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Exploring Generational Differences Between Generation Y and Baby Boomers in Work-Life Balance

Afton Barber

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EXPLORING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENERATION Y AND
BABY BOOMERS IN WORK-LIFE BALANCE

by

AFTON SMITH BARBER

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Human Resource Development and Technology

Jerry W. Gilley, Ed.D., Committee Chair

College of Business and Technology

The University of Texas at Tyler
May 2014

The University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, Texas

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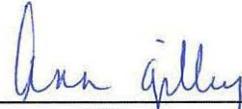
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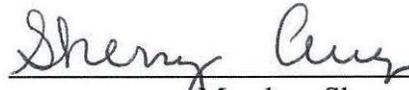
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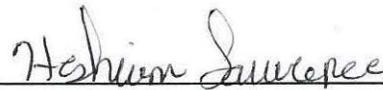
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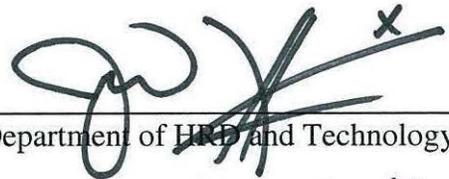
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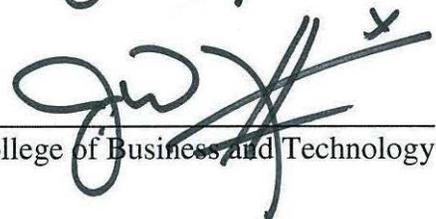
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Dedication

For Bella and Jack Edward, the two reasons I strive for work-life balance. I love you more than you will ever know, "I love you to the moon and back."

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Abstract

EXPLORING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENERATION Y AND
BABY BOOMERS IN WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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May 2014

With the recent addition of Generation Y to the workforce, workplace dynamics are changing to reflect a labor force which now encompasses the four extant commonly working generations. This study seeks to identify generational differences found between two of the generations in the current workforce, Baby Boomers and Generation Y, by isolating a specific work value, work-life balance, as promoted through managerial practices. Limited research has examined the links among the topics of generational differences, work-life balance, and managerial practices. Therefore, this study will attempt to explore the relationships among the three topics.

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

This chapter presents the problem statement that will be the focus of this study. In addition, this chapter will provide the following: 1) background of the research problem; 2) the need for this study; 3) statement of the problem; 4) research questions that will be explored in this study; 5) the purpose and significance of this study; and 6) theoretical underpinning of the study. Lastly, the definitions of key terms and the researcher's perspective are presented.

Introduction and Background

Workplaces are becoming more age diverse (Cogin, 2012), encompassing workers from all four generations, all working together, changing the dynamics in the workplace and raising questions about the multigenerational workforce (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012). Kowske, Rasch, and Wiley (2010) refer to this phenomenon as “the great generational divide at work” (p. 265). Currently there are four generations making up the multigenerational American workforce including Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y (Cole, Smith, & Lucas, 2002; Strauss & Howe, 1991). With the inclusion of four generations in the workforce, researchers and practitioners are examining the generational differences among the individuals specifically considering the nature, characteristics, consequences, and dynamics among the generations.

Until recently, Baby Boomers were the largest generation in the American workforce, however, large numbers of retiring Baby Boomers are now being replaced by Generation Y workers and ultimately changing the workplace (Saxena & Jain, 2012; Twenge, 2010). The record number of Generation Y workers, “estimated at 1.7 billion worldwide representing 25.5% of the world’s population,” are set to replace the retiring Baby Boomers over the next decade (Saxena & Jain, 2012, p. 114). Furthermore, Generation Y workers are the new key workers in the workforce because of their sheer volume and their very different characteristics thus representing the beginning of some drastic changes in the workforce (Cole et al., 2002). Safer (2007) describes the workplace as a “psychological battlefield” between “self-centered Millennials” and “their stodgy, rule abiding Baby Boomer bosses” (as cited in Kowske et al., 2010, p. 265). “The aging and ultimate retirement of the baby boom generation represents a major demographic and sociological phenomenon that has far reaching implications for organizations, the government, and society as a whole” (Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008, p. 70). Therefore, the generational shift within the workforce presents changes and challenges in the workforce, which both scholars and practitioners are addressing through research and business practices.

Need for the Study

The current research questions whether there are generational differences in the workplace and contends that further research is needed on generational differences with regard to work values (Costanza et al., 2012). Scholars (Aresenault, 2004; Costanza et al., 2012; Jorgensen, 2003; Twenge, 2010) are calling for more empirical research that focuses on the generational differences in the workplace. According to Westerman and

Yamamura (2007) “the examination of generational differences among workers is a critical and underdeveloped area of inquiry for management research” (p. 150). With the current multigenerational workforce, it is important for managers and organizations to recognize what distinguishes one generation from the next; however, there is limited empirical research that identifies the specific generational differences (Aresenault, 2004; Jorgensen, 2003). Aresenault (2004) claims that there is a lack of understanding about generational differences, which has prevented “organizations from capitalizing on the strengths of generational differences” (p. 124) and contends that “the principal reason for the misunderstanding and lack of appreciation is the scarcity of empirical research to validate generational differences” (p. 126).

According to Jorgensen (2003), literature has focused on generational differences and the impact that work design and workforce strategies have on organizations, and such literature is based mainly on observation instead of empirical research. Additionally, “one of the biggest challenges in research on generational differences is the lack of a workable time machine” because much of the “studies on generational difference in work values are cross-sectional, with data on workers of different ages collected at one point in time” (Twenge, 2010, p. 202).

One main reason for the lack of empirical research centers on the emerging new generation, Generation Y. Since Generation Y has recently been entering the workforce, there is limited empirical research available for the generation, and thus there are limited studies that compare Generation Y to previous generations. In addition, there is contradictory literature regarding generational differences as well as literature on the specific generations. Hewlett, Sherbin, and Sumberg (2009) suggest that Generation Y

and Baby Boomers are similar and offers a comparative analysis between the two. Similarly, Levenson (2010) claims that “there is insufficient evidence that [Generation Y] is fundamentally different than its predecessors” (p. 263). Research by Saxena and Jain (2012) claims that Generation Y workers have different workplace needs and expectations. A study by Smola and Sutton (2002) found that generational differences in workers’ values exist among Baby Boomers and Generation X; however, there is insufficient research that compares Generation Y to previous generations.

Due to the shortcomings in the literature, it is difficult to fully grasp the generational differences among Generation Y and Baby Boomers. From the standpoint of managers and organizational development, it is important to understand these generational differences among workers because “these generational differences may be a tool that managers can use to create more employee productivity, innovation and corporate citizenship” (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 363). Westerman and Yamamura (2007) claim that “failure on the part of managers to understand and adjust appropriately to generational differences and the demands of new generations entering the workplace can result in misunderstandings, miscommunications, and mixed signals” (p. 151). In addition, this lack of understanding can affect employee productivity, innovation, and corporate citizenship (Kupperschmidt, 2000), “ultimately resulting in problems with employee retention and turnover” (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 151). Therefore, there is a need for more research on generational differences that can influence managerial practices.

Statement of the Problem

According to Wieck, Dols, and Northam (2009), one of the challenges for organizations is “creating an environment where all four generations can coexist and thrive” (p. 169). This can be a challenge because “absorbing a new generation into the workplace can lead to or exacerbate conflict” (Lower, 2008, p.80). Fyock (1990) warned that failure to deal with the multigenerational workforce may cause misunderstandings and miscommunications; therefore, managers and leaders within organizations will have to contend with all four generations in the workforce and create an environment in which all four generations can co-exist and be productive. Therefore, it is important for organizations and managers to recognize generational differences and work to create a workplace of “inclusion in which every employee can thrive and work toward common goals” (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2013, p. 40).

With the generational shift in the workforce, problems within organizations, specifically for managers, can arise (Kaifi, Nafei, Khanfar, & Kaifi, 2012) and cause issues among workers “that ultimately result in reduced effectiveness” (Colquitt, Lepine, & Wesson, 2011, p. 392). O’Bannon (2001) claims that “as each new generation enters the workforce conflicts are assumed” because each generation brings with them different “boundaries, ground rules, and expectations” (p. 95).

Research Questions

To gain an insight into employee perceptions of the establishment of work-life balance, generational differences, and specific management practices associated with work-life balance, the overall research questions to be answered by this study are as follows:

RQ1) Are there generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees? This research question will be examined from the employees' perspective.

RQ2) Which managerial behaviors and practices promote the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees? This research question will further explore three managerial practices: involve employees in decision-making, treat employees as unique individuals, and encourage teamwork and collaboration. The three predictors (involve employees in decision-making, treat employees as unique individuals, and encourage teamwork and collaboration) were chosen for exploration in this study based on the following literature. Generation Y workers have been linked to such characteristics as belonging to a group (Cole et al., 2002; Parry & Urwin, 2011), input into decision-making (Cole et al., 2002; McCrindle & Hooper, 2006) and prefer collaboration (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002); therefore, these two predictors were chosen to distinguish Generation Y from the Baby Boomers. Additionally, previous research suggests that managers should treat employees as unique individuals (Costanza et al., 2012; Twenge, 2010; Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). These three managerial behaviors were taken from the Gilley and Gilley (2010) instrument and supported by the reviewed literature.

From these research questions, the following hypotheses have been developed to answer the overarching research questions.

H_0 = There are no generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

H₁ = There are generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

H_{2a} = Managers who involve employees in decision-making positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{2b} = Managers who involve employees in decision-making positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

H_{3a} = Managers who treat employees as unique individuals positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{3b} = Managers who treat employees as unique individuals positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

H_{4a} = Managers who encourage teamwork and collaboration positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{4b} = Managers who encourage teamwork and collaboration positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

Study Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this study will be to explore the generational differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers with regard to work-life balance by examining employees' perceptions of their managers' promotion of work-life balance in the workplace. Since managers and organizations must contend with the differences in generational work values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors among the cohorts, this study will make a case for generational differences within organizations. According to Chi, Maier, and Gursoy (2013), "it is important to understand employees' perceptions of their managers, especially employees' perceptions of managers from older and younger

generational cohorts because those perceptions may have significant impact on employees' motivational, organizational, and productivity outcomes" (p. 42). Additionally, "generational differences significantly impact employee attitudes and outcomes in the workplace" (Westerman & Yamamura, 2007, p. 150). By further examining generational differences, this study may offer significant findings that can assist in closing the research gap as well as offer specific knowledge about Generation Y and Baby Boomers and managerial practices that can be applied by organizations and managers in the workplace.

Theoretical Underpinning of the Study

The research will be underpinned by generational theory as first noted by Strauss and Howe in 1991, which examined "the big picture of historical and cultural events that shape generations" (Coomes & DeBard, 2002, p. 14). "The idea is that common experiences shared by individuals of a particular age at a particular point in time create similarities (e.g. attitudes) among those in the cohort" (Costanza et al., 2012, p. 376). According to Strauss and Howe (1991) a generation has a "peer personality," which is defined as a "generational persona recognized and determined by (1) common age location; (2) common beliefs and behavior; and (3) perceived membership in a common generation" (p. 64). Using generational theory, this study recognizes that "to be a generation, its members must recognize it as distinct from other generations" (Coomes & DeBard, 2004, p. 8). Furthermore, generational theory supports the notion "that a generation is shaped by its interactions with other extant generations" (Coomes & DeBard, 2004, p. 8).

Through generational theory, a generational perspective can provide managers and organizations with one more tool for understanding multigenerational workers, thus establishing the case for generational management. “By exploring the factors that shape a generation’s peer personality and discerning identifying characteristics of that personality” managers and organizations “can develop more effective policies and practices” (Coomes & DeBard, 2004, p. 13). Coomes and DeBard (2004) contend that one generation’s values, attitudes, and behaviors are not the same as the previous generation; therefore, using Strauss and Howe’s (2000) generational analysis allows for the observation of the emerging generation’s movement away from the preceding generation’s values. By using the theoretical framework of Strauss and Howe (1991, 2000) this study will build upon the belief that there are generational differences within today’s workforce.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to two specific cohorts, Baby Boomers and Generation Y, as they are categorized by literature; therefore, the study may not be applicable to other generations. In addition, the researcher used secondary data and, thus, had no involvement in the selection of participants in the two cohorts. Further, the age range categories on the instrument were previously determined by the original researchers. The use of secondary data holds very specific boundaries due to the lack of control from the current researcher.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are significant to this study:

- 1) The secondary data used is valid and reliable.

2) The study was confidential and the participants are unknown.

Definitions of Terms

This study will use definitions derived from the review of literature. The following list of terms and definitions are applicable to this study.

Generation: A group of individuals who share similar birth years and life events (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Generation Y: Individuals born between 1981 and 2000 (Wieck et al., 2009).

Baby Boomers: Individuals born between 1946 and 1964 (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Work-life Balance: The balance between an individual's work responsibilities and non-work activities (Kalliath & Brough, 2008; Kumar & Chakraborty, 2013).

Researcher's Perspective

As a member of the Generation Y cohort and working mother of two small children, this research holds significant meaning for me. Although, I may be considered a member of Generation Y due to my birth year, much of my personal characteristics and values do not fit the typical Generation Y mold. However, I do value and expect work-life balance in the workplace. For me, the idea of being a working mom is normal, as I was raised by an amazing working mother who was the greatest living example I know personally.

As a researcher, I am fascinated by the generational workforce and how managers work with the new incoming generation and their expectations. From this research, I hope to learn more about both Generation Y and Baby Boomer workers, and establish a clear difference between the two. In addition, I hope to gain a better understanding of

specific managerial practices that influence work-life balance, which will personally assist me in my own career growth.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter reviews the areas of literature relevant to studying generational differences among Baby Boomers and Generation Y, work-life balance, and managerial practices. The review of literature will be organized into seven sections: generational workforce, Generation Y, Baby Boomers, generational differences, work values, work-life balance, and managerial practices. The search strategy for conducting this review included the following electronic databases: Digital Dissertations, Business Source Complete, SAGE: Management and Organization, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar from the Muntz Library at the University of Texas at Tyler. The search terms used included “generational differences,” “Generation Y,” “Baby Boomers,” “work-life balance,” “generational theory,” and “managerial practices” in the keywords search fields. These keywords were also combined in the search fields to narrow the literature results in order to get the available cross-sectional literature. The database search resulted in a number of journal articles and books with relevance to the topics of interest.

Generational Workforce

When examining the multigenerational workforce, it is important to understand what constitutes a workforce of multiple generations. Therefore, this section will offer a better understanding of what defines a generation as well as the four generations present in today’s workforce. “Before proceeding, it is important to note that generations, as they

have generally been written about, refer to groups of individuals (i.e., cohorts) based on shared experiences at similar ages” (Costanza et al., 2012, p. 376). Lancaster and Stillman (2002) claimed that “events and conditions that each of us experience during our formative years determine who we are and how we see the world” (p. 14). Parment (2013) supports the notion that “rather than using time of birth to determine different generations, generational cohorts are set apart by cataclysmic events that produce a change in the values, attitudes, and predispositions in a society” (p. 190). Authors and society have labeled the generations; however, the generation labels and defining years are often inconsistent (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 364).

Various authors have defined generations in the workplace, however, two predominant sources, Strauss and Howe (1991) and Kupperschmidt (2000), are typically cited throughout the generational literature. A generation as defined by Strauss and Howe (1991) is “a special cohort-group whose length approximately matches that of a basic phase of life, or about twenty-two years” (p. 34). Kupperschmidt (2000) defined “a generation as an identifiable group, which shares years of birth and hence significant life events at critical stages of development” (Wong et al., 2008, p. 878). For this study, these two definitions will serve as the basis for defining the generations present in today’s workforce.

The current American workforce is broken down into four generations: Veterans or Traditionalists (1925-1945); Baby Boomers (1946-1964); Generation X (1965-1980); and Generation Y or Millennials (1981-2000) (Reeves & Oh, 2007). Strauss and Howe’s (1991) taxonomy of the four generations is accepted by most researchers and they acknowledge that there are varying start and end dates among generations (Costanza et

al., 2012). While researchers differ slightly in what precise birth years define the generations, most agree there are four broad generations of employees (Wong et al., 2008) and that each generation has different attributes (Hansen & Leuty, 2012). All four generations have “distinct attitudes, behaviors, and expectations in the workplace” as well as different traits, characteristics, and values (Wieck et al., 2009, p. 169).

For this specific study, the two generations that will be focused on are the Baby Boomers and Generation Y. Due to the mass exit of the Baby Boomers and the mass entrance of Generation Y, this research will concentrate on these two cohorts since they are driving the current generational shift in the workforce (Saxena & Jain, 2012). In addition, literature over the past decade has examined the differences between Baby Boomers and Generation X (Kupperschmidt, 2000), and suggested generational differences do exist (Smola & Sutton, 2002); however, less research has been conducted focusing on Baby Boomers and Generation Y. The following two sections will offer a synthesis about what is known about Generation Y and the Baby Boomers.

Generation Y

This generation is comprised of workers born between the years 1981 and 2000 (Reeves & Oh, 2007; Wieck et al., 2009). Generation Y has been referred to as other names such as: “Millennials” (Strauss & Howe, 2000), “Net Generation” (Shaw & Fairhurst, 2008), “GenMe” (Twenge, 2006) and “Generation Next” (Zemke, Raines, & Filipezak, 2000; Martin, 2005). A majority of the reviewed literature uses the term Generation Y or Millennials interchangeably because they refer to the same cohort (Cole et al., 2002; Hauw & Vos, 2010; Twenge, 2010; Zemke et al., 2000). An important note for this study is that the label for this generation is not consistently agreed upon, nor are

the dates that define it. “There is significant disagreement among the various authors about which span of years should be encompassed within any one generation” (Reeves & Oh, 2007, p. 295). In addition, the review of literature defines the lowest birth year at 1978 and the highest limit at 2004, depending on the source (Wesner & Miller, 2008). For this study, Generation Y will be the primary term used, but relevant literature using the term Millennials will also be included as appropriate to support the study.

The majority of the reviewed Generation Y literature has focused on their characteristics, traits, and values as well as understanding and characterizing this generation (Cole et al., 2002; Munro, 2009). A good portion of the literature and research has focused on attracting, retaining, and managing Generation Y as well as their individual characteristics and values (Cole et al., 2002; Deal, Altman, Rogelberg, & 2010; Hauw & Vos, 2010; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Wong et al., 2008). Cole et al. (2002) claim that much interest has focused on understanding this generation as well as the impact they have on the American workplace. What information does the current reviewed literature and research provide us about this generation? Table 1 through Table 3 offer a summary of all the traits, values, and characteristics of Generation Y found through the literature review process.

Table 1
Generation Y Characteristics

Characteristics	Author
Best educated generation	Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009; Levenson, 2010
Independent	Izzo, 2002; Saxena & Jain, 2012
Entrepreneurial	Izzo, 2002; Saxena & Jain, 2012
Tech savvy	Izzo, 2002; Saxena & Jain, 2012; Wong et al., 2008; Karefalk, Pettersson, & Zhu, 2007
Dislike micromanagement	Izzo, 2002; Saxena & Jain, 2012; Weingarten, 2009
Thrive in innovative environment	Cole et al., 2002
Relaxed work environment	Cates, 2010
High trust in authority	Reeves & Oh, 2007
Little concern for job security	Hart, 2006; Wong et al., 2008
Flight risk	Twenge & Campbell, 2008
Good at multi-tasking	Freifield, 2007; Kodatt, 2009
Results focused	Herbison & Boseman, 2009; Shih & Allen, 2007
Continuous feedback	Hastings, 2008

Table 2
Generation Y Values

Values	Author
Empowerment	Izzo, 2002; Saxena & Jain, 2012
Challenging work	Izzo, 2002; Saxena & Jain, 2012
Excitement	Izzo, 2002; Saxena & Jain, 2012
Meaningful work	Reeves & Oh, 2007; Wieck et al., 2009
Contribution to organization	Raines & Tulgan, 2007; Cates, 2010; Downing, 2006
Make a Difference	Raines & Tulgan, 2007
Input into decision making	Cole et al., 2002; McCrindle & Hooper, 2006
Belonging to group or team	Parry & Urwin, 2011
Work-life balance	Downing, 2006; Cramer, Parris, & Saville, 2011; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Parry & Urwin, 2011

Table 3
Generation Y Attitudes

Attitudes	Author
Self-assured	Lancaster & Stillman, 2002
Narcissistic	Twenge & Campbell, 2008
High self-confidence	Downing, 2006

A review of literature reveals the following characteristics, attitudes, and traits of Generation Y. They are the best educated generation to enter the workforce (Sujansky & Ferri-Reed, 2009) with twice the college credentials as that of their predecessors (Levenson, 2010). Izzo (2002) “characterized [Generation Y] as entrepreneurial and independent, digitally savvy, rejecting micromanagement, and valuing empowerment, challenge, and excitement” (Saxena & Jain, 2012, p. 116). Generation Y wants to do meaningful work (Reeves & Oh, 2007; Wieck et al., 2009) that will add value to the organization’s strategic direction (Munro, 2009) and they want to contribute and make a difference in their workplace (Raines & Tulgan, 2007). They also care about how their work contributes to the big picture of the organization (Cates, 2010). In addition, they value input into decision making (Cole et al., 2002; McCrindle & Hooper, 2006) and respond well when employers look to integrate and allow them to make contributions immediately (Downing, 2006). They want to belong to a group or team (Parry & Urwin, 2011) and thrive in innovative environments (Cole et al., 2002) as well as a relaxed work environment (Cates, 2010).

Research by Reeves and Oh (2007) claims that Generation Y has a high trust in authority, whereas research by Martin and Tulgan (2002) suggests that they have mistrust for traditional hierarchies and authority. Wolburg and Pokrywczynski (2001) found that they have low levels of trust and loyalty to corporate cultures. Hart (2006) found that, in comparison to other generations, they have little concern for job security (Wong et al., 2008); therefore, they tend to change jobs often within a short period of time if they feel that their needs are not met (Morton, 2002; Kim, Knight, & Crutsinger, 2009). For this reason, Twenge and Campbell (2008) define them as a flight risk to organizations. One

year is their definition of a long-term commitment (Martin, 2005), and research by Hastings (2008) found that only one in five anticipates tenure with the same company for six years or longer. Zemke et al. (2000) found that Generation Y workers consider job jumping every two years in search of greater compensation or purposeful work to be normal for this generation. In conjunction, Eiser (2009) attributes the lack of long-term commitment from this generation to being impatient, easily distracted, and uninterested in low-level tasks. Due to their work attitude about long-term commitment, Generation Y has been viewed as being vastly different from those of previous generations, such as the Baby Boomers, and is affecting organizational development.

Generation Y is tech savvy, technology driven, motivated by technology (Wong et al., 2008; Karefalk, Pettersson, & Zhu, 2007) and have grown up in a technological world that has made them well connected through social media and the Internet. Current research by Barford and Hester (2011) found that they use technology to solve problems and complete tasks, unlike previous generations who did not grow up with technology at their fingertips (Herbison & Boseman, 2009). Generation Y likes to communicate using modern forms of technology and media such as pod casts, Skype, e-mail, and text messages (Eiser, 2009). Behrens (2009) found that Generation Y utilizes technology within organizations and can assist other generations like the Baby Boomers in technology related skills.

Generation Y are self-assured (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), narcissistic (Twenge & Campbell, 2008), and have high self-confidence due to their positively reinforced childhood (Downing, 2006). They are able to work quickly (Herbison & Boseman, 2009), keep up with their workload because they are good at multi-tasking (Freifield,

2007; Kodatt, 2009), and are results focused (Herbison & Boseman, 2009; Shih & Allen, 2007). They expect continuous recognition and daily feedback (Hastings, 2008).

Generation Y workers are perpetual learners who seek to develop and grow on a constant basis (Downing, 2006). Although they do not like to be micromanaged (Weingarten, 2009), they require thorough direction from their management (Morton, 2002).

Generation Y is motivated by work-life balance (Downing, 2006; Cramer, Parris, & Saville, 2011) and will, when forced to choose, select their family and friends over work (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, and Ogden (2007) found Generation Y to value diversity, equality, and tolerance in their working and non-working lives. Similarly, Parry and Urwin (2011) found that Generation Y strongly favors work-life balance and independence, and are less motivated by money and power. A study by Stork, Wilson, Bowles, Sproull, and Vena (2005) found that forty-four percent of employees under 30 reported that their non-work lives were more important than their work lives. In comparison to previous generations, Generation Y workers are more likely to desire work-life balance (Twenge, 2010) and value work-life balance the most in a work environment (McCrinkle & Hooper, 2006).

Baby Boomers

This generation is comprised of workers born between the years 1946 to 1964, also called Boomers for short because of the boom in births during 1946 and 1964 (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Smola & Sutton, 2002). Important events that have shaped the Baby Boomers were the “assassinations of JFK, RFK, Martin Luther King, social unrest, walk on the moon, civil rights movement, women’s movement, experimentation with illicit drugs, and the cold war” (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008, p. 509). They are

estimated to be 76 million strong; however, Boomers are beginning to retire in large numbers, greatly affecting the labor force (Eversole, Venneberg, & Crowder, 2012). It should be noted that many Boomers are extending their tenure in the labor force or reentering the workforce. Montenegro, Fisher, and Remez (2002) claim that a majority of Baby Boomers want to continue work beyond the traditional age of retirement, however, the entirety of this generation will reach retirement in the next 25 years (Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008). In 2008, it was estimated that the oldest Baby Boomer turned 62 and that much of this generation is now in the later stages of their careers (Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008).

Within organizations, Baby Boomers are considered to have most of the power and control; they live to work (Gursoy et al., 2013). Sherman (2005) claimed that work, more than anything, has defined their self-worth and their evaluation of others (Gursoy et al., 2013). “This is a significant tension point between [Baby Boomers] and the younger generations because they expect others to have the same work ethic and work the same hours” (Gursoy et al., 2013, p. 41). This generation started the workaholic trend (Glass, 2007; Zemke et al., 2000) and believe in paying their dues and step-by-step promotions (Rath, 1999). When it comes to career advancement, Baby Boomers will take a promotion and then consider how it will affect their life, which is a different approach from other generations (Chao, 2005; Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008). In terms of careers, this generation expected to begin their careers at the same company from which they would retire (Chi et al., 2013); also drastically different from Generation Y.

Baby Boomers grew up embracing the psychology of entitlement and expecting the best from life (Kupperschmidt, 2000). They were raised in a two-parent household

with the mother as caregiver and father as breadwinner (Chi et al., 2013). They value teamwork, collaboration, group decision-making (Zemke et al., 2000) and are competitive (Niemi, 2000). Baby Boomers are often associated with work values such as optimism, team orientation, and personal gratification (Leschinsky & Michael, 2004); on the job they value loyalty, respect organizational hierarchy, generally wait their turn for advancement (Chi et al., 2013), and believe in loyalty to their employer (Karp, Fuller, & Sirias, 2002).

Baby Boomers have been called time-stressed and materialistic (Strauss & Howe, 1991); they tend to be individualistic, self-absorbed, cynical, and focused on social causes (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008). This generation is affected by the pressure of caring for their aging parents as well as their children (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Kupperschmidt (2000) found their positive work abilities or strengths to include consensus building, mentoring, and effecting change.

Generational Differences

The literature on the generational workforce reveals that there is empirical research regarding generational differences within the workplace (Macky, Gardner, & Forsyth, 2008; Reeves & Oh, 2007; Wong et al., 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002). However, there is a question “as to whether the claimed differences actually do exist” (Costanza et al., 2012, p. 376). “Not all researchers believe that there are significant generational differences among workers” (Chi et al., 2013, p. 44). Deal (2007) claimed that, regardless of age, all workers desire the same things in work and life. Costanza et al., (2012) found that meaningful differences among generations probably do not exist on the work-related variables, however, these are attributed to factors other than generational

membership such as age or life stages. Costanza et al., (2012) claims that “there are substantive and meaningful generational differences between individuals in today’s workplaces” (p. 375) because organizations have “employees with a broad range of ages and generational memberships” that influence the workplace (p. 376). Costanza et al., (2012) offer the most current meta-analysis about generational differences in work-related attitudes; further, their research “is the first known quantitative review of research on generational differences in the workplace” (p. 375).

The following is a review of the most current literature available regarding generational differences. Obal and Kunz (2013) examined how different generational cohorts (Millennials and Baby Boomers) develop online trust in a website and offered insights for managers to consider. Their study is the first to research generational differences in the development of trust online. Parment (2013) examined the difference between Generation Y and Baby Boomers and their shopping behaviors, which found support that different generations have different values, attitudes, and preferences that significantly influence their purchase patterns.

A study by Chi et al., (2013) “found that Millennials have perceptions of work that are more aligned within their own generational cohort and are at odds with those in older generations (Baby Boomer, GenX)” (p. 47). Their research is of great significance for this study due to the examination from the management perspective as well as the difference in generational perspectives on work values. The research by Chi et al., (2013) supports the need for, and direction of, this study since Generation Y workers have values and perceptions of work that are not consistent with their predecessors.

According to Gursoy et al. (2013), the literature on generational differences is rich and many researchers have documented the generational differences between Baby Boomers and Generation X (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Glass, 2007; Kupperschmidt, 2000; O'Bannon, 2001; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge, 2010). O'Bannon (2001) looked at the backgrounds and defining moments between Baby Boomers and Generation X and how these perspectives influence work attitudes and perceptions. A notable finding from O'Bannon (2001) is that "the failure to recognize and acknowledge the differences between Baby Boomers and Xers will result in miscommunication, misunderstandings and harsh feelings, creating dysfunctional supervisor-employee relationships" (p. 96). Gursoy et al. (2013) contend that understanding the generational differences is critical because the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2004) discovered that nearly 58 percent of human resource professionals report observing conflict among employees as a result of generational differences. This study acknowledges that the same breakdowns can occur if the differences between Baby Boomers and Generation Y are not recognized and acknowledged.

Smola and Sutton (2002) examined the differences in work values among generations. Their research is influential for this study because their "findings strongly suggest that work values are more influenced by generational experiences than by age and maturation" (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 379). Research by Rodriguez, Green, and Ree (2003) found that Baby Boomers tend to value challenging work that can be accomplished over several days while working regularly scheduled hours. Parker (2007) found some significant generational differences in both behavior and perceptions related to work-life balance by examining generational differences among Baby Boomers,

Generation X, and Generation Y in work-life balance attitudes. The results reported by Parker (2007) show that the differences in work-life balance attitudes may be based more on age than on generational cohorts.

Findings from a 2013 study by Gursoy et al. further support the notion that differences in work values among employees from different generations exist. Based on the conclusions of Gursoy et al. (2013), this study will develop a more focused approach on examining work values by specifically honing in on work-life balance. One very specific finding from Gursoy et al. (2013) that will be of particular interest to this study is “Millennials work to live” whereas “Boomers live to work” (p. 47). Consequently, there is a need for further exploration of specific generational differences in work values. The research hypotheses will be developed to affirm the differences in work-life balance among these two generations.

Work Values

Work-life balance is considered to be a work value, therefore it is important to understand what is meant by work values. George and Jones (1999), (as cited in Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 365-366) claim work values are a “worker’s attitudes about what one should expect from the workplace and how he should go about reaching those expectations.” Dose (1997), (as cited in Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 366) defines work values as “the evaluative standards relating to work or the work environment by which individuals discern what is right or assess the importance of preferences.”

Work values in the workplace have been examined for a number of years with mixed results (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Some scholars have found that work values and attitudes change with career stages (Rhodes, 1983); however, others found no change in

work values over an extended period of time (Singer & Abramson, 1973). A notable study by Cherrington (1980) examined work attitudes of three age groups on a large number of work value measures, and found younger workers attitudes were different than the older two groups.

From the reviewed literature on work values, scholars have concluded that the topic and study of work values is important because “as managers respond to the changing values of their employees, those value systems may ultimately affect organizational values” (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 367). In addition, “with the transition of one generation to the next into top leadership positions, organizations will be influenced by the next generation’s values” (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 367). According to Eversole et al. (2012), “each generation seems to be alike in one critical area: their desire for workplace flexibility” (p. 607). Therefore, this research will focus on the one critical area identified by Eversole et al. (2012), that of work-life balance as a desired value among the generations.

Work-life Balance

Given that work and home are considered to be inescapably linked (Kanter, 1977), achieving some balance between the two has become an important area of research among practitioners and academicians (Grywacz, & Carlson, 2007; Sturges & Guest, 2004). The phrase “work-life balance” was first used in the “1970s to describe the balance between an individual’s work and personal life,” and over the past decade has been further explored and questioned (Singh, 2010, p. 51). Scholars do not agree on a definition (Reiter, 2007) and use other terms such as work-family balance, work-family conflict, or work-life synergy (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007) when discussing this topic.

According to Kumar and Chakraborty (2013), work-life balance “is striking balance between work and non-work schedules” (p. 62). Kalliath and Brough (2008) defined work-life balance as the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities. Work-life balance has also been defined as the individual’s ability to find a combination between work other responsibilities, aspirations, or activities (Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, & Walter, 2002; Sanchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012). For this study, work-life balance is defined as the balance between an individual’s work responsibilities and non-work activities.

When discussing work-life balance it is important to understand how work-life balance is defined and why it has become such an explored work value. According to Hildebrandt and Littig (2006), the increase in female employment and the changing family dynamic have been significant influences in the establishment of work-life balance for employees. More women, especially mothers with children, are working today. As a result, working mothers are now executing two distinct roles, that of mother and breadwinner for the family, which involves balance between work and non-work schedules (Hildebrandt & Littig, 2006). Greenberg and Landry (2011) claim that many workers have a desire for work-life flexibility. For example, working adults may need to care for aging parents, Baby Boomers may want to move to part-time work, and men share household responsibilities with their working spouse. Therefore, work-life balance affects males and females as well as all four generations in the workforce.

Scholars have examined the topic of work-life balance in relation to a number of different topics such as organizational effectiveness, organizational performance,

managerial practices, and work-life policies and practices (Allen, 2001; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Chimote & Srivastava, 2013; Lockwood, 2003; Schramm, 2006; SHRM, 2007; Singh, 2010; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). From the perspective of employees in all four generations, work-life balance is an important work value that is becoming a priority for many people (Sturges & Guest, 2004). Lockwood (2003) found that 90 percent of working adults felt they did not spend enough time with their families. Schramm (2006) revealed that work-life balance was found to be one of the top five trends that would most likely have a major impact or cause radical restructuring of the workplace over the next decade. According to Morris, Heames, and McMillian (2011), the trend of work-life balance “was confirmed in a recent study by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2007), who reported that an increased demand for work-life balance was number four on the list of Top Ten Workplace Trends according to HR Professionals” (p. 266). Work-life balance is expected for all employees across all generations, not just younger workers; therefore, the desire for work-life flexibility is sought by each generation (Eversole et al., 2012).

Kumar and Chakraborty (2013) found a connection between organizational effectiveness and work-life balance. Chimote and Srivastava (2013) examined work-life balance from two perspectives, organizations and employees, and researched the gap between the two. The study, however, found poor correlation between the two perspectives. As a result of the demand for work-life balance, organizations are creating policies and practices that establish and reflect the employee’s desire for work-life balance. Such policies and practices include flextime, telecommuting, job sharing, compressed workweek, and part-time work (Chimote & Srivastava, 2013).

Managerial Practices

Scholars have noted that managerial support, communication, and understanding are critical to employees' achievement of work/family balance (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Clark, 2002; Eversole et al., 2012). Eversole et al. (2012) claim "an insensitive and inflexible manager increases tension, decreases productivity, has the single most negative influence on work-life, and makes the whole company look insensitive" (p. 615). It is the belief of this researcher that the manager is a key factor in establishing work-life balance.

Watkins (1995) claimed that the supervisor-subordinate relationship is one of the most powerful predictors of work/family problems, while Collins, Hair, and Rocco (2009) further claim that the relationship can be enhanced with knowledge of generational differences and the contrasting work values of each generation (Eversole et al., 2012). Thompson et al. (1999) found three factors associated with what they termed as work-family culture. The first is the managerial support factor, defined as "the extent to which managers were supportive and sensitive to employees' family responsibilities" (Thompson et al., 1999, p. 401). "While researchers have posited that 'contextual factors' such as work-life policies and managerial support are important, there is no substantial empirical research that examines employees' perceptions regarding the extent to which a context is supportive of work-life issues and the implications this has for work-life policy utilization (Allen, 2001)" (Greenberg & Landry, 2011, p. 1164). Therefore, research is needed that explains how managerial practices influence an employee's establishment of work-life balance.

Research Gap

It is clear that there is a broad range of ages and generation memberships in the current workforce. However, it is unclear about the differences among these cohorts and the dynamics among these workers (Costanza et al., 2012). For this study, the phenomenon of the multigenerational workforce will serve as the basis for the establishment of generational differences among Generation Y and Baby Boomers within the workforce. Due to the tenure of Baby Boomers in the workforce, there has been a plethora of literature and research about their impact on society and organizations (Cole et al., 2002). In contrast, there is limited literature and research regarding Generation Y workers due to their recent entrance into the workforce. Over a decade ago, Generation Y workers were teenagers beginning to make their debut in the workplace. They will continue to arrive until the year 2015. Therefore, this “relatively unseasoned” cohort is still integrating into the American workforce (Cole et al., 2002, p. 6).

Due to the Baby Boomers upcoming retirement and Generation Y replacing this cohort, there is a generational shift causing drastic changes of which both scholars and practitioners are taking notice (Twenge, 2010). The present research lacks solid definitive evidence of generational differences between these two cohorts. In addition, there is a lack of time-lag studies on generational differences “which examines people of the same age at different points in time” (Twenge, 2010, p. 202). According to Twenge (2010), there are only three academic studies (Kowske et al., 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge et al. in press) exploring work values. Consequently, further research is needed in this area because “one cannot assume that one generation’s values, attitudes, and behaviors are the same as their predecessors” (Coomes & DeBard, 2004, p. 13).

The generational shift is not about the mass entrance or exit of one generation. Rather, the focus and attention are about generational differences in work values among the two cohorts. In recent years, scholars have questioned, predicted, and began to examine the differences between these two generations in order to clearly understand the differences in what each cohort values. Limited literature compares the work values between Baby Boomers and Generation Y, which results in a general disagreement among researchers on the significance of generational differences among workers (Chi et al., 2013).

The review of literature further exposes the research gap regarding generational differences. Smola and Sutton (2002) examined the differences in work values among generations and found strong support “that work values are more influenced by generational experiences than by age and maturation” (p. 379). Costanza et al., (2012) found meaningful differences among generations probably do not exist on the work-related variables, and are attributed to factors other than generational membership such as age or life stages. Parker (2007) found some significant differences in both behavior and perceptions related to work-life balance, which may be more about age than with generational cohorts.

Although there is literature about work-life balance in relation to these two cohorts, not all scholars agree on the importance of the value. Scholars have found (Downing, 2006; Parry & Urwin, 2011) that Generation Y values work-life balance while Baby Boomers “acknowledge the importance of work-life balance” (Kaifi et al., 2012, p. 89); however, it is still unknown whether both generations place the same value on work-life balance or are significantly different. This provides another justification for further

research on generational differences from the perspective of work-life balance. Upon reviewing the literature, there is a need for further research on work values, and more specifically work-life balance, from the perspective of generational differences. The lack of consensus among scholars regarding generational differences further exposes a gap in research and provides additional justification for this study.

Simply looking at work-life balance between the two cohorts does not provide a sufficiently deep study that will truly contribute to the field of HRD. In order to make this research more enriched, robust, and pertinent to the field of HRD, the area of work-life balance will be examined through the lens of the workers' perspective on how their manager establishes work-life balance. Workers will then be divided into two cohorts to consider generational differences. Managers play a key part in establishing work-life balance (Eversole et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 1999; Twenge, 2010). Therefore, managerial practices must be accounted for when researching work-life balance. Research is needed that explores how managerial practices influence the establishment of work-life balance in regard to generational diversity.

In short, there is a research gap in the literature regarding managerial practices that influence, promote, or establish work-life balance for employees, and the different impact those practices have on generations in the workforce. Research on generational differences has been conducted (Costanza et al., 2012; Twenge, 2010; Parry & Urwin, 2010), however, there is limited research on the link between managerial practices, the different generations, and work-life balance. Therefore, the need for this study is driven by the limited, non-collective agreement regarding generational differences as well as the impact for organizations employing and managing the different generations in the

workforce. It is the intent of this research to explore the factors associated with managerial practices that have an influence on the establishment of work-life balance within the workforce. The ultimate goal is to develop a study based upon previous research establishing generational differences (Costanza et al., 2012) as well as the impact of managerial practices on the workforce (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009).

Summary

This chapter has presented the relevant literature to this study. The literature focusing on generational workforce, Generation Y, Baby Boomers, generational differences, work values, work-life balance, and managerial practices provided the foundation for the research gap, which will further be explored in the data analysis section. From the review of literature, the research questions and hypotheses were developed. The following chapter will articulate the methodology for the study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This study will be designed to offer support for generational differences by specifically isolating two generations, Baby Boomers (born between 1946 – 1964) and Generation Y (born between 1981 – 2000). These two groups will serve as the study population. This study will investigate the work value work-life balance. This chapter will begin with a brief overview of the research strategy that will be used to provide insight into generational differences between Baby Boomers and Generation Y. In addition, this chapter will present the methodology including the research questions and hypotheses, research design, population and sample, instrument, study reliability and validity, data analysis, limitations, and chapter summary.

Research Strategy

The strategy for this study will be to use a quantitative methodology. The quantitative approach is best suitable for this research for analyzing generational differences because the data is measurable by numbers, is structured, and generalizable to the study population (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition, quantitative data is considered to be “hard, reliable data in the sense of being robust and unambiguous,” whereas qualitative data is “invariably unstructured” and contextual (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 412). According to Swanson and Holton (2005), “quantitative techniques are particularly strong at studying large groups of people and making generalizations from the sample

being studied to broader groups beyond that sample” (p. 30). Since the primary focus of this study is generational differences between two groups, Baby Boomers and Generation Y, the quantitative approach will allow for results that will aid in making the case for the differences among generations.

Research Questions

It is the approach of this research to examine the establishment of work-life balance by managerial practices from the perspective of individuals in two different cohorts, Baby Boomers and Generation Y. Specifically examined are whether the individual’s manager promotes work-life balance within organizations at the micro level and the frequency with which managers display specific managerial behaviors associated with the promotion of work-life balance. The findings of this research are expected to give organizations and managers insight into employee perceptions of the establishment of work-life balance, generational differences, and specific management behaviors and practices associated with work-life balance.

Therefore, the overall research questions to be answered by this study are as follows:

RQ1) Are there generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees? This research question will further explore the differences in the two generations by looking at their perceptions of their manager’s promotion of work-life balance.

RQ2) Which managerial behaviors and practices promote the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees? This research question will isolate three managerial practices (involve employees in decision-making, treat

employees as unique individuals, and encourage teamwork and collaboration) from the instrument in relation to work-life balance.

It should be noted that further refinement of the research questions may be necessary after careful review of the dataset. “Developing research questions is an ongoing activity throughout the entire process of framing the research” (Swanson & Holton, 2005, p. 23). From these research questions, the following hypotheses have been developed to answer the overarching research questions.

H_0 = There are no generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

H_1 = There are generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

H_{2a} = Managers who involve employees in decision-making positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{2b} = Managers who involve employees in decision-making positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

H_{3a} = Managers who treat employees as unique individuals positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{3b} = Managers who treat employees as unique individuals positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

H_{4a} = Managers who encourage teamwork and collaboration positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{4b} = Managers who encourage teamwork and collaboration positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

Study Design

This study will use a quantitative research method with the approach of secondary analysis by reviewing archival data from Gilley et al. (2009). The use of secondary data “is of increasing interest to researchers in business and management” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.312). Bryman and Bell (2011) state there are many advantages of using secondary data analysis. According to Dale, Arber, and Proctor (1988) the advantages include cost and time, high-quality data, opportunity for longitudinal analysis, subgroup or subset analysis, opportunity for cross-cultural analysis, more time for data analysis, reanalysis may offer new interpretations, and the wider obligations of the business researcher. As with any data collection, time is a factor as well as the cost to collect data; by using secondary data, the time and cost are significantly reduced while offering a high-quality dataset.

For this research, the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset is high-quality data that was rigorously collected. Samples come from a national group of participants and the dataset has been produced by highly experienced researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011), as supported by prior journals written using this data set (Gilley et al., 2010a; Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008; Gilley, Gilley, McConnell, & Veliquette, 2010b).

The opportunity for longitudinal analysis, for this research, is one of the main contributing factors of using the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset. One possibility is that this study could potentially be the start of a longitudinal study, which will be a future long-term research project to explore generational differences. By using archival data, this study will have the advantage of examining data that was previously collected by Gilley and Gilley (2013) that supports the investigation of all three topic areas: work-life

balance, generational differences, and managerial practices. Furthermore, by using archival data the study will not incur downtime designing, validating, and collecting data, which will decrease the lag time typically observed during the process of a longitudinal study.

For this study, the possible longitudinal design will serve two purposes. First, the need for more longitudinal studies is warranted due to being “relatively little used in business and management research...because of the time and cost involved” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 57). “Pettigrew (1990) has emphasized the importance of longitudinal study in understanding organizations as a way of providing data on the mechanisms and processes through which changes are created” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 57). Second, the need for more longitudinal studies in the area of research surrounding generation differences is justified. According to Costanza et al., (2012), “empirical studies using longitudinal designs are rare and studies that include conceptualization of the changing nature of generational differences over time are rarer still” (p. 379). Smola and Sutton (2002) claimed that “a major issue in the study of work values over time is the difficulty of conducting a longitudinal study” (p. 367). Therefore, there is a need for longitudinal studies that examine the relationship of generational differences as well as the change of work values over time. By using the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset, the possibility of a longitudinal study is an available research option once the original dataset has been analyzed.

Study Population and Sample

The use of the Gilley and Gilley (2013) data allows for subgroup or subset analysis. The survey was originally administered to 409 participants/students in master’s

(MBA and organization development) and PhD (organization development) programs at four-year universities in diverse locations across various regions including the Midwest, Mountain West, South, and Southwest (Gilley et al., 2009). At the present time, the survey has been administered to additional participants, approximately 1,092. The participants “were working professionals who represented a diverse array of industries (e.g., manufacturing, service, education, professional, and government) and organizational positions (e.g., front line, supervisor, manager, midlevel manager, and senior executive)” (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 84). The sample population will be broken down according to subgroups reflecting the participant’s generation cohort, thus only using two subgroups of the data. The age variable in the instrument will be categorized according to the two generational cohorts as defined by the literature, thus Baby Boomers are those individuals born between 1946 – 1964 and Generation Y employees are those individuals born between 1981 -2000 (Wieck et al., 2009).

Instrument

The complete instrument by Gilley and Gilley (2010) “consists of 36 content questions (19 organization specific and 17 manager specific) and eight demographic questions, which covered respondent gender, age, industry, number of employees in the unit or division and the organization as a whole, current position in the organization, length of service in both the current position and in total with the employer, and the gender and approximate age of the respondent’s manager” (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 84). The “survey questions sought basic demographic data such as participant age, title or level with the organization, gender and industry type,” which will allow this study to break down the population into additional subgroups aside from the two cohorts (Gilley

et al., 2008, p. 162). The original intent of data collection was to “examine a broad range of participants, industries, and companies” (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 162).

This study will isolate one specific question from the full instrument: “my manager promotes work-life balance,” which will serve as the dependent variable with frequency of responses gauged using a 5-point scale ranging from “never” (1) to “always” (5) (Gilley et al., 2009). The question was selected from the complete instrument because it focuses on the area of work-life balance. The subset analysis will examine the one question as it pertains to the three areas of the research interests, which are work-life balance, managerial practices, and generational differences. In addition, the study will examine three possible predictors associated with managerial practices that promote work-life balance including involving employees in decision-making, treating employees as unique individuals, and encouraging teamwork and collaboration.

Reliability and Validity

As with any study design, reliability and validity of the instrument are important components of the research method. The instrument used by Gilley et al. (2009) was tested for reliability and validity prior to being used for analysis. “The survey instrument was developed from a series of questions regarding managerial performance and practices in organizations” (Gilley, Gilley, & Kouider, 2010a, p. 60). “The initial survey instrument was created using perceptual-based questions and tested using 59 senior-level undergraduate volunteers in a business capstone course” as well as being “based on the literature on managerial effectiveness” (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 83). The initial participants provided feedback on “question ambiguity and clarity” providing respondent insight that was “incorporated into a revised instrument” and given to an experienced group of

leadership professionals who “provided input with regard to question face validity” (Gilley et al., 2010a, p. 60). Then the “revised survey instruments were made available to 407 subject matter experts at an international academic research conference;” where fifty-three (13%) conference attendees voluntarily reviewed the instrument and provided feedback regarding content validity and survey design” (Gilley et al., 2010a, p. 60). Prior use of the Gilley and Gilley (2013) data by other researchers (Gilley et al., 2010a; Gilley et al., 2008; Gilley et al., 2010b) has proven that the instrument and data are reliable and valid.

Data Analysis

The use of the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset allows for more time on data analysis. The collection of data can be time consuming; therefore, using secondary data reduces the time associated with data collection, thus allowing more time to analyze the data. The analysis of data “requires considerable thought and often a preparedness to consider learning about unfamiliar techniques of data analysis” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 320). With more time for data analysis, new interpretations of the data can possibly be found that was not analyzed by the original researchers. Bryman and Bell (2011) state that “data can be analyzed in so many different ways that it is very unusual for the range of possible analyses to be exhausted” thus the data can be reexamined for new findings (p. 320).

Prior to running any statistical analysis, the secondary data will need to be prepared for analysis. The preparation of the data will include creating a data file, entering data, screening and cleaning the data, testing the assumptions such as normal distribution, and preliminary analysis (Pallant, 2010). It should be noted that some

manipulation of the data file may be warranted to make it suitable for analysis (Pallant, 2010). It is the intent of this study to analyze the data using statistical analysis approaches that are driven by the research questions and the data itself. Therefore, the data analysis will be driven by the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset and using several statistical treatments. The following section will address possible statistical methods that will be conducted using the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset.

The data will be analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis of data will begin with descriptive statistics for the dependent variable, promotes work-life balance, as it relates to the two generational cohorts, and extracted from the dataset based on age ranges established in the survey. The age ranges will be based upon the reviewed literature and the pre-established age categories in the data. The descriptive statistics for the dependent variable, promotes work-life balance, will include frequencies and percentages as well as intercorrelations.

The first analysis of the data will be the comparison of the two groups, Baby Boomers and Generation Y, which will aid in answering research question one. The use of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to compare the means of two groups. By running a one-way ANOVA, the results should indicate whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Both the null hypothesis and hypothesis one will be addressed using one-way ANOVA.

H_0 = There are no generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

H_1 = There are generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

To address H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{3a}, H_{3b}, H_{4a}, H_{4b} this study will use multiple regression. Regression can be appropriate for this dataset in order to determine the significant influences of several independent variables on the one dependent variable, promotes work-life balance. Three managerial practices will serve as the independent variables. These are involving employees in decision-making, treating employees as unique individuals, and encouraging teamwork and collaboration. These three managerial practices were selected from the Gilley and Gilley (2010) instrument in conjunction with the reviewed literature.

Prior research by Gilley et al. (2008) and Gilley et al. (2010a, 2010b) used multiple statistical techniques including factor analysis, simultaneous regression, and multiple linear regression on a portion of the dataset. Therefore, this research study will use a number of statistical treatments depending on the manipulation of the dataset as it relates to the research questions. For example, this study could conduct post-hoc analysis on the data to further explore generational differences on the specific managerial practices.

Limitations

When using secondary data analysis, there are limitations that cannot and should not be ignored. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), the limitations for secondary analysis include lack of familiarity with the data, complexity of the data, no control over data quality, and absence of key variables. These limitations will be taken into consideration and noted in the study; however, the limitations do not warrant discontinuation of data usage. In fact, the use of “secondary analysis presents few disadvantages” and works well with the presented research agenda (Bryman & Bell,

2011, p. 331). Therefore, it is the design and purpose of this study to mine existing data from the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset with hopes to determine whether managers promote work-life balance within their organizations based upon the perceptions of their employees.

Prior use of the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset has yielded limitations that this study will acknowledge. First, the “convenience sampling methodology” of graduate status students “at a small number of universities” may limit the “potential for generalization” (Gilley et al., 2009, p. 89). The participants were “self-selected, which may yield skewed results (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003)” but this limitation was addressed “through the use of multiple groups of people” at different universities (Gilley et al., 2008, p. 165-166). Second, “the use of a self-rating instrument of perceptual data raises concerns about methods variance and attribution bias” which was addressed by using “multiple groups over time” (Gilley et al., 2010b, P. 40). Also, the data was focused on managerial practices in general as part of a larger study on managerial practices; therefore, the data as a whole does not focus on one particular area like work-life balance. Perhaps “a more deliberate, intense examination” of a certain area could “yield more robust results” (Gilley et al., 2010b, p. 40). However, for this research the three main topics of interest are identified in the dataset, thus allowing the opportunity to test the variable of work-life balance, with the potential to yield consequential results. As the research progresses, the study would acknowledge more limitations if they are discovered.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the method design that will be used to conduct this study. In this study, the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset will be examined for the impact of managerial practices on the variable of work-life balance as it pertains to the two cohorts, Baby Boomers and Generation Y. Prior to this research, the data has not been analyzed from this viewpoint nor has the data been divided by generational cohorts. As a result of reexamining the data from a different vantage point, the possibility and likelihood of using alternative quantitative data analysis methods may be involved, offering a different interpretation of the data as well as broader use of the dataset. In addition, the reexamination of the existing data will be interpreted from a new theoretical framework, thereby changing the relevance and theoretical significance of the study implications.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter contains the findings of the data mining conducted to answer the research questions and test the research hypotheses. This chapter details the demographic information, explains the one-way analysis of variance and multiple regression, and provides the statistical results in the sequence of the research hypotheses as presented in Chapter Three. The first section details the demographics of the participants.

Demographic Information

This section details the demographics of the participants. The survey was administered to 409 participants who were from all four generations. In order to get the sample population, the 409 participants were divided into their respective generations. The age groups for this study were determined through literature and the age categories that were pre-established by the survey authors (Gilley & Gilley, 2010). Prior analysis of this data has not included dividing the data by generational cohorts. From the 409 participants, the data was broken down into subgroups and this study examined the two applicable cohorts. The first group, Generation Y (born between 1981 – 2000), and the second group, Baby Boomers (born between 1946 – 1964), make up the study population (N=166).

The sample size was comprised of Generation Y (n=98) and Baby Boomers (n=68). Table 4 gives the summary of demographics broken down by the two cohorts.

Table 4
Demographic Data of Participants by Generation

Description	Generation Y	Baby Boomers
Gender		
Male	52.04%	47.06%
Female	47.96%	52.94%
Current Industry		
Manufacturing	7.14%	1.47%
Service	42.86%	27.94%
Education	21.43%	26.47%
Professional	16.33%	22.06%
Government	4.08%	17.65%
Non-profit	8.16%	4.41%
Number of Employees in Organization		
<100	46.94%	23.53%
101-500	15.31%	19.12%
501-1000	7.14%	10.29%
1001-2500	8.16%	16.18%
2501-5000	2.04%	2.94%
5001-10,000	1.02%	8.82%
10,001+	19.39%	19.12%
Current Position		
Front line employee	65.31%	16.18%
Supervisor or team leader	23.47%	23.53%
Mid-level manager	8.16%	32.35%
Senior/Executive manager	2.04%	23.53%
Other	1.02%	4.41%
	n=98	n=68

As identified in Table 4, the majority of the Generation Y respondents, 42.86%, are employed in the service industry. Similarly, the majority of the Baby Boomer respondents, 27.94%, are employed in the service industry. For both groups the majority work in organizations that have less than 100 employees. The one noticeable difference between the respondent groups was their current position in an organization. The majority of Generation Y respondents, 65.31%, are front line employees, whereas the majority of Baby Boomer respondents, 32.35%, are mid-level managers.

Data Analysis

For this study, two statistical tools, one-way ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression, were chosen to examine the data. Prior to analysis, the data was examined for accuracy of data entry and missing values to ensure there were no obvious problems. After the data cleaning, the data was tested for independence of residuals, normality, equality of variances, and multicollinearity.

With multiple regression, an assumption is that errors of prediction are independent of one another (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The independence of residuals or errors was tested to determine that there was no correlation between error terms, meaning that the size of one case is not correlated with another case. The Durbin-Watson statistic tests for the presence of serial correlation among the residuals. The residuals are uncorrelated if the Durbin-Watson statistic is approximately 2.0; the value range is 0.0 to 4.0. The value for the Durbin-Watson statistic in this study is 1.762, suggesting that the independence of residuals assumption holds.

In order to determine normality of the data, a normal P-P plot graph was plotted to show whether the data is normally distributed. As can be seen from the following normal P-P graph (Figure 1), the data is normally distributed, meaning that errors of prediction are normally distributed around the dependent variable (work-life balance) and there are no outliers.

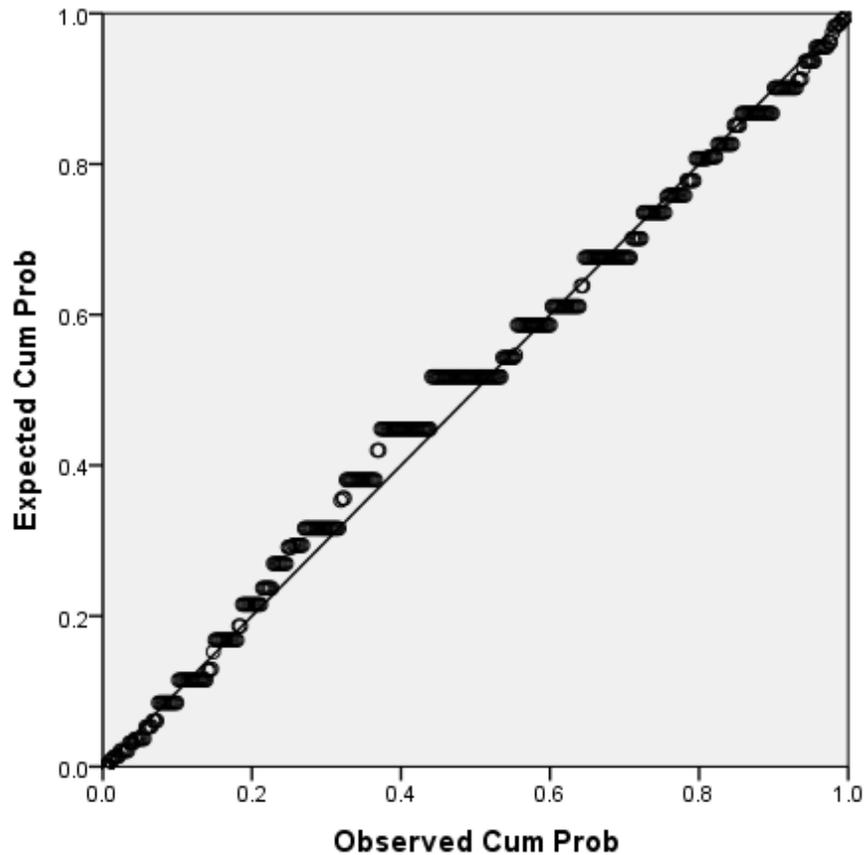


Figure 1. Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Dependent Variable: II-21

Prior to running one-way ANOVA, the Levene's test was performed to test for the homogeneity of variances across the two groups, Generation Y and Baby Boomers. In order to not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variances, the test must show a non-significance value of greater than 0.05. For this data, the Levene statistic was 0.971, which indicated that the variances for the two groups are equal and have not violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

The variance inflation factors (VIF) were examined to help detect multicollinearity. If one or more of the independent variables is highly correlated with another independent variable in the regression equation there is an issue of multicollinearity (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). As a common practice, the

VIFs should not exceed 4.0 and any VIF of 10.0, or greater, shows signs of serious multicollinearity requiring correction (Cohen et al., 2003). For this data, there was no evidence of collinearity; all VIF factors < 3.0.

One-Way ANOVA

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test research question one. For one-way ANOVA, the dependent variable was work-life balance and the independent variable was age of the participants. The independent variable was divided into two groups based on the respondents' age at the time of the survey, which created the two groups, Generation Y and Baby Boomers. With one-way ANOVA, the means of the dependent variable (work-life balance) were assessed to determine whether the means of the groups differ significantly from each other. Table 5 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA test.

Table 5
One-Way ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.892	2	1.946	1.365	.257
Within Groups	578.983	406	1.426		
Total	582.875	408			

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for the perception of managerial support differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers for work-life balance. The employees perception of managerial support of work-life balance did not differ significantly across the two groups, ($F(2,406) = 1.365, p = .257$). The one-way ANOVA results found there were not significant differences in the mean scores on the dependent variables across the two groups. Therefore, as determined by one-way ANOVA, there were no statistically significant differences found between the groups, meaning there is no difference based on the age of the participants.

Table 6
Managers Promote Work-life Balance

	Generation Y		Baby Boomers	
	%	Cum %	%	Cum %
Never	5.1	5.1	11.8	11.8
Rarely	21.4	26.5	17.6	29.4
Sometimes	17.3	43.9	27.9	57.4
Usually	36.7	80.6	27.9	85.3
Always	19.4	100.0	14.7	100.0
N	98		68	
M (SD)	3.44 (1.176)		3.16 (1.229)	

Table 6 reflects the frequency responses from the question regarding how frequently “my manager promotes work-life balance.” The frequency responses were collected using a 5-point scale ranging from never (1) to always (5). Table 6 reports the frequencies according to the two age groups. For Generation Y, respondents indicated that their manager “never,” “rarely,” or “sometimes” promote work-life balance 43.9% of the time, as compared to 57.4% Baby Boomers who indicated their manager “never,” “rarely,” or “sometimes” promote work-life balance. Thus, there was a slight difference in the responses between Generation Y and Baby Boomers.

Multiple Regression

Since the research intention was to determine which independent (predictor) variables predict managerial support of work-life balance, stepwise multiple regression analysis was determined to be the most appropriate method of analysis. In stepwise multiple regression, the regression “equation starts out empty and the independent variables are added one at a time” by the statistical analysis program as “they meet statistical criteria” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 140). The independent variable that has the highest correlation with the dependent variable enters the equation first (Stevens, 2009). When an independent variable stops contributing to the regression equation, the

statistical analysis program will omit the independent variable from the equation (Cohen et al., 2003). For this study, the variables (involve employees in decision-making, treat employees as unique individuals, encourage teamwork and collaboration) as written in research question two and H_{2a} H_{2b} H_{3a} H_{3b} H_{4a} H_{4b} were selected to test which variable in the set of variables is the best predictor of the outcome (work-life balance).

The use of correlation coefficients such as Pearson *r* was used to evaluate a predictor's contribution to the regression model (Kraha, Turner, Nimon, Zientek & Henson, 2012). Pearson correlation coefficients (*r*) can range from -1.0 to 1.0. Table 7 and Table 8 present the Pearson correlation coefficients for each group.

Table 7
Pearson Correlations for Generation Y

	WLB	DM	UI	TC
WLB	1.000			
DM	.569	1.000		
UI	.604	.631	1.000	
TC	.525	.590	.625	1.000

Note: WLB = work-life balance, DM = decision-making, UI = unique individuals, TC = teamwork and collaboration

Note: all correlations are significant at $p < .01$

Table 8
Pearson Correlations for Baby Boomers

	WLB	DM	UI	TC
WLB	1.000			
DM	.729	1.000		
UI	.773	.810	1.000	
TC	.647	.839	.763	1.000

Note: WLB = work-life balance, DM = decision-making, UI = unique individuals, TC = teamwork and collaboration

Note: all correlations are significant at $p < .01$

In order to show significance between the two groups (Generation Y and Baby Boomers) stepwise multiple regression was run for each group separately. The results of

multiple regression analysis for Generation Y are presented in Table 9 and Table 10 and the results for Baby Boomers are presented in Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 9
ANOVA for Generation Y

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	56.825	2	28.412	34.915	.000
Residual	77.308	95	.814		
Total	134.133	97			

Table 10
Multiple Regression for Generation Y

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.851	.323		2.635	.010
Unique Individuals	.446	.110	.408	4.067	.000
Decision-Making	.341	.110	.311	3.099	.003

Dependent Variable: Work-life balance

Note: Selecting only cases for Generation Y

Table 11
ANOVA for Baby Boomers

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	63.591	2	31.796	54.923	.000
Residual	37.629	65	.579		
Total	101.221	67			

Note: Selecting only cases for Baby Boomers

Table 12
Multiple Regression for Baby Boomers

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.371	.282		1.316	.193
Unique Individuals	.549	.133	.531	4.119	.000
Decision-Making	.324	.140	.299	2.320	.023

Dependent Variable: Work-life balance

Note: Selecting only cases for Baby Boomers

Multiple regression analysis was used to test whether the set of independent variables significantly predicted the participants' perception of managerial support of work-life balance. For Generation Y, the results of the regression indicated the two predictors (unique individuals and decision-making) explained 42.4% of the variance ($R^2 = .424$, $F(2,95) = 34.915$, $p = 0.00$). It was found that treating employees as unique individuals significantly predicted work-life balance ($\beta = .408$, $p = 0.00$), as did involving employees in decision-making ($\beta = .311$, $p = 0.003$). The third predictor, teamwork and collaboration, did not load into the stepwise regression equation.

For Baby Boomers, the results of the regression indicated the two predictors (unique individuals and decision-making) explained 62.8% of the variance ($R^2 = .628$, $F(2,65) = 54.923$, $p = 0.00$). It was found that treating employees as unique individuals statistically significantly predicted work-life balance ($\beta = .531$, $p = 0.00$), as did involving employees in decision-making ($\beta = .324$, $p = 0.023$). The following section will give the results according to the research question and hypothesis that corresponds.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research question one asked, "Are there generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees?" In order to answer research question one, the following hypotheses were developed.

H_0 = There are no generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

H_1 = There are generational differences in the perception of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees.

Research hypothesis H_1 was tested using one-way ANOVA, see Table 5. After running the one-way ANOVA, data analysis provided support for the null hypothesis. In the discussion section, more information will be given that will offer an examination of possible causes of the similarities between the two generations.

Research question two asked, “Which managerial behaviors and practices (involve employees in decision-making, treat employees as unique individuals, encourage teamwork and collaboration) promote the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees?” In order to answer research question two, the following hypotheses were developed.

H_{2a} = Managers who involve employees in decision-making positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{2b} = Managers who involve employees in decision-making positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

H_{3a} = Managers who treat employees as unique individuals positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{3b} = Managers who treat employees as unique individuals positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

H_{4a} = Managers who encourage teamwork and collaboration positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer employees.

H_{4b} = Managers who encourage teamwork and collaboration positively influence the perception of work-life balance for Generation Y employees.

Through the use of multiple regression, research question two and hypotheses H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{3a}, H_{3b}, H_{4a}, and H_{4b} were answered to determine whether one or more independent variables may predict the outcome promotion of work-life balance.

Hypotheses H_{2a} and H_{3a}. Multiple regression analysis was conducted for Baby Boomers to determine the relationship of the purposed predictors and work-life balance. For H_{2a}, there was a statistically significant positive relationship for managers who involve employees in decision-making, $R^2 = .628$ ($F(2,65) = 54.923$, $p = 0.00$). For H_{3a}, there was a statistically significant positive relationship for managers who treat employees as unique individuals, $R^2 = .597$ ($F(1, 66) = 97.959$, $p = 0.00$).

Hypotheses H_{2b} and H_{3b}. Multiple regression analysis was conducted for Generation Y to determine the relationship of the purposed predictors and work-life balance. For H_{2b}, there was a statistically significant positive relationship for managers who involve employees in decision-making, $R^2 = .424$ ($F(2, 95) = 34.915$, $p = 0.00$). For H_{3b}, there was a statistically significant positive relationship for managers who treat employees as unique individuals, $R^2 = .365$ ($F(1, 96) = 55.273$, $p = 0.00$).

Hypotheses H_{4a} and H_{4b}. For both of these hypotheses, the predictors did not load into the model. As previously stated, not all variables may end up in the stepwise regression equation, as is the case for H_{4a} and H_{4b}. The variable of managers who encourage teamwork and collaboration did not add anything statistically to the regression equation; therefore, the analysis stopped. H_{4a} and H_{4b} were not supported.

Overall, when examining the two generations, there was no difference in the results. For both groups, at each step the same predictor variable (treating employees as unique individuals and involving employees in decision-making) contributed the most to

the prediction equation in the same sequence. In addition, the same predictor variable (teamwork and collaboration) dropped out of the stepwise regression equation due to non-significance. Therefore, support for generational differences was not found by examining research question one, two, or H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{3a}, H_{3b}, H_{4a}, and H_{4b}. As shown in Table 9 through Table 12, there were no significant differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers. More explanation will be given in chapter five.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of one-way ANOVA and multiple regression. A summary and discussion of the research results along with recommendations for further research are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify generational differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers. The major goal of this study was to determine whether there were significant differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers in regard to their perception of work-life balance. In addition, the intent of the study was to further identify managerial practices or behaviors that contribute to the perception of work-life balance. This chapter will first discuss the results of the two research questions and eight hypotheses, and provide a summary. Last, this chapter will discuss the implications of the study and recommendations for future research.

Conclusions

The results of the study imply that there are no significant differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers in regards to perceptions of work-life balance. After examining the research questions and eight hypotheses, the overwhelming conclusion for this study is that there are no generational differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers with regards to their perception of work-life balance. This study falls in line with a number of other studies (Real, Mitnick, & Maloney, 2010; Wong et al., 2008; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Dries, Pepermans, & De Kerpel, 2008) that also found little or no support for generational differences.

Research Question One asked, “Are there generational differences in the perceptions of managerial support for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and

Generation Y employees?” The results of the one-way ANOVA test revealed support for the null hypothesis. Thus, the null hypothesis, there are no generational differences in the perception for work-life balance between Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees, as developed by their manager, was supported by the findings of this study.

By supporting the null hypothesis, this study does not offer support for a number of previous studies that suggest Generation Y is vastly different from older generations. Research by Shaw and Fairhurst (2008) claimed that Generation Y differs from other generations in their work-related characteristics. Findings from Gursoy et al. (2013) suggest there are generational differences in work values and attitudes. Additionally, Smola and Sutton (2002) contended that work values of employees are influenced by generational experiences and not by age. Wong et al. (2008) found that when looking at personality and motivation drivers of the generations, the greatest differences are among the Baby Boomers and Generation Y.

When reviewing the findings, a notable contribution of this study in addition to generational differences is the support for perceptions of work-life balance. The findings support research by Sturges and Guest (2004) that claim work-life balance is becoming a priority for many employees in all four generations. This study did not examine the desire for work-life balance between the two generations; rather the aim of this study was the employee’s perception of work-life balance. As discussed in chapter four, this study asked about the frequency for which Generation Y and Baby Boomers perceive that their manager promote work-life balance; both groups responded similarly that their manager “never,” “rarely,” or “sometimes” promotes work-life balance; Generation Y 43.9%, Baby Boomers 57.4%. With the results from research question One, this study can draw

the following conclusions regarding perceptions of work-life balance. Both Generation Y and Baby Boomer employee's perceptions of work-life balance do not differ significantly. In addition, the employees did not perceive that their managers promoted work-life balance.

Research Question Two asked, "Which managerial behaviors and practices (involve employees in decision-making, treat employees as unique individuals, encourage teamwork and collaboration) promote the perception of work-life balance for Baby Boomer and Generation Y employees?" The results of the stepwise multiple regression test revealed support for four of the hypotheses, H_{2a} , H_{3a} , H_{2b} , and H_{3b} which include two predicting variables, involving employees in decision-making and treating employees as unique individuals. Based on the findings, this study can make the following conclusions:

- Baby Boomers want managers to involve them in decision-making (H_{2a})
- Baby Boomers want managers to treat them as unique individuals (H_{3a})
- Generation Y want managers to involve them in decision-making (H_{2b})
- Generation Y want managers to treat them as unique individuals (H_{3b})

Hypotheses H_{4a} and H_{4b} did not load into the regression model, which included the predicting variable of encouraging teamwork and collaboration. The conclusion can be made that neither group has a strong perception that their managers encourage teamwork and collaboration.

When considering the independent variable of work-life balance, the results are not astonishing and support the notion that work-life balance occurs at the individual level rather than as a collective group or generation. Work-life balance, as defined in

chapter one, is the balance of an individual's work responsibilities and non-work activities which has no relationship with a team or group approach. Therefore when examining the predicting variable of encouraging teamwork and collaboration, it is not surprising that the variable did not load into the regression equation. In order for employees to be treated as unique individuals and to be involved in decision-making, they cannot be treated as members of a group or collaborate with other employees when determining work-life balance. Work-life balance is a work value unique to each individual employee and will be defined differently for each individual.

The findings of this study support the notion that managers should treat employees as unique individuals, regardless of their generation cohort. Since this study found no significant support for generational differences, individuals should not be grouped into generations but rather they should be treated as unique individuals. According to Twenge (2010), managers should "treat employees as unique individuals and not just as members of their generation" (p. 209). In addition, Wong et al. (2008) "emphasizes the importance of managing individuals by focusing on individual differences rather than relying on generational stereotypes" (p. 878). Wong et al. (2008) specifically states that HR professionals and managers should consider the individual differences of employees. Conversely, Costanza et al. (2012) claims that "treating members of different generations differently may not be an effective strategy" (p. 391). Therefore, an important finding of this study is the need for employees to be treated as unique individuals and not as members of a specific generation.

Another important finding of this study is that managers should involve employees in decision-making, regardless of their generation cohort. Previous research

by Cole et al. (2002) and McCrindle and Hooper (2006) claim Generation Y value having an input in the decision-making process. According to these findings, Baby Boomers also want to have an input into decision-making. When it comes to the employee's perception of work-life balance, both generations want to be involved in making decisions regarding their individual wants, needs, and desires. Therefore, an important finding of this study is the need for employees to be involved in decision-making.

With these findings, this study offers the conclusion that there are no significant differences in Generation Y and Baby Boomers when it comes to perceptions of work-life balance and the three predicting variables (involve employees in decision-making, treat employees as unique individuals, and encourage teamwork and collaboration). Simply put, the results for each group were not significantly different. Both groups have perceptions of work-life balance, and want managers to treat them as unique individuals and involve them in decision-making.

Limitations

The study limitations should be acknowledged to put the findings in perspective. It should also be noted that a detailed list of limitations, in addition to the following limitations, were described and discussed in chapter three. When using secondary data, there will be limitations associated with the dataset. This study recognizes that the findings offer a narrow perspective on generational differences for several reasons. First, this study used secondary data, which limited the sample size of the age categories. The original dataset of 409 participants could not be utilized due to the pre-established age categories and the examination of only two age groups that were applicable to this study. Based on the breakdown of the four generations and the utilizable surveys, the small

sample size ($N=166$) could have affected the findings. Additionally, due to the small sample size, further data analysis such as structure equation modeling (SEM) was not suitable for this dataset. Expanding the sample size in the future would enhance the dataset available for analysis, making for a more robust study.

In addition, the study only examined two cohorts in the workplace. Thus, the findings do not include all four generations that are present in the work force. By not including all four generations, the study cannot make conclusions that apply to the other two generations, Generation X and the Veterans, that are unaccounted for in the data analysis. Therefore, due to the two missing generations, the findings may not be generalizable to the entire work force. Also, the findings may not be generalizable due to the demographics of the participants. The Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset used convenient sampling sources taken from students at a small number of universities, which can limit the generalization.

Further, the study only examined a single variable (work-life balance) that could also have influenced the findings. By only looking at one work value, the results are not inclusive of other predicting variables, thus possibly affecting the findings. Examining additional variables will influence the robustness of the study and increase the possibilities for additional data analysis. Additionally, including additional variables could expand the possibilities of more statistical data analysis treatments.

Due to these limitations, this dataset was not conducive to further statistical data analysis such as analysis of covariance, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) or SEM. Furthermore, using additional statistical treatments would not have provided support or different findings for the research questions on this study. The use of SEM was not

possible for numerous reasons. First, the sample size of both groups was too small to utilize SEM. Since this study was examining two groups, the use of multi-group SEM models would have been appropriate; however, since there was no significant support for differences between the two groups, this type of data analysis was not appropriate. Additionally, SEM can be used to determine the extent to which a theoretical model is supported. In this study, a theoretical model was not being tested nor could a theoretical model be constructed due to the dataset and research questions. After running the stepwise multiple regression and one predicting variable (encourages teamwork and collaboration) did not enhance the results statistically to the regression equation, the possibility of building a construct around the three predicting variables was not feasible. Therefore, testing or using variables to define constructs through SEM was not appropriate for the dataset. The two research questions were adequately addressed using one-way ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression. Running additional analysis would not change the results of this study nor be appropriate for this dataset.

Implications

Despite the limitations, the study adds to the literature on generational differences and work-life balance. In addition, by supporting the null hypothesis, this study acknowledges the implications associated with the theoretical underpinning of this study, generational theory. This study's theoretical framework of Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational theory is not without critique; however, "little research on generational differences has solid theoretical foundation underpinning" (Costanza et al., 2012, p. 379). Costanza et al. (2012) claim that "there is limited theoretical support for the hypotheses about specific differences among the generations on work-related outcomes and the

reason for them” (p. 379). This research does make theoretical implications for using generational theory as a basis for determining age cohorts. By grouping the participants according to their age and life stages, the study established generational cohorts that are based on prior literature. While researchers may differ on the birth years, most agree on four generations of employees with different life events associated with each generation (Wong et al., 2008).

From the perspective of generational differences, this study supports the research that suggests there are limited meaningful differences among the generations (Chi et al., 2013; Costanza et al., 2012; Deal, 2007; Johnson & Lopes, 2008; Wesner & Miller, 2008). These findings support the claim by Costanza et al., (2012), who conducted a meta-analysis of generational differences, and “found little support for differences between groups of individuals based on generational membership” (p. 387). De Meuse and Mlodzik (2010) conducted a review of generational differences literature and found few consistent differences among the generations. Furthermore, De Meuse and Mlodzik (2010) compared the literature to popular press and found that “peer-reviewed research does not support the popular media” in regards to strong generational differences among the generations in the workplace (p. 4). Additionally, this study’s findings support the research by Deal (2007) that suggests all workers desire the same things in work and life regardless of their generation. Furthermore, Deal (2007) concludes that an employee’s life stage has a greater impact on their desire for life outside of work than their generation cohort, which is line with this study’s findings.

Although the literature offers support for the claim that both generations desire work-life, this study did not examine the desire for work-life balance, but rather the

perceptions of work-life balance. This study suggests that managers are failing to meet employee's needs and wants regarding work-life balance. For example, Baby Boomers are at the end of their careers, are raising their grandchildren, taking care of their aging parents, and their priorities have shifted due to a changing work environment. In the case of Generation Y, many studies have linked this generation with work-life balance as a work motivation and driver (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Downing, 2006; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Twenge, 2010).

Therefore, it is the belief of this study that the findings have more significant implications for work-life balance research than generational differences. Based on the results, work-life balance is an important work value for both Generation Y and Baby Boomers. Much research has supported the importance of work-life balance for Generation Y. From this study, the conclusion can be made that Baby Boomers also perceive work-life balance as an important work value. In this study, the variable (work-life balance) is not occupational specific and can be applicable/generalizable across the work force in regards to the two researched groups. This study concludes that when it comes to perceptions of work-life balance, there are no significant differences between the generations.

The results of this study have practical implications for multi-stakeholders including managers, organizations, employees, and HR professionals. These findings suggest important implications for managers of both generations. First, managers should understand that there are no significant differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers when it comes to their perceptions of work-life balance. Managers should take into consideration the perception for work-life balance among all generations, thus all

employees want work-life balance. Through these findings, managers should be aware and acknowledge that employees, regardless of their generation, have perceptions of work-life balance. Through this awareness, managers can then make their management practices conducive to conditions that foster work-life balance. This study should assist managers in their awareness for work-life balance and help them recognize and implement work-life balance policies and procedures in the workplace. The literature says managerial practices are critical to the establishment of work-life balance. These findings support the critical relationship between the manager and employee in relation to the perception and promotion of work-life balance. Therefore, the study implications show support for positive managerial practices (treating employees as unique individuals and involving employees in decision-making) that managers should consider implementing.

Previous research has drawn connections between work-life balance and positive organizational and employee outcomes, such as reduced turnover, motivation, and commitment (Sanchez-Vidal et al., 2012). In addition to retaining employees, recruiting employable talent has been linked to work-life balance such as flexible working schedules, and has been considered a top priority for the generations when making an employment decision (Lindquist, 2008). Lindquist (2008) claims that “promotion of flexible working schedules is more important now than ever” (p. 7). Through this research and previous studies, managers should consider establishing work-life balance policies and practices such as flextime, job sharing, part-time work, compressed workweek, and telecommuting (Chimote & Srivastava, 2013). By establishing work-life

balance practices in organizations, managers can influence and affect their employee's desire for work-life balance.

From this research, managers should take note of the predicting variables that positively influence perceptions of work-life balance; treating employees as unique individuals and involving employees in decision-making. More specifically, managers should customize work-life policies to the individual's needs rather than a "one size fits all strategy" (Chandra, 2012, p. 1055). The findings from this study support the need for greater customization according to the individual's needs, and thus support employee's desires to be treated as unique individuals. Managers will need to consider each individual and understand what work-life balance means for each employee. Work-life balance has different meanings for different employees, as is the case in this study. Generation Y employees have different life responsibilities than Baby Boomers which means they define work-life balance by different measures. As a result, managers must be aware of the differing views of work-life balance for each individual employee.

For HRD practitioners, the findings suggest a need for HR initiatives and policies that support the establishment and promotion of work-life balance. By establishing work-life balance practices, organizations can better recruit and retain all generations since work-life balance is a desire for every employee. Simply making managers aware of the perceptions of work-life balance is not enough to impact and foster change in organizations. HRD practitioners need to begin making changes at the managerial levels that cause direct attention and implementation of work-life balance. HRD practitioners need to engage in training managers and working with them to implement policies and procedures that will positively impact their workforce. HRD practitioners can develop

training programs focusing on work-life balance that help make managers aware, coach managers, and hold managers accountable. Managerial practices that promote work-life balance and other positive work values should be implemented into manager growth and development plans. As a result, HRD practitioners can make positive, significant enhancements in multiple areas, management practices, employee perceptions, and organization culture.

In order for managers to be successful, the organization has to support the implementation of work-life balance policies and procedures. For organizations, the findings support the need for integration of work-life balance policies and procedures into the work environment. The establishment of work-life balance in organizations has been linked to higher retention rates, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover (Baral & Bhargava, 2011; Chimote & Srivastava, 2013). From the organization standpoint, the managerial practices promote work-life balance, which in turn fosters positive results for the organization as a whole. Thus, the implications for work-life balance reach beyond the individual employee level to encompass management and organization levels. As a result, this study believes that perceptions of work-life balance are important for individuals, managers, HRD practitioners, and organizations.

Recommendations for Future Research

The topic of generational differences will continue to be highly researched due to the further integration of Generation Y into the workforce over the next few years. Additionally, due to the growing desire among all generations for work-life balance, the topic will continue to be studied. Therefore, there are many avenues of future research that are open for exploration. One potential area for expansion of this research would be

to increase the study population by looking at more than two generations. Another possible avenue is to look at the three prominent generations (Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomers) in the workforce and explore possible differences or similarities among the three groups. This study chose to examine only Generation Y and Baby Boomers, excluding Veterans and Generation X. In order to determine if there is significant support for generational differences, increasing the study population to include all generations may provide different results from those of this study.

In addition, the scope of this study could be expanded for future research by encompassing additional work values. For this study, the scope isolated the variable of work-life balance; more specifically the perceptions of work-life balance. Future research could change the focus to include variables such as job satisfaction or commitment on work-life balance. Another possible direction is to examine the desire for work-life balance. This study did not address the employee's desire for work-life balance, but rather the perceptions of work-life balance were examined. There is a significant difference between an employee's desires for and perceptions of work-life balance. Based on cited literature and these findings, there is a need to research the level of desire for work-life balance among generations. Previous research by Greenberg and Landry (2011); Morris et al., (2011); and Eversole et al., (2012) claims that there is a strong desire for work-life balance among the generations. Eversole et al., (2012) found that employees from all four generations desire work-life balance regardless of their age. In order to research desire for work-life balance, neither the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset nor the Gilley and Gilley (2010) instrument would be appropriate to use, as they do not investigate the level of desire for work-life balance.

Another possible direction for future research is to investigate managerial or organizational commitment to work-life balance. This study took the direction of examining the employee's perception of their manager's support of work-life balance, whereas future research could examine the manager's perception of work-life balance. The findings from this study point to the need to determine the manager's role in establishing work-life balance. This study did not investigate which generation of managers is better at promoting work-life balance. Future examination of the Gilley and Gilley (2013) could look at the generation of the manager and the difference between the managers perception based on their age and the age of the employees they manage.

Additionally, future research could address managerial commitment to establish work-life balance practices and policies in the work environment. Research by Sanchez-Vidal et al. (2012) examined the gaps between manager and employee perceptions of work-life balance and found there is a perception gap with regards to work-life balance availability and practices. Further exploration, as stated by Sanchez-Vidal et al. (2012), in combination with these findings could include consequences of the perception gap between the manager and employee that influence managerial practices. Managerial support for work-life balance and the level of organizational commitment to the extent to which organizations establish work-life balance policies and procedures could be researched. In order for a manager to promote work-life balance, the policies and procedures need to be supported by the organizational culture. Future empirical research should focus on multiple stakeholders within the organization in order to provide a more robust understanding of work-life balance.

The findings of this study suggest that HR practitioners create policies and procedures in favor of work-life balance. Therefore, consideration should also be given to researching the benefits of work-life balance. The benefits of work-life balance can be explored from the employee, manager, or organizational perspective. Future research should explore specific variables, such as employee engagement, reduced turnover, employee commitment, etc., that can be linked to work-life balance, as these variables could be implemented into organizational policies and procedures to create positive implications within organizations.

Both generational differences and work-life balance warrant further research as greater numbers of Generation Y move into the workforce and replace the Baby Boomers. As stated previously in chapter three, one intention of this study was the possible start of a longitudinal study exploring generational differences. Multiple researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Costanza et al., 2012) have called for longitudinal studies that examine the differences of generations over time. Additionally, Sanchez-Vidal et al. (2012) suggested a longitudinal study examining the change in perceptions of work-life balance over time. Therefore, the Gilley and Gilley (2013) dataset could be further explored at a later date to see if the results still hold after a given amount of time.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the conclusions from the research study by describing the results from testing the research questions and hypotheses. The summation of the research results have been presented as well as the implications for theory, research, and practice. Additionally, possible areas for future research have been explored. The aim of this research was to determine the extent of generational differences among Generation Y

and Baby Boomer workers in relation to perceptions of work-life balance. While the findings suggest there are no significant generational differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers when it comes to perceptions of work-life balance, the findings reveal similarities for work-life balance among the participants. The findings suggest that both generations want managers who treat them as unique individuals and involve them in decision-making. Hopefully this study has established a case for work-life balance as a significant positive influence in the perceptions of Generation Y and Baby Boomer employees.

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