utilized before, during, and immediately following each participant interview. Two separate field note documentation forms were developed since interviews for Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals contain different questions. Copies of the field note documentation forms can be found in Appendices E and F.

Due to workplace and social restrictions associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic, all interviews were conducted via Zoom video and audio-conferencing software. While data surrounding the effectiveness of utilizing online videoconferencing services to collect qualitative interview is in its infancy, recent studies suggest the viability of Zoom for such analysis due to its ease of use, data management features, and security options (Archibald et al., 2019). Accordingly, Zoom's videoconferencing capabilities allowed the researcher to conduct interview observations similar to an in-person setting. The researcher also utilized Zoom's data management and security options to securely record interviews and aid in the development of verbatim interview transcripts.

The researcher followed data collection and analysis protocols as recommended by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) and Yin (2014) to develop and manage findings efficiently and

securely. The researcher engaged in real-time data analysis to record interview observations and formulate follow-up questions prompted by participant interview responses and determine if new information could be collected to explore the research questions and sub-questions. The researcher also recorded observations and thoughts immediately following interview sessions. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed data by reviewing the interview recordings, transcripts, and field note documents. The researcher selected NVivo to assist in the storage, organization, and analysis of all collected data. This program was selected based on its functionality to edit text, record notes and memos, retrieve text, and manipulate nodes and categories (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Accordingly, this tool assisted the researcher in identifying key themes emerging from all data collected via interviews, verbatim transcripts, and field note documents. Identified themes are described in detail in the following section.

Presentation of the Findings

Seven Generation Z project team members, eight Millennial project team members, and two Generation X project team members that work on intergenerational project teams containing Generation Z professionals at a division of a global information technology company provided deeper insight and understanding to the business problem addressed in this study. The researcher conducted participant recruitment and interviews until data saturation was achieved and no new information was presented in light of the research question and sub-questions. It is important to note that at the time participant interviews were conducted, all intergenerational project team members interviewed had worked remotely from their home offices during the past year due to workplace and social restrictions associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic. In some instances, many of the Generation Z team members interviewed had never met their teammates face-to-face since the research institution had transitioned to a remote working format in March

2020 prior to their hire dates. Therefore, many of the Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participant responses to interview questions are shaped by their observations and experiences navigating both opportunities and challenges associated with working remotely on teams during the global health crisis.

Data collected from interviews, including participant responses to semi-structured, open-ended questions along with the researcher's field notes generated 11 salient themes. Together these themes help address how this newest professional generational cohort is impacting intergenerational team dynamics and is best motivated and engaged in a project team environment. The following subsections of this paper provide an in-depth analysis of the discovered themes and their relation to the research questions, conceptual framework, anticipated themes, literature, and research problem.

Themes Discovered

Responses from both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project team members to open-ended, semi-structured interview questions concerning the literature's most significant aspects team engagement revealed 11 salient themes. Five major themes emerged from the group of seven Generation Z participants interviewed and six major themes emerged from the group of ten Non-Generation Z participants interviewed. Together these 17 project team professionals provided a holistic, insightful account of how this youngest generation of professionals is impacting intergenerational project team dynamics and is best motivated and engaged at a global technology organization located in the southeastern United States. Discovered themes emerging from Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participant interviews are separated and delineated in the following subsections.

Generation Z Participant Themes. Seven Generation Z participants currently serving on intergenerational project teams at the researched organization volunteered to participate in this inquiry. Pseudonyms GZ 1 – GZ 7 were accordingly assigned to this participant group. Five major themes emerged among the Generation Z project team professionals interviewed when asked about their preferences, experiences, and observations working on intergenerational project teams. These themes were a preference for personal, direct communication, a preference for expedient, creative team/group decision-making, a preference for personal, communicative conflict management, a desire for personal connection with leaders for coaching and growth, and a desire for connection with teammates and passions. These themes and associated subthemes are described in the following section.

A Preference for Personal, Direct Communication. A preference for personal, direct communication with teammates emerged as a major theme from Generation Z interview participants. Two major sub-themes emerged surrounding the topic of team communication preferences for Generation Z professionals. The first sub-theme was an extreme aptitude for and reliance on technology for many avenues of team communication. The second, and perhaps more surprising sub-theme that emerged from this group, was a preference for in-person communication or videoconferencing due to workplace and social restrictions associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic, for topics requiring larger discussions or more team member input. Furthermore, Generation Z interview participants cited common preferences for meetings conducted via videoconference with the goal of simulating the interpersonal benefits of in-person communication as much as possible.

Generation Z interview participants consistently discussed their preferences for communicating via the research institution's designated team messaging app as well as text

messaging teammates for items that could be answered easily or left until a teammate had time to respond. Such preferences are consistent with Seemiller and Grace (2017) who found that Generation Z cohorts prefer to multi-task across up to five screens and would rather communicate via text than by email or phone. Accordingly, most Generation Z participants discussed how such tools allowed for team members to communicate when multi-tasking and quickly obtain necessary information to continue with a given task (GZ 1, GZ 2, GZ 3, GZ 5, & GZ 6). Some Generation Z participants discussed a preference for installing the group team communication app on their personal phones, mentioning that they can "text" on a phone faster than they can type on a traditional computer keyboard (GZ 1, GZ 5, GZ 6, & GZ 7). This group also enjoyed the ability to respond to team messages on their phones when briefly stepping away from their desks or outside of traditional work hours (GZ 1, GZ3, GZ 5, & GZ 7). Others discussed how receiving questions from colleagues or superiors via messaging allowed time for them to reflect on the question being asked and seek advice from their teammates on how best to respond (GZ 3 & GZ 7).

In contrast to Generation Z participants' preference for group messaging apps and text messages for quick, easy communication, this group observed their teammates representing older generations to strongly prefer email when utilizing technology to communicate with team members. Some discussed how older generations often sent formally written email communications for matters that the Generation Z professionals thought could be more efficiently and concisely handled utilizing the group messaging app or text (GZ 1, GZ 4, & GZ 6). This difference in electronic communications preferences seemed to frustrate Generation Z teammates citing delayed email response times and their interpretation that email lends itself to a less personal, indirect communication style (GZ 3, GZ 4, & GZ 7).

The second communication sub-theme revealed a preference for in-person meetings or videoconferences for team matters that could not be quickly and easily handled while multi-tasking or needing a fast response. This preference for in-person or videoconference communication is consistent with Castellano's (2016) finding that this generation would rather work in an office environment than from home or other remote locations. Similarly, Lanier (2017) found that 51% of surveyed Generation Z cohorts preferred in-person communication with leaders to discuss feedback and other employee performance-related matters.

Again, Generation Z project team participants discussed their preference for direct, personal communication citing the importance of each team member keeping their web camera on for the setting to replicate an in-person meeting as much as possible (GZ 1, GZ 2, GZ 3, GZ 4, & GZ 6). GZ 2 described how he preferred to see and understand the "energy" of the person talking during group meetings to better interpret and understand communication. Other Generation Z participants made similar remarks referencing their preference for "seeing" team members in group meetings since they had never met their teammates in person (GZ 1, GZ 4, & GZ 6).

Conversely, Generation Z participants cited differences when observing how older generations of teammates interacted on meetings conducted via videoconference. Most discussed how older teammates were more likely to keep their cameras off, especially in larger group meetings (GZ 1, GZ 2, & GZ 3). GZ 1 discussed how looking at a screen of blank speaker boxes made the meetings feel "detached" and "pointless." Many Generation Z teammates also found older generations of teammates to engage in more small-talk, debate, and explanation during team meetings than they perceived necessary (GZ 2, GZ 3, GZ 5, & GZ 7). One Generation Z participant, GZ 2, stated that she preferred team discussions to more quickly "get to the point,"

with her peers making similar comments as well. Whether using messaging apps, texting, or in-person/videoconference meetings, these preferences and observations further underscore Generation Z's preference for a more direct, interpersonal communication style.

A Preference for Expedient, Meaningful, Creative Team/Group Decision-Making.

When asked about their preferences for approaching group decision-making on intergenerational teams, Generation Z participants described a preference for expedient, meaningful, creative team/group decision-making. This theme is consistent with Chillakuri and Mahanandia (2018) who found that members of this youngest generation are motivated by opportunities to be efficient and express their individuality. Similarly, Stillman and Stillman (2017) called Generation Z the "DIY (do-it-yourself) generation" (p. 225), postulating that this preference may collide with the more collaborative preferences of older generational cohorts.

Likewise, most Generation Z participants described an environment where older, more senior members of the team most often made decisions with less input from the team itself. Some postulated that this model could be due to their relative lack of professional experience (GZ3 & GZ 5) or their current remote working environment being less conducive to collaboration (GZ 2, GZ 5, & GZ 7). In general, participants discussed a disdain for over-discussing decisions that had already been made and a preference for making the decision and "moving on." (GZ 2, GZ 3, & GZ 7). GZ 1 stated, "I don't need to know a lot about the why of a decision if it doesn't really affect me." Others made similar comments about older generations of teammates tending to continually discuss decisions made by the team regardless of how it affected their particular team role (GZ 2, GZ3, & GZ 5).

Generation Z team members also consistently observed older generations of teammates to approach group decision-making by looking at how things were done in the past and repeating

the same process (GZ 4, GZ 5, GZ 6, & GZ 7). GZ 4 described, "My older teammates seem to default to how it was done in the past with less regard for the situation's context." In contrast, Generation Z participants spoke of a preference for approaching decision-making by first looking at the intended outcome of a particular decision and finding creative ways to achieve the desired result (GZ 4, GZ 6, & GZ 7). However, given the current context of their project team roles, Generation Z team members had not been given the opportunity to approach many team decisions in that manner.

     A Preference for Personal, Communicative Conflict Management. All seven Generation Z team member interviewed discussed their preference for handling team conflict directly with the individual with whom they disagreed. Many made comments about going directly to the individual and handling the conflict as soon as possible to avoid the conflict escalating with time (GZ 1, GZ 2, GZ 3, GZ 4, & GZ 6). Most Generation Z team members also discussed the importance of finding out the "why" behind the conflict so it could be resolved (GZ 3, GZ 4, GZ 5, GZ 6, & GZ 7). GZ 4 stated, "You have to truly understand the conflict before fixing it." Others made similar comments discussing different avenues of exploring the conflict such as having their manager mediate a productive discussion with themselves and the other party (GZ 3). Overall, there was extreme consensus that conflict should be handled as soon as it was presented in a direct and empathetic manner where each individual's perspective could be understood.

     There was also consensus in how Generation Z team members observed their older teammates to handle conflict, describing the opposite of this cohort's preference for a direct, empathetic approach. GZ 4 and GZ 5 made comments of how older teammates seemed to show their disagreements in a group setting. GZ 1 and GZ 3 described scenarios where older

teammates would let conflict continue for months, talking behind each other's back with other team members. Generally, the Generation Z team members interviewed observed older generations on their team to either avoid addressing the conflict or attempting to quickly fix it and move on. Generation Z professionals believed that this quick fix approach was only a "patch" (GZ 4 and GZ 7) that ultimately resulted in the conflict continuing and affecting the team as a whole.

While a review of the literature surrounding Generation Z professionals did not specifically address this cohort's approach to conflict management, previous research does support the assertion that this youngest workplace generation has higher expectations and desires for workplace diversity than any other group. Stewart (2017) noted that members of this generation were taught in classrooms that focused on diversity and collaboration. Additionally, Generation Z has come of age in an era of social media platforms that provide access to different cultures, backgrounds, and circumstances in an unprecedented way (Lanier, 2017). Therefore, participant responses surrounding the importance of empathy and understanding of another's viewpoint when approaching conflict resolution are consistent with the unique value this generation possesses for collaborating with colleagues who are different than themselves.

A Desire for Personal Connection With Leaders for Coaching and Growth. When asked how Generation Z team members were best motivated by leadership, all seven discussed the importance of frequent honest and open feedback. Most participants also made comments surrounding their desire for open dialogue with leaders on both personal and workplace matters (GZ 2, GZ 3, GZ 5, & GZ 7). This theme is consistent with Lanier's (2017) assertion that Generation Z professionals most value leaders who can provide meaningful engagement and open dialogue as well as a PR Newswire survey, which found that Generation Z overwhelming

selected "communication" as the most important leadership quality and desired continuous

feedback over yearly performance reviews. (Despite the tech revolution, 2016).

Accordingly, GZ 1, GZ 2, GZ 4, and GZ 7 talked about their desire for an open line of

communication with their manager where they felt well-supported with room to make and learn

from mistakes. GZ 3 and GZ 5 discussed their desire for a more personal, collaborative

relationship with their team leaders where they felt comfortable problem-solving both large and

small issues. Several mentioned their desire for leadership to provide coaching that was honest

but encouraging. GZ 1 described, "honesty with encouragement is best; however, over-the-top

encouragement feels fake." Similarly, GZ 7 explained that he was best motivated when he felt

comfortable with his managers, knowing he could ask questions, present issues, or learn from

mistakes. Overall, there was consensus that this group of young professionals is hungry for

accessible, collaborative leaders who will coach them toward long-term development and

growth.

A Desire for Connection With Teammates and Passions. When asked to describe the

ideal project team environment, each Generation Z professional talked about a desire to know

teammates on a more personal level. As GZ 7 described, "We want people to be themselves and

not over-professionalize things." Many discussed a wish to know more about their teammates'

and manager's backgrounds, interests, and hobbies. Others said that they preferred a more

relaxed team environment where their colleagues made time to be social and talk about things

unrelated to work. GZ 5 commented, "It seems that my older teammates want to schedule time to

meet and interact. Maybe they are just really busy, but I wish we could talk in a less formal

manner." GZ 2 described how she liked for her manager and teammates to reach out to check on

her from time to time and reassure her throughout the work week. Others made similar

comments addressing their desire for teammate support, describing an ideal environment where their teammates were passionate about their own job and success as well as the success of others (GZ 2, GZ 5, & GZ 6).

Some Generation Z professionals mentioned a desire for their team to be impactful outside of their primary job responsibilities, relating the importance of truly believing in something to be successful. GZ 4 and GZ 6 made comments about wanting to be part of something beyond their job roles such as such as helping the community around them. Similarly, GZ 5 and GZ 7 made references to wanting to feel like their job and team were part of something bigger. This theme of connecting work to something deeper is consistent with Fatemi's (2018) finding that Generation Z professionals believe that companies should address social and environmental issues more than any previous workplace generation. Additionally, literature reveals that Generation Z highly values social entrepreneurship (Stewart, 2017) and a significant portion of Generation Z professionals are willing to take a pay cut in return for working toward a mission that they identify with (Fatemi, 2018). Accordingly, such descriptions of the ideal team environment further indicate that Generation Z is looking for deep connection with their teammates as well as connection between their job and their beliefs and passions.

Non-Generation Z Participant Themes. To gain a holistic account of how Generation Z is impacting intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged in a team environment, the researcher also interviewed ten older generations of individuals currently working on project teams with these youngest professionals. Pseudonyms NGZ 1 – NGZ 10 were accordingly assigned to this participant group comprised of eight professionals representing the Millennial generation and two representing Generation X. Some held project team leadership positions while others were project team members.

When Non-Generation Z professionals discussed their perceptions, observations, and experience working on team with Generation Z teammates, six major themes emerged. These themes included an observed informal communication style, a mixed approach to group and team decision-making, a lack of observed team conflict, an observed desire for personal, authentic connection with leadership, a hunger for learning and growth, and an emphasis on team performance. These themes and associated subthemes are discussed in the following section.

An Observed Informal Communication Style. When Millennial and Generation X professionals were asked about observations concerning their Generation Z teammates' communication preferences, each of the ten participants discussed their informal style. While a review of the literature did not specifically address this generation's informal communication behaviors, such observations are consistent with the value Generation Z professionals place on meaningful engagement and open dialogue (Lanier, 2017). Most older generations of teammates talked about this in a positive light (NGZ 1, NGZ 4, NGZ 7, NGZ 9, & NGZ 10), with one Millennial team member, NGZ 1, describing her Generation Z colleagues as having a "confident voice" when talking with both teammates and clients. Another Millennial teammate, NGZ 9, talked about admiring how his Generation Z teammates "call things as they are" where everyone on the team can quickly "understand their take" on a given issue or situation. In contrast, another older teammate, NGZ5, viewed this generation's casual communication style as a lack of respect for professional hierarchy with NGZ 5 saying, "Generation Z talks to you like a buddy whether you like it or not."

Older generations of teammates also referenced their observation of Generation Z colleagues preferring to communicate via instant message or text on a frequent basis. NGZ 6 discussed how Generation Z teammates often seemed to respond to questions through the group

work app or text, even if you call them first. A Millennial team member, NGZ 8, talked about how Generation Z teammates installed their work messaging app on their personal phones so that they could respond quickly to messages both during and after business hours. In contrast, this participant stated that older generations of teammates were not apt to use work apps outside of work and would less likely install them on their personal devices (NGZ 8). Other comments made by NGZ 3 and NGZ 10 also referenced Generation Z to be "instantaneous" in their responses via electronic communication. Such observations of Generation Z's communications preferences are again consistent with Seemiller and Grace's (2017) assertion that Generation Z cohorts prefer to multi-task across up to five screens and would rather communicate via text than by email or phone. These observations also support Opfer's (2018) finding that Generation Z employees are likely to prioritize collaboration, speed, and the sharing of workplace information.

Furthermore, a subtheme that emerged under the topic of communication was an observed direct, blunt communication style with both peers and older generations of teammates. NGZ 3, NGZ 5, and NGZ 9 discussed how their Generation Z colleagues were quick to "call out" certain behaviors or decisions in an honest manner. NGZ 3 and NGZ 4 referenced their observation of Generation Z seeking honesty and transparency more than any other workplace generation. However, a few Non-Generation Z teammates, NGZ 3 and NGZ 5, also observed that Generation Z teammates were not as accepting of honest, direct feedback when given to them. As such, there was some disparity in how older generations of teammates perceived Generation Z to desire blunt, honest feedback and their response when such feedback was given.

An Observed Mixed Approach to Group/Team Decision-Making. Non-Generation Z teammates were more divided in their observations of how Generation Z approaches group/team decision making than any other topic. Exactly half of the ten Non-Generation Z professionals,

NGZ 1, NGZ 3, NGZ 5, NGZ 7, and NGZ 9, discussed Generation Z teammates to be vocal, inquisitive, and passionate when approaching team decisions, whereas the other six Non-Generation Z teammates, NGZ 2, NGZ 4 NGZ 6, NGZ 8, and NGZ 10 described the opposite. NGZ 1, NGZ 3, and NGZ 9 who witnessed a more vocal Generation Z in team decision meetings, discussed tensions between this generation and older colleagues for control of ideas and possible solutions. NGZ 9 described how Generation Z liked to "view situations from all angles" while NGZ 4 described how the group would "work backward from the intended result" when approaching problem-solving. In contrast, NGZ 4 and NGZ 9 discussed how Millennial teammates cared more about following a prescribed process when approaching decision-making as a group.

Those that observed Generation Z to take a passionate, creative approach to group and team decision making coincide with Stillman and Stillman's (2017) assertion that this generation "hyper-custom" (p. 106), and strongly desires to customize and tailor their brands, career paths, and job descriptions. Similarly, Adecco (2015) found that Generation Z cohorts enjoy entrepreneurial initiatives, are self-confident, and are optimistic about their career goals. Together, these findings and participant observations are further evidence that Generation Z professionals want the opportunity and freedom to problem-solve in an innovative manner.

Conversely, Non-Generation Z teammates who observed Generation Z colleagues to be less vocal during team decision meetings described this generation as quiet during group meetings and allowing older, more tenured teammates to take the lead (NGZ 6, NGZ 8, and NGZ 10). One Millennial teammate, NGZ 10, described how her Generation Z teammates seemed to prefer to make decisions quickly then let older colleagues continue talking and debating decisions that were already made. Another Generation X professional, NGZ 6, discussed how

Generation Z teammates tended to be quiet when asked for input in group settings but were more likely to ask questions and problem-solve in a one-on-one setting. NGZ 2 made similar comments about observing Generation Z teammates to more likely engage in one-on-one settings than when gathered as a group. These observations conflict with how the literature to date describes a passionate, entrepreneurial-minded Generation Z as observed by the other half of Non-Generation Z participants. However, Generation Z participants' statements regarding disdain for over-discussing decisions that had already been made (GZ 2, GZ 3, & GZ 7) could help explain the discrepancy between some Non-Generation Z observations and what others and the literature professed.

A Lack of Observed Conflict. When asked their observations of how Generation Z manages team conflict, eight out of ten Non-Generation Z teammates, NGZ 1, NGZ 2, NGZ 4, NGZ 6, NGZ 7, NGZ 8, NGZ 9, and NGZ 10, stated that they had not observed any conflict between Generation Z teammates and other individuals. NGZ 2, NGZ 4, NGZ 6, and NGZ 9 postulated that this lack of observation was due to their company's remote work format, theorizing that they would likely have more exposure to team conflict when co-located with team members in a physical office setting. Otherwise, one teammate, NGZ 5, described scenarios where he had witnessed Generation Z teammates "tattle-telling" on other teammates, observing that younger colleagues were quick to go to management to handle conflict instead of addressing it personally. Another Non-Generation Z teammate, NGZ 3, discussed observed team conflict stemming from tensions between Gen Z team members wanting immediate respect and older generations feeling that respect was something to be earned. A review of the literature did not reveal findings surrounding this generation's approach to conflict management, however, it is

possible that this lack of observation could be due to Generation Z participants' statements regarding the importance of solving conflict in a private, empathetic manner.

    An Observed Desire for Personal, Authentic Connection With Leadership. Seven out of ten Non-Generation Z professionals, NGZ 1, NGZ 3, NGZ 4, NGZ 6, NGZ 7, NGZ 9, and NGZ 10, some of whom were project team managers, observed their Generation Z colleagues to desire a personal, authentic connection with leadership. NGZ 1, NGZ 3, NGZ 6, NGZ 7, and NGZ 9 made mention of Generation Z team members wanting an open line of communication with their managers as well as their desire for transparency and vulnerability. NGZ 7 stated that this generation did not want "a hard and fast line between employee and boss." Another Millennial team member, NGZ 3, described how his younger colleagues wanted their manager to be "a little vulnerable and real." Similarly, one manager, NGZ 6, said that he observed his Generation Z team members to want feedback on both a personal and professional level, noting that fulfilling this desire took extra time that was often difficult to appropriate. However, this manager also remarked that while the time required to establish the relationship and dialogue that his Generation Z team members desired was difficult, it was also necessary to obtain individual and team buy-in with this group. Again, these observations are consistent with both the literature surrounding Generation Z's desire for meaningful engagement and open dialogue with leadership (Lanier, 2017) as well as Generation Z participant responses surrounding the leadership actions and behaviors that best motivated and engaged this cohort.

    An Observed Hunger for Learning and Growth. Six Non-Generation Z participants, NGZ 1, NGZ 3, NGZ 4, NGZ 6, NGZ 7, and NGZ 9, talked about how their Generation Z colleagues were not afraid to ask questions and sought deep understanding of how they could improve both personal and team performance. This observation is consistent with Hesselbein's

(2018) assertion that Generation Z professionals are career-focused with a high propensity for

leadership as well the emphasis placed on collaboration and learning opportunites with

colleagues from diverse backgrounds (Stewart, 2017). One Millennial team member, NGZ 7,

noted how he and his peers adopted more a "fake it 'til you make it" mentality early in their

careers, whereas these young professionals would rather ask a question about something they did

not understand. Other comments were made about this generation's desire for one-on-one

mentorship and to know why various workplace information and processes mattered in the larger

organizational context. A Millennial team manager, NGZ 10, stated that her Generation Z

professionals were "trying to learn and figure out so much," eager to learn and make a large

impact.

   An Observed Emphasis on Team Performance. When older generations of teammates

were asked their perception of how their Generation Z colleagues were motivated by leadership

many referred to the emphasis placed on teams. Again, this observation coincides with Stewart's

(2017) assertion that Generation Z professionals place special emphasis on collaboration and

learning opportunites with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. A Generation X team manager,

NGZ 4, discussed how his Generation Z team members wanted to succeed as a team, whereas his

Millennial team members were more motivated by individual performance goals and incentives.

Other comments were made by NGZ 1, NGZ 3, NGZ 7, and NGZ 10 about this generation's

desire for team collaboration and connection on both a professional and personal level. Examples

provided by NG1, NGZ 3, NGZ 7 and NGZ 10 included instances of their youngest colleagues

enjoying opportunities for informal group quality time, team-building activities such as group

competitions, and other occasions where the team was able to interact in a relaxed, fun manner.

This observed preference for fun with teams in the workplace is also consistent with Hills (2018)

who found that Generation Z cohorts more strongly guard against employee burnout from

mental, emotional, or physical exhaustion than predecessor generations.

Interpretation of the Themes

The 11 themes emerging from both Generation Z's descriptions of their own preferences

and experiences and older teammates' observations working with their youngest colleagues

reveal this generation's desire for authenticity, connection, and community in the workplace.

When asked interview questions surrounding communication, group/team decision-making,

conflict management, or leadership, the vast majority of responses suggested that Generation Z

professionals want to work in a supportive team environment that fosters relationships and

connectivity with both colleagues and leadership. For instance, when Generation Z members

were asked how they were best motivated in a team environment, there was no mention of

monetary incentives, other than one participant, NGZ 1, who stated that while he enjoyed

earning bonuses, he more desired avenues that fostered long-term development and growth.

Similarly, nine out of 10 Non-Generation Z participants did not mention monetary incentives

when asked their perceptions of how their Generation Z teammates were motivated and engaged.

Instead, interview question responses from both participant groups surrounded the importance of

frequent, informal, one-on-one communication for both personal and work-related conversations

that allowed all team members, regardless of title or position, to know each other's personal

lives, backgrounds, and interests.

An undercurrent of Generation Z's desire for connectivity, vulnerability, and support in

the workplace surrounded most responses regarding this generation's communication

preferences and behaviors. The words "honest," "open," "informal," and "real" were often used

to describe desires and preferences with both teammates and leaders responding to questions

regarding both communication and motivational leadership actions and behaviors. As participant GZ 7 stated, "We want people to be themselves" adding that when teammates and team managers shed formalities, communication is honest and genuine.

Both Generation Z and Non-generation Z participant responses regarding their Generation Z observations were consistent with this sentiment whether discussing electronic or in-person communication. For instance, none of the Generation Z participants referenced email when asked about communication preferences. Instead, many made observations that older generations often sent formally written email communications for matters that could be more efficiently and concisely handled utilizing the team app or text. Whether the ability to quickly message or text a team member or the space and time for frequent in-person dialogue surrounding both personal and workplace matters, findings suggest that Generation Z places extreme value on authentic connection and communication in the workplace.

Both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participant responses surrounding this youngest workplace generation's preferences for group and team decision-making also revealed a preference for authentic collaboration with teammates and leaders. Generation Z participants expressed their preference to abstain from discussing decisions already made by leadership or that did not affect their team roles. However, they did express a preference for engaging in creative exchanges of ideas and potential solutions for matters where they found relevancy to their roles, team, and/or the organization. Non-Generation Z team members discussed observations that support this preference stating that they often found their youngest teammates silent in group meetings, but had experienced other situations where Generation Z team members viewed situations from multiple angles or worked backward from the intended result. Accordingly, findings suggest that this generation is disinterested in providing input for matters

they find irrelevant or unable to affect. However, is engaged and eager to collaborate on team decisions where they find value and impact.

Generation Z's desire for authenticity, connection, and community is also revealed in how participants described their approach to team conflict management. Generation Z participant responses surrounded a preference for handling conflict in a direct, one-on-one manner that sought deep understanding of the other person's perspective for true conflict resolution. Additionally, most Non-Generation Z teammates stated that they had not observed any conflict with their Generation Z teammates and others. While these professionals postulated this lack of observation was due to their team's remote working format, it is possible that they have not witnessed how Generation Z handles conflict, at least in some instances, due to this generation's preference for handling conflict in a private, empathetic manner. Given Generation Z's consensus for quickly addressing conflict with a teammate in a way that seeks deep understanding and resolution, it is possible that some instances of conflict have been resolved in a manner that would be undetectable to fellow team members.

Finally, when Generation Z participants were asked to describe their ideal project team environment, words such as "fun," "supportive," "casual," and "social," were used. Some Generation Z members discussed how they wanted their teammates to feel like "friends." Regardless of the specific word choice, all seven Generation Z project team members that were interviewed passionately discussed their desire to be part of a team that fostered support and community. Responses suggest that Generation Z professionals want their workplace teams to feel similar to their supportive relationships outside of the workplace to best develop and thrive. While many participants noted their understanding that dialogue and interactions with clients should have a more formal, professional air, they overwhelmingly prefer their engagement with

teammates to be less "suit-an-tie" (GZ 3) and more comfortable and authentic. Similarly, some Generation Z professionals discussed their assumption that project team managers might be leery of being too "buddy-buddy" (GZ 7). However, understanding that there was some extra level of professionalism and distance to maintain as employee and subordinate, most Generation Z team member responses suggested that this generation requires a certain level of openness, vulnerability, and comradery with leaders to be motivated and value their feedback.

Representation and Visualization of the Data

As outlined in the previous section, consistencies existed in how Generation Z project team professionals described their own preferences toward team communication, group/team decision-making, conflict management, leadership, and teamwork and how Non-Generation Z project team professional described their observations of how their youngest teammates approached these topics. While there were some differences in how Generation Z described their own team ideals and experiences and how Non-Generation Z team members observed this group's behaviors, most inconsistencies were revealed in how the older group perceived the motivations and underlying reasons for their younger colleague's actions. For instance, both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z team participants consistently discussed Generation Z's informal communication style. However, while Generation Z participants discussed this as way to communicate with teammates in a personal, direct, authentic manner, some older generations of colleagues perceived this communication style preference to be inexperienced or a lack of respect for professional hierarchy. Accordingly, Table 2 further illustrates consistencies and inconsistencies emerging from data collected during interviews with each participant group.

Table 2

Participant Group Response Comparison

Team Engagement Topic	Generation Z Participants' Preference	Non-Generation Z Observations and Perceptions of Gen Z Teammates
Communication	Wants team communication to be personal, direct, authentic, and informal. Prefers texting on personal phones or messaging on team app for quick responses and team member check-ins. Desires frequent, in-person opportunities for meaningful personal and workplace dialogue.	Observes Gen Z teammates to have a relaxed, informal communication style. Most perceived this as confident and relatable while some perceived it as lack of respect for professional hierarchy. Observes Gen Z teammates to engage I frequent, instantaneous communication via app messaging or text both inside and outside of business hours. Observes Gen Z to be quick to provide bluntly honest feedback when engaging with both peers and older generations of teammates; perhaps not always as accepting of blunt, honest feedback when reciprocated.
Group/Team Decision Making	Disinterested in discussing decisions that do not affect their role or have already been made by leadership. Prefers to engage in decision-making by looking at the situation's unique context and finding multiple creative solutions regardless of process or how similar decisions were made in the past.	Half of participants observed Gen Z teammates to be quiet during group meetings, allowing older, more tenured teammates to take the lead or discuss decisions that management had made. Half of participants observed their Gen Z teammates to want ownership of brainstorming and finding creative solutions.
Conflict Management	Prefers to handle conflict as soon as it arises, approaching the individual for a direct, honest conversation.	Little to no observation of how their Gen Z teammates handled conflict.

	Believes finding out and discussing the "why" behind each person's position is important to reaching resolution. Prefers to discuss and resolve conflict in a personal, private manner so that all involved individuals can move past the situation and not affect the team.	
Motivational Leadership Actions and Behaviors	Desires opportunities for open dialogue with leaders on both personal and workplace matters. Prefers communication with leaders to be less formal and more transparent and vulnerable. Desires a level of comfort to ask questions, receive coaching/support, and learn from mistakes.	Observes Gen Z teammates to desire no hard and fast line between employee and boss. Observes Gen Z teammates wanting mangers to be vulnerable and provide coaching on a personal and professional level. Observes Gen Z teammates to want frequent communication and open dialogue with managers.
Ideal Team Environment	Desires to know teammates and team managers on a personal level, understanding their backgrounds, interests, and hobbies. Thrives in a supportive environment where teammates want to succeed as individuals and as a team. Desires connection between their team roles and meaningful work that positively affects their personal growth, the organization's goals, and the community.	Observes Gen Z teammates to value succeeding as a team over succeeding as individuals. Observes Gen Z teammates to enjoy informal group quality time and team-building activities such as group competitions and other occasions where the team can interact in a relaxed, fun manner.

Relationship of the Findings

The following sections provide an in-depth discussion of this inquiry's findings in relationship to the research questions and sub questions, conceptual framework, anticipated themes, review of the literature, and research problem. The 11 themes that emerged from this inquiry are analyzed in light of these considerations to illustrate how findings addressed the founding components of this qualitative, case study research effort. Accordingly, the following discussion reveals that data collected throughout this inquiry provided deeper insight to how Generation Z professionals are impacting project team dynamics and are best motivated and engaged in a team environment.

Relationship of Findings to Research Questions. As discussed, separate interview guides and questions for Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals were best suited for addressing the research questions and sub-questions guiding this study. Accordingly, interview questions were designed to allow both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project professionals the opportunity to share in-depth information about their experience with the researched phenomenon. Accordingly, the research questions and sub-questions guiding this inquiry were as follows:

RQ1. How do Generation Z cohorts influence project team dynamics on multi-generational project teams?

RQ1a. How do communication styles and preferences for Generation Z cohorts influence project team dynamics?

RQ1b. How do members of Generation Z approach conflict resolution?

RQ1c. How do Generation Z cohorts interact with project team members representing older generations?

RQ2. How are Generation Z cohorts best engaged on multi-generational teams?

    RQ2a. What are the most influential factors that motivate Generation Z project team members toward active team engagement and project success?

    RQ2b. How do Generation Z cohorts view and value other generations on the project team?

    RQ2c. How do other generations view and value Generation Z project team members?

RQ3. How can project managers best lead multi-generational project teams that include Generation Z team members?

    RQ3a. What leadership actions or behaviors best resonate with Generation Z project team members?

Findings related to RQ 1 and its associated sub questions reveal that Generation Z professionals desire an intergenerational team dynamic fosters genuine relationships and connectivity with both colleagues and leadership. Whether communicating via direct messaging, text, or in-person/videoconference, Generation Z professionals prefer an informal, authentic open line of communication with both peers and older generations of colleagues where they feel safe and supported both personal and professionally. Such preferences may be displayed in their desire to know teammate's backgrounds, hobbies, and interests or in their tendencies to communicate in a direct, blunt manner. This desire also translates to their preference to approach conflict with both peers and older generations of teammates in a direct, empathetic manner that seeks understanding of each individual's perspective. Accordingly, findings related to RQ1 suggest that Generation Z desires genuine relationships with teammates that reflect, at least to some degree, the relationships and support systems they enjoy in their personal lives as well.

Findings related to RQ 2 and its associated sub questions reveal that Generation Z is best engaged when their teams embody a supportive community. Similar to findings related to RQ 1, Generation Z values relationships with both peers and older generations of teammates and thrives in a supportive environment where teammates want to succeed as individuals and as a group. Furthermore, Generation Z desires connection between their team roles and meaningful work that positively affects their personal growth, the organization's goals, and the community.

Findings from Non-Generation Z interview question responses reveal that older teammates are in tune with and admire some aspects of these preferences and behaviors. For instance, many older colleagues positively discussed how Generation Z colleagues were not afraid to ask questions, communicated in a confident, relatable manner, and valued succeeding as a team over succeeding as individuals. Furthermore, Non-Generation Z participants also commented on Gen Z teammates wanting mangers to be vulnerable and provide coaching on a personal and professional level. While it was noted in some responses that the level of time and effort required to meet such needs was often difficult to appropriate, most agreed that it was necessary to achieve Generation Z's buy-in and team commitment.

As mentioned, there were also some inconstancies in how Non-Generation Z team members perceived the underlying reasons behind their younger teammates' observed behaviors. Some found their informal communication style to be undesirable in the workplace while others perceived that this generation not as accepting of constructive, blunt feedback as they profess. Similarly, older generations of colleagues did not perceive Generation Z teammates to have had experience with team conflict and attributed this lack of experience with their current remote working format. However, it is possible that this lack of observation is instead due to how Generation Z teammates describe their conflict resolution approach as empathetic and private.

Overall, observations and experiences between both participant group's responses suggest that Generation Z's actions and behaviors are largely consistent with their self-described preferences. However, the reasons that underlie their project team behaviors and motivations are less understood by colleagues and leaders representing older generations.

Finally, findings related to RQ 3 and its associated sub question reveal that Generation Z desires opportunities for open dialogue with leaders on both personal and workplace matters for genuine coaching and growth. To achieve this level of trust and relationship, Generation Z project team members prefers communication with leaders to be less formal and more transparent and vulnerable. Furthermore, these youngest professionals want a level of comfort with their managers where they can ask questions and learn from their mistakes. Findings suggest that Generation Z is eager for leaders to coach them in an honest and direct manner, but first need to develop a personal relationship with their leaders to truly value and implement their feedback.

Relationship of Findings to the Conceptual Framework. The conceptual framework selected for this study originated with Mannheim's (1952) theory of generations, which understood a generation to be a cohort of a population who have experienced noteworthy events in their youth during a distinct period of time. Furthermore, both Maslow's (1943) and Herzberg's (1967) motivational theories provide a foundation for most workplace and team motivation research and are also relevant to this research framework. Like other generations, Generation Z professionals not only identify with similar influential events but are also subject to both workplace and team motivation factors and considerations. Accordingly, this conceptual framework provided the foundation for deeper exploration of how Generation Z professionals,

who have experienced similar opportunities, economic conditions, and life-shaping events engage with project teammates who ascribe to older generational cohorts.

Consistent with the conceptual framework that underpinned this inquiry, seven project team professionals representing Generation Z provided consistent descriptions of preferences, desires, and experiences when asked open ended, semi-structured interview questions. While participants were diverse in gender, ethnicity, background, and God-given gifts and talents, their interview question responses revealed five salient themes. While participants may have been similar in other manners imperceptible to the researcher, the commonality they all possessed was their generational cohort. Therefore, findings provided deeper insight to how this youngest professional group is influencing intergenerational team dynamics and is best motivated and engaged in project team environment.

Also consistent with Maslow's (1952) theory of generations and subsequent generational theories of how generations experience note-worthy, life shaping events were interview responses related to how the COVID-19 global health crisis affected both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participants. Given that project team participants had worked remotely throughout the last year of employment, interview responses were also shaped by how each generation had experienced the unexpected work transition due to workplace and social restrictions. Accordingly, areas for future research on how Generation Z is best motivated and engaged in an intergenerational team setting could also include how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced this generation's preferences and experiences.

Relationship of Findings to Anticipated Themes. According to Creswell and Poth (2018) qualitative researchers should practice reflexivity to convey their background and experiences and how their experiences may anticipate or inform study interpretations.

Accordingly, the researcher conducting this inquiry has a birth year that designates her as part of the Millennial generation. The researcher is also a college instructor who has taught Generation Z students over the last seven years. Given the researcher's background and experience, themes were anticipated surrounding Generation's Z preferences communication with teammates using technology. Such anticipation was also supported by a review of the literature surrounding team communication revealing Generation Z's aptitude and preference for utilizing technology more than older generations of teammates. However, the researcher did not anticipate that Generation Z participants would discuss the ability to message or text teammates and leadership as a way of having work relationships that supported one-on-one open communication. While older generations might view texting and messaging on apps, especially outside of business hours, as impersonal and possibly unprofessional, Generation Z participant responses suggest that this youngest workplace generation views this method of connectivity to shed unnecessary formalities and foster support and connectivity with their teammates and leaders.

The researcher also did not anticipate that Generation Z participants would overwhelmingly discuss their preference for in-person/video conference communication with teammates and leadership. Given this generation's aptitude and experience with technology, participant response regarding the importance of face-to-face, personal interactions was somewhat unexpected. However, while Generation Z had grown up with technology more than any other workplace generation (Seemiller & Grace, 2017), participant responses suggest that this generation prefers messaging and texting for quick questions and team member check-ins, but desire in-person opportunities with teammates and leaders for true connection, dialogue, and feedback.

Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed how qualitative researcher begin to identify emerging themes throughout the data collection process. However, Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) also stressed the importance of data triangulation to validate qualitative data and findings. Accordingly, the researcher thoroughly reviewed transcript data, clarifying statements, and field notes to validate themes that emerged. By engaging in this practice, the researcher was able to achieve a deeper level of data interpretation, especially when identifying themes related to group and team decision-making as well as conflict resolution. For instance, many Non-Generation Z participants had not observed conflict with Generation Z teammates. Similarly, half of Non-Generation Z professionals described Generation Z to be quiet during group decision-making. Such observations, or lack thereof, were interpreted as inconsistent with Generation Z participant responses on such topics during the data collection process. However, triangulation of data revealed these themes to be better supported and explained. Upon closer examination, data revealed that the lack of conflict observation could be due to Generation Z's preference to handle conflict in a private manner undetectable by uninvolved group members. Furthermore, instances where older generations of teammates had observed Generation Z colleagues to be less vocal in group meetings supported this Generation's disinterest in discussing decisions that did not affect their role or that had already been made by leadership. Overall, the themes that emerged from this inquiry were unanticipated by the researcher and provided deeper insight to the business problem.

Relationship of Findings to the Literature. Prior to conducting the field study for this inquiry, a review of the literature overwhelming supported the study's basis that each generation, demarcated by birth year, has experienced related economic conditions and opportunities as well as life-shaping events that influence the general mindset of each cohort (Inglehart, 1977;

Kupperschmidt, 2000; Mannheim, 1952). Furthermore, scholarly and professional literature

surrounding workplace generations significantly revealed that these groups possess unique, lived

experiences that influence workplace values and performance (Brien, 2018; Generational

Differences in the Workplace, 2020; LaCore, 2015; Miranda & Allen, 2017). Finally, academic

and professional literature agreed that differences exist between Generation Z and its predecessor

generation, Generation Y (Bencsik et al., 2016; Stewart, 2017), however, few studies have

explored how the preferences and capabilities of Generation Z cohorts influence multiple aspects

of workplace and team dynamics (Burton et al., 2019).

The literature review also revealed salient themes related to project team dynamics and

engagement. These themes were team communication (Bushardt et al., 2018; Hall, 2016; Zhu et

al., 2016), group (team) decision-making (Acai et al., 2018; Cervone, 2015; Krogerus &

Tschappeler, 2017; Organ & O'Flaherty, 2016), conflict management (King & Bryant, 2017;

Lower, 2008; Zhu et al., 2016), and leadership actions and behaviors (Alawneh & Sweis, 2016;

Burke et al., 2006; Vuorinen & Martinsuo, 2018). While some of this research did not

specifically address generationally diverse teams, findings provided insight into processes and

leadership behaviors that cultivate effective collaboration and performance and were utilized as

the foundation for the participant interview questions designed to explore how Generation Z

influences intergenerational team dynamics and is best motivated and engaged in a team

environment.

Taken together literature surrounding the presence of generational differences in the

workplace and the most salient themes related to team engagement provided the basis for the

semi- structured, open-ended interview questions that served as the primary data collection

method. Responses surrounding communication, group/team-decision making, conflict

management, leadership, and teamwork helped fill a gap in project management and project team literature, as little is known about how Generation Z engages with others in a team setting (Burton et al., 2019). Furthermore, prior to conducting this inquiry a review of the literature revealed only a small body of research surrounding Generation Z in the professional workplace. Some studies gleaned insight from values studied and observed of college-going Generation Z cohorts, while others were the result of studying the oldest of these professionals who were young in their professional careers. No studies were found that gathered Non-Generation Z employees' observations and experiences working with Generation Z colleagues. As such, the findings from this inquiry provide new insight to how Generation Z professionals prefer and conduct various faucets of work team dynamics and are best engaged from both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z perspectives.

Relationship of Findings to the Research Problem. The general problem this inquiry attempted to address was the lack of knowledge in how Generation Z, the newest and youngest workforce generation, influences multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement (Bencsik, et al., 2016; Burton et al., 2019; Wang & Wang, 2017). Furthermore, the majority of multi-generational team research to date focused on the U.S. healthcare industry. Therefore, there was a need to study multi-generational teams in other industries as well (Burton et al., 2019). The IT industry, specifically the project-based software industry, is among the most popular employment areas for the youngest generational cohorts (Yildirim & Korkmaz, 2017). Accordingly, company leaders and project managers must prepare for how this youngest cohort is best motivated and engaged in a multi-generation project team environment. Therefore, the specific problem addressed was the lack of knowledge in how Generation Z cohorts influence multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement, resulting in potentially different

approaches to team communication, group decision-making, leadership, and conflict management at a multinational technology organization located in the southeastern United States.

The 11 themes that emerged from this study from both Generation Z's descriptions of their own preferences and experiences and older teammates' observations working with their youngest colleagues revealed this generation's desire for authenticity, connection, and community in the workplace. Furthermore, findings revealed Generation Z's desire for vulnerability and support from both teammates and team leaders as well as engagement in creative decision making for matters where they find relevance and lasting impact. On the other hand, this youngest group of professionals is disinterested in discussing decisions that do not affect their role or that have already been made by leadership. As such, findings from this inquiry provided deeper insight and knowledge as to how Generation Z influences intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged in a team environment.

Summary of the Findings. The research problem under examination was that there is a lack of knowledge in how Generation Z, the newest and youngest workforce generation, influences multi-generational project team dynamics and engagement. To address this problem and gain deeper insight, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews containing open-ended questions with seven Generation Z project professionals (birth years 1995 – 1998) and ten project professionals representing older generations who currently work on teams with Generation Z colleagues at a division of a global information technology company located in the southeastern United States. When comparing both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participant responses, 11 salient themes emerged from interviews, verbatim transcripts, and field notes. Five of these themes emerged from the group of seven Generation Z participants

interviewed and six themes emerged from the group of 10 Non-Generation Z participants interviewed. Together these 17 project team professionals provided a holistic, insightful account of how this youngest generation of professionals is impacting intergenerational project team dynamics and is best motivated and engaged at a global technology organization located in the southeastern United States.

The purpose of this qualitative case study analysis was to add to the body of knowledge by exploring how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. Key findings suggest that Generation Z professionals desire a project team environment that fosters authenticity, connection, community, and support. Whether discussing experiences and preferences with teammates or team leaders, Generation Z is best motivated by personal, honest communication and relationships that more closely mirror their friendships and other supportive relationships outside of the workplace. Findings reveal that this group is eager to collaborate and be coached by leaders, but only after a certain level of comfort and rapport is established.

Finally, the findings from this study helped answer the research questions and sub questions guiding this effort as findings reveal that Generation Z is best engaged when their teams embody a supportive community. Generation Z values relationships with both peers and older generations of teammates and thrives in a supportive environment where teammates want to succeed as individuals and as a group. Furthermore, Generation Z desires connection between their team roles and meaningful work that positively affects their personal growth, the organization's goals, and the community. Generation Z also desires opportunities for open dialogue with leaders on both personal and workplace matters for genuine coaching and growth. To achieve this level of trust and relationship, Generation Z project team members prefer

communication with leaders to be less formal and more transparent and vulnerable. As such, organizations and project teams who understand these preferences and desires and practice them within the project team environment will likely better engage and develop this youngest generation of professionals.

Application to Professional Practice

This section demonstrates how the findings from this research effort can improve a wide breadth of business industries and disciplines. Additionally, as this case study inquiry focused on project teams and leadership, findings are discussed in light of how they improve the project management practice. The section concludes with suggested practical application strategies that organizations can utilize to for tangible implementation of the themes revealed in this effort.

Improving General Business Practice

For the first time in history, up to five generations co-exist in the workplace (Burton et al., 2019). With the span of generations represented and the rapidly changing workforce composition, Banwany (2014) postulated that companies are increasingly pressured to deliver the next generation of "ready-now" leaders (p. 30) as older generations are soon retiring and younger generations are taking on new leadership roles. Accordingly, understanding how each generational cohort approaches and values various aspects of workplace and team performance is particularly relevant for today's business organizations. Furthermore, as each generational cohort has experienced unique, life-shaping events that accordingly influence their values, behaviors, and preferences (Inglehart, 1977; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Mannheim, 1952), organizations cannot assume that the same incentives, benefits, and leadership behaviors that motivate and engage one generation will be effective for another.

While successful business organizations might more naturally assume that various enrichment and development efforts should differ between their oldest, Baby Boomer or Veteran employees and their youngest personnel, company leaders must also be aware of differences between generational cohorts that are closer in birth years. While professional workplace research surrounding Generation Z is still in its infancy, findings from this research effort support Bencsik et al. (2016) and Stewart's (2017) assertion that differences exist between this youngest cohort and its predecessor Millenial generation. Therefore, today's organizations should not assume that its comparatively younger employees will be motivated and engaged in the same manner. Although members of Generation Z are just beginning their professional careers, estimates suggest that Generation Z is 23 million strong, outnumbers Millennials by nearly one million, and will comprise a significant portion of the workforce by the end of the decade (Stewart, 2017). Accordingly, findings from this study help provide insight to strategic business leaders to effectively begin developing this next generation of professionals as they increasingly represent their employee population.

Improving Project Management. While findings from this study are applicable to business organizations regardless of industry or discipline, they are particularly applicable to the field of project management, which is heavily comprised of project teams working together to accomplish strategic deliverables for business organizations and their customers. Accordingly, project management experts Moran and Youngdahl (2014) emphasized the importance of project leaders effectively influencing team members and other project stakeholders for whom they have no formal authority, citing the "platinum rule" (p. 132) of treating others according to their needs and preferences. Furthermore, Gelbtuch and Morlan (2015) espoused the importance of "generational competence" (p. 1) as part of the project team leadership component of the Project

Management Institute (PMI) Talent Triangle™. Such findings from the project management professional literature further underscore the significance of this research effort.

Findings from this inquiry suggest that Generation Z professionals strongly prefer and desire authenticity, connection, and community with project team peers and project team leaders, placing a high value on frequent interactions and personal relationships with teammates and project managers. Given the current composition of the professional workforce, project teams are increasingly comprised of generationally diverse members with more and more Generation Z representatives. While project leaders must also continue to motivate project team members representing older generational cohorts according to their unique preferences, project managers must also be aware of how their youngest team members are effectively engaged. Therefore, findings from this study suggest that project managers who lead teams containing Generation Z professionals should inspire a supportive team environment that fosters authentic relationships and connectivity with both colleagues and leadership.

Potential Application Strategies

As discussed in the previous section, responses from both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participants in this inquiry reveal Generation Z values relationships with both peers and older generations of teammates and thrives in a supportive environment where teammates want to succeed as individuals and as a group. They want team communication to be personal, frequent, authentic, and informal, preferring to communicate by texting on personal phones or messaging on team app for quick responses and team member check-ins. As such, team leaders responsible for intergenerational teams comprised of Generation Z members as well as older generations of teammates can be mindful of these preferences and make intentional efforts to frequently communicate with these professionals, whether it be a quick message to ask about

their day or stopping by their desk to chat about weekend plans. Furthermore, team leaders and colleagues should opt for in-person communication when approaching Generation Z professionals with personal and workplace matters that require meaningful dialogue.

Findings also reveal that Generation Z prefers to engage in decision-making by looking at the situation's unique context and finding multiple creative solutions regardless of process or how similar decisions were made in the past. Accordingly, organizational leaders and project managers should provide opportunities for this youngest to group to approach team decision-making in this manner. Based on the findings from this study, Generation Z is best motivated to engage in meaningful decision-making when they understand the value and impact of a given issue or situation. Consequently, opportunities for this group to engage in innovative problem-solving will be particularly effective if leadership can connect the desired outcome to a purpose that is relevant to the team's success, the organization's advancement, and/or the betterment of society.

This inquiry's findings also suggest that Generations Z professionals prefer to handle conflict as soon as it arises, approaching the individual for a direct, honest conversation. They also believe that finding out and discussing the "why" behind each person's position is important to reaching true resolution. An understanding of this preferred approach to conflict resolution can prepare both intergenerational project team leaders and teammates to receive and reciprocate this approach to conflict resolution when navigating conflict with their youngest generation of teammates.

As mentioned in relation to team decision-making application strategies, Generation Z desires connection between their team roles and meaningful work that positively affects their personal growth, the organization's goals, and the community. As such, organizational leaders

and project managers should explain the connection and potential impact of work assignments, objectives, and goals to Generation Z professionals to best motivate them toward engaged performance. While older generations of teammates might put more emphasis on knowing the "why," behind a particular decision, findings from this study suggest that Generation Z places more value on understanding the intended outcome's relevancy and impact.

Finally, Generation Z desires opportunities for open dialogue with leaders on both personal and workplace matters for genuine coaching and growth. To achieve this level of trust and relationship, Generation Z project team members prefer communication with leaders to be less formal and more transparent and vulnerable. As such, leaders of teams comprised of Generation Z professionals should make time for engaging in personal dialogue with their youngest teammates, sharing some details about their personal lives such as hobbies, interests, or even the names of their pets. Leaders can also prioritize and create opportunities for team interactions in a casual, relaxed manner where less formal conversations can more organically occur. These occasions do not need to be overly planned or scripted, but instead allow for team members and leaders to socialize and connect with each other outside of formal work responsibilities.

Summary of Application to Professional Practice

As described in this section, findings from this study can be applied to breadth of professional environments including industries that rely on project management and teams to accomplish various organizational goals and customer deliverables. Whether leading an intergenerational project team or a business unit that is generationally diverse, an understanding of Generation Z's preferences and desires for engagement can aid strategic organizations in effectively coaching, motivating, and developing this youngest generation of current employees

and future business leaders. Accordingly, organizational leaders and project managers who inspire team environments that foster authenticity, connection, community, and support are most likely to motivate and engage this generation toward effective team performance.

Recommendations for Further Study

As discussed in the presentation of the findings, many of the Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participant responses to interview questions were shaped by their observations and experiences navigating both opportunities and challenges associated with working remotely on teams for the past 12 months during COVID-19 global pandemic. Given the timing of this research effort aligned with the global health crisis, initial recommendations for future study pertain to replicating this study once business organizations have safely transitioned back to normal office working conditions. While certainly some organizations employed virtual teams before the pandemic, all participants in this research effort would be physically co-located with their teammates in the same office building had the global health crisis not occurred. Therefore, valuable insight could be gained by replicating this study once project team professionals returned to their typical working format.

Furthermore, as consistent with Maslow's (1943) theory of generations and subsequent generational theories of how generations experience note-worthy, life shaping events, the researcher recommends that future studies explore how the global health crisis specifically influenced each generation's preferences and desires for project team motivation and engagement, comparing findings to the generational workplace literature prior to the social and workplace transitions that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Replication efforts could also include interviewing Generation Z project professionals later in their careers to explore how preferences and desires are influenced as this youngest generation ages and acquires more

professional experience. Finally, as this single site case study research effort focused on a

division of a multi-national company in the information technology industry, the researcher

recommends replicating this study in other divisions of the same company as well as other

organizations in different disciplines to compare and validate findings for deeper insight into

how Generation Z impacts intergenerational project team dynamics is best motivated and

engaged in the workplace.

Reflections

This section describes the researcher's reflections that pertain to this research effort.

Opportunities for personal and professional growth are described including reflections related to

the researcher's preconceived ideas and biases associated with this inquiry. This section also

incorporates the researcher's ruminations about biblical principles that align with this inquiry and

its associated findings. As such, this section allows the researcher to reflect on how this effort is

personally, professionally, and spiritually formative and impactful.

Personal and Professional Growth

This research effort has provided valuable opportunities for personal and professional

growth. Due to the researcher's previous career experience as a project management professional

and her current role teaching undergraduate Generation Z business students over the past seven

years, each phase of this research effort and its associated findings provided a formative

experience that will have lasting personal and professional implications. Given these

experiences, the researched possessed personal assumptions and biases pertaining to project team

leadership principles as well as how Generation Z representatives are motivated and engaged.

While the researcher followed the interview guide when conducting participant interviews to

reduce opportunities for bias in this study, personal preconceptions had the potential to influence

participant responses as well as the researcher's identification and interpretation of the themes revealed in this effort.

While qualitative researchers do position themselves in the research study, they must take special care to identify and convey multiple diverse participant perspectives and views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Accordingly, the themes that emerged from both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z participant responses were largely unanticipated by the researcher. However, upon deeper reflection and analysis during and after data collection procedures, these themes provided logical insight to actions and behaviors that the researcher had consistently observed in the time she has spent working closely with similarly aged college students representing this generational cohort. As such, the researcher will utilize the themes surrounding Generation Z's preferences and desire for authentic connection, relationships, and community as she strives to teach, encourage, and develop this generation of business professionals.

Furthermore, as the researcher trains graduate students in the project management discipline, insights gained from this research effort will significantly impact her posture toward engaging her students as well as how she instructs them on various project management leadership principles. For graduate students who represent Generation Z, the researcher will utilize the findings from the literature and this study about this generation's preferences and desires to more deeply and effectively engage these students. She will also share the findings from the literature and this study to develop students for current and future careers in project management and various other business disciplines.

Biblical Perspective

While this inquiry provided multiple opportunities for personal and professional growth, it more importantly offered opportunities for spiritual reflection and cultivation. The concept of

generations interacting with and influencing each other is found throughout scripture. The psalmist writes of generations passing down to one another "the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done" (Psalm 78: 4, ESV). Malachi 4:6 describes how God will "turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers." Psalm 78 commands God's people to tell the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord so that the next generation might know him. Accordingly, these and other scriptures describing how generations are to positively influence one another and perpetuate the steadfast love of God not only have implications in the context of family, but wherever Christians interact with older, younger, and peer generations of individuals.

As Christ's image-bearers both inside and outside of the workplace, Christian professionals who understand and honor each generation's unique preferences and values can better reflect and reveal God's image with deeper empathy and authenticity. Hardy (1990) ascertained that business organizations strengthen the fabric of this world by enabling God's children to realize their God-given callings. Furthermore, when leaders cultivate employees, work is utilized as a platform for expressing God-given talents (Keller & Alsdorf, 2012; Van Duzer, 2010). Based on the literature and the findings of this study, Generation Z desires authentic connection and personal relationships with both colleagues and leadership more than any previous workplace generation. As such, Christian professionals who engage with their youngest employees in this manner can participate in meaningful professional and kingdom cultivation.

Based in scripture, Hardy (1990) also contended that groups and teams within business organizations align with God's design for humans to thrive in community. The themes emerging from this research effort surrounding Generation Z professionals' desire for community in the

workplace are particularly impactful when viewed in light of these assertions. Themes emerging from this study reveal that Generation Z values relationships with both peers and older generations of teammates and thrives in a supportive environment where teammates want to succeed as individuals and as a group. Furthermore, the literature and findings from this study suggest that Generation Z professionals want their job roles to provide opportunities to positively impact society. As the Proverbs writer teaches, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17, NIV). Given this youngest generation of professionals' open posture toward community both inside and outside of the workplace, Christian professionals who work with this generation are well positioned to sharpen this next generation of leaders for business organizations and God's kingdom.

The psalmist also teaches that God stands by his covenant and is faithful to a thousand generations (Psalm 105:8). This and similar scriptures surrounding God's faithfulness to previous and future generations provides comfort and encouragement that God's provision and strength guides and supports Christian professionals who long to display God's love in the workplace and play an impactful role in cultivating the lives of their colleagues in a positive manner. Such spiritual workplace aspirations are sometimes difficult and fallible as imperfect humans engage each other personally and professionally. However, when individuals seek engagement that is authentic and foundational to God's love and faithfulness, generations of professionals will be engaged in kingdom work.

Summary of Reflections

Each phase of this research effort has provided the researcher with a formative experience that is both professionally and spiritually impactful. In her current vocation as a business professor, the researcher will utilize the themes surrounding Generation Z's preferences

and desire for authentic connection, relationships, and community as she strives to teach, encourage, and develop this generation of business professionals. She will also share the findings from the literature and this study to develop students for current and future careers in project management and various other business disciplines. Most importantly, this research effort furthers the researcher's personal resolve to engage students and professionals with authenticity and empathy to positively impact generations of individuals and inspire both business and kingdom development.

Summary of Section 3

This qualitative case study analysis examined how Generation Z is influencing intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance by gaining perspectives and insights from seven Generation Z project team professionals and ten Non-Generation Z professionals who currently work on teams with Generation Z teammates. Accordingly, responses from both Generation Z and Non-Generation Z project team members to open-ended, semi-structured interview questions concerning the literature's most significant aspects team engagement revealed 11 salient themes. Themes emerging from Generation Z interview responses included a preference for personal, direct communication, a preference for expedient, creative team/group decision-making, a preference for personal, communicative conflict management, a desire for personal connection with leaders for coaching and growth, and a desire for connection with teammates and passions. Themes revealed from Non-Generation Z interview responses included an observed informal communication style, a mixed approach to group and team decision-making, a lack of observed team conflict, an observed desire for personal, authentic connection with leadership, a hunger for learning and growth, and an emphasis on team performance.

Findings from this study help provide insight to strategic business leaders to effectively begin developing this next generation of professionals as they increasingly represent their employee population. Findings are particularly applicable to the field of project management, which is heavily comprised of project teams working together to accomplish strategic deliverables for business organizations and their customers. A deeper understanding of Generation Z's workplace preferences and desires also supports kingdom cultivation as professionals who understand and honor each generation's unique preferences and values can better reflect and reveal God's image with empathy and authenticity. Whether leading an intergenerational project team or a generationally diverse business unit, the insight provided by this inquiry can aid organizations in engaging, motivating, and developing this newest generation of professionals and future business leaders.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Professional workplace literature surrounding Generation Z is in its infancy and little is known about how this cohort interacts and performs in a team setting, especially when put together with other generational groups (Burton et al., 2019). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and is best engaged toward effective team performance. The conceptual framework selected for this study originated with Mannheim's (1952) theory of generations, which understood a generation to be a cohort of a population who have experienced noteworthy events in their youth during a distinct period of time. Furthermore, both Maslow's (1943) and Herzberg's (1967) motivational theories provided a foundation for most workplace and team motivation research and were also relevant to this research framework. Like other generations,

Generation Z professionals not only identify with similar influential events but are also subject to both workplace and team motivation factors and considerations.

Accordingly, this inquiry sought to understand the perspectives of both Generation Z project team professionals as well as project team members and leaders representing other generational cohort groups who work on project teams with Generation Z members. Consistent with qualitative case study research supported by Stake (2010), Yin (2014), and Creswell and Poth (2018), data were collected though semi-structured interviews with seven Generation Z project team professionals and 10 Non-Generation Z project professionals who currently served on teams with Generation Z colleagues. Interviews were conducted with participants including both Generation Z and other generational team cohorts to ensure that findings represented multiple perspectives on the topic as well as diverse views (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Eleven themes emerging from both Generation Z's descriptions of their own preferences and experiences and older teammates' observations working with their youngest colleagues revealed this generation's desire for authenticity, connection, and community in the workplace. Findings are particularly applicable to the field of project management, which is heavily comprised of project teams working together to accomplish strategic deliverables for business organizations and their customers. Furthermore, these findings help provide insight to strategic business organizations and leaders to effectively develop this next generation of professionals as they increasingly represent their employee population.

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Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Email Template

Dear Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Business at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Business Administration degree. The purpose of my research is to understand how Generation Z professionals (born 1995 to 2010) are best engaged in project teams and influence intergenerational project team dynamics. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and have current or recent past experience working on project teams with multiple generations, including Generation Z. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview and review their interview transcript. Interviews should last approximately one hour and will be conducted via web conference. Interview transcripts will be sent via email within one week of the interview session for participants to review for accuracy. This transcript review process should take approximately 20 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential and will not be published.

To participate in my study and set up an interview date and time, please contact me via email at

████████████████████

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, please sign the consent document by typing your name and date on it and return it to me by email prior to the interview.

Participants will be entered in a raffle to receive a $50 Amazon gift card for their participation in my study. Once a participant name is drawn, he or she will receive the gift card via email.

Sincerely,

Karah Sprouse
Instructor of Business and Doctoral Candidate
████████████████████

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

How Generation Z Influences Multi-Generational Project Team Dynamics and Engagement
Karah S. Sprouse
Liberty University
School of Business

You are invited to be in a research study to understand how Generation Z professionals (born 1995 to 2010) are best engaged in project teams and how they influence intergenerational project team dynamics. You were selected as a possible participant because you are 18 years of age or older and have current or recent experience (within the last twelve months) working on an intergenerational project team at your job that includes Generation Z members. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.
Karah Sprouse, a doctoral candidate in the School of Business at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to explore how Generation Z impacts multi-generational project team dynamics and how members of this generation are best engaged to promote effective team performance.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:
      1. Participate in a 60-minute, audio-recorded interview via web conference utilizing Zoom.
      2. Review your interview transcript for accuracy. The transcript will be emailed to you one week after the interview and will need to be returned by email within one week of receipt. This review should take approximately 20 minutes.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include the potential for the organization to enhance its impact on the community by assisting in the improvement of strategic capabilities. Additionally, the information may assist business organizations in enhancing their services to stakeholders including employees and customers through enhanced project team engagement and performance.

Compensation: Participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a $50 gift card for their willingness and consent to participate in this study. Once a participant name is drawn, he or she will receive the gift card via email. Otherwise, participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.
      • Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

• Data will be stored on a password locked computer and in a locked safe. The data may be used in future presentations.

• Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your participating institution. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Karah Sprouse. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ████████████████. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Russell Fail at ████████████████.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher[s], **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.
Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.
Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

_____ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix C: Interview Guide – Generation Z Project Professional

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study as well as set aside time for this interview. Your insight and experiences will be extremely helpful in exploring how the youngest professional workforce generation, Generation Z, influences intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged for successful project team performance. This interview should take approximately one hour. It will first contain a set of clarifying questions that confirm consent and qualifications for participating in this study. Following these questions, I will ask eight questions that invite you to describe in detail your own perceptions, experiences, and anything that you have witnessed as a Generation Z project professional that is a current member of a multi-generational project team.

1. First, please help me by answering the following questions:

    a. Have you turned in a signed consent form to participate in this interview?
    b. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me before we begin this interview? If so, did I satisfactorily answer your questions?
    c. Do you consent to a verbatim transcript of our interview and to complete the interview review form?
    d. Do you understand the approximate age/birth years for Generation Z?
    e. Do you understand the definition of intergenerational project teams?

2. Please help me confirm your qualifications for participating in this study by answering the following questions:

    a. Are you currently employed by the researched organization?
    b. Are you currently serving on a project team comprised of team members representing multiple generations?
    c. Does your birth year designate you as a member of Generation Z (1995 – 2010)?
    d. Do you agree to share your perspectives and experiences in an honest and detailed manner?

3. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your communication styles and preferences for project team communication?

4. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding communication with project team members belonging to other generations.

5. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your preferences for effective team/group decision-making?

6. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding team/group decision-making within intergenerational project teams.

7. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your preferences for effective team conflict management?

8. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding conflict with project team members belonging to other generations.

9. Please describe the project team environment that you work best in and how you may or may not have experienced this as a Generation Z project professional on an intergenerational team.

10. As a Generation Z project professional, what project leadership actions or behaviors do you find most effective?

11. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding effective project leadership actions or behaviors in motivating an intergenerational project team.

This concludes our interview. Thank you for providing your valuable experience, perspectives, and insights to these questions. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in this research effort.

Appendix D: Interview Guide – Non-Generation Z Project Professional

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study as well as set aside time for this interview. Your insight and experiences will be extremely helpful in exploring how the youngest professional workforce generation, Generation Z, influences intergenerational project team dynamics and is best engaged for successful project team performance. This interview should take approximately one hour or less. It will first contain a set of clarifying questions that confirm consent and qualifications for participating in this study. Following these questions, I will ask four questions that invite you to describe in detail your own perceptions, experiences, and anything that you have witnessed as a Non-Generation Z project professional that is a current member of a multi-generational project team that contains Generation Z team members.

1. Before moving forward with the interview, please help me by answering the following questions:

   a. Have you turned in a signed consent form to participate in this interview?
   b. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me before we begin this interview? If so, did I satisfactorily answer your questions?
   c. Do you consent to a verbatim transcript of our interview and to complete the interview review form?
   d. Do you understand the approximate age/birth years for Generation Z (1995 – 2010)?
   e. Do you understand the definition of intergenerational project teams?

2. Please help me confirm your qualifications for participating in this study by answering the following questions:

   a. Are you currently employed by the researched organization?
   b. Are you currently serving on a project team comprised of team members representing multiple generations, including members of Generation Z?
   c. Can you please share that generational cohort that you represent due to your birth year (Millennial: 1980 - 1994, Generation X: 1965 - 1979, Baby Boomer: 1946 - 1964, Veteran/Traditionalist: 1922 - 1946)?
   d. Do you agree to share your perspectives and experiences in an honest and detailed manner?

3. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding communication within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

4. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding team/group decision-making within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

5. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding conflict within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

6. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding effective project leadership actions or behaviors in motivating an intergenerational project team that contains Generation Z project professionals.

This concludes our interview. Thank you for providing your valuable experience, perspectives, and insights to these questions. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in this research effort.

Appendix E: Field Note Template – Generation Z Project Professional

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DOCUMENTATION SHEET

Interview with (Participant Pseudonym): _____

Date and Time: _____

Setting/Location: _____

Signed Consent Form: YES   NO

1. First, please help me by answering the following questions:

    a. Have you turned in a signed consent form to participate in this interview?

    b. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me before we begin this interview? If so, did I satisfactorily answer your questions?

    c. Do you consent to a verbatim transcript of our interview and to complete the interview review form?

    d. Do you understand the approximate age/birth years for Generation Z?

    e. Do you understand the definition of intergenerational project teams?

2. Please help me confirm your qualifications for participating in this study by answering the following questions:

    a. Are you currently employed by the researched organization?

    b. Are you currently serving on a project team comprised of team members representing multiple generations?

    c. Does your birth year designate you as a member of Generation Z (1995 – 2010)?

     d. Do you agree to share your perspectives and experiences in an honest and detailed manner?

3. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your communication styles and preferences for project team communication?

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4. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding communication with project team members belonging to other generations.

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5. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your preferences for effective team/group decision-making?

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6. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding team/group decision-making within intergenerational project teams.

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7. As a Generation Z project professional, how would you describe your preferences for effective team conflict management?

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8. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding conflict with project team members belonging to other generations.

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9. Please describe the project team environment that you work best in and how you may or may not have experienced this as a Generation Z project professional on an intergenerational team.

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10. As a Generation Z project professional, what project leadership actions or behaviors do you find most effective?

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11. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding effective project leadership actions or behaviors in motivating an intergenerational project team.

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Researcher's (Interviewer's) Thoughts and Observations:

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The Researcher's (Interviewer's) Feelings Regarding the Interview:

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The Researcher's (Interviewer's) Final Participant Thoughts and Observations:

Appendix F: Field Note Template – Non-Generation Z Project Professional

PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DOCUMENTATION SHEET

Interview with (Participant Pseudonym): _____

Date and Time: _____

Setting/Location: _____

Signed Consent Form: YES   NO

1. Before moving forward with the interview, please help me by answering the following questions:

    a. Have you turned in a signed consent form to participate in this interview?

    b. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me before we begin this interview? If so, did I satisfactorily answer your questions?

    c. Do you consent to a verbatim transcript of our interview and to complete the interview review form?

    d. Do you understand the approximate age/birth years for Generation Z (1995 – 2010)?

    e. Do you understand the definition of intergenerational project teams?

2. Please help me confirm your qualifications for participating in this study by answering the following questions:

    a. Are you currently employed by the researched organization?

    b. Are you currently serving on a project team comprised of team members representing multiple generations, including members of Generation Z?

    c. Can you please share that generational cohort that you represent due to your birth year (Millennial: 1980 - 1994, Generation X: 1965 - 1979, Baby Boomer: 1946 - 1964, Veteran/Traditionalist: 1922 - 1946)?

    d. Do you agree to share your perspectives and experiences in an honest and detailed manner?

3. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding communication within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

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4. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding team/group decision-making within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

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5. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding conflict within intergenerational project teams that contain Generation Z project professionals.

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6. Please describe in detail your experience as well as anything that you have witnessed regarding effective project leadership actions or behaviors in motivating an intergenerational project team that contains Generation Z project professionals.

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Researcher's (Interviewer's) Thoughts and Observations:

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The Researcher's (Interviewer's) Feelings Regarding the Interview:

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The Researcher's (Interviewer's) Final Participant Thoughts and Observations:

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