AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF MULTIGENERATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that "AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF MULTIGENERATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR" is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.
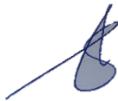
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my parents, Bafana Abie and Nesta Sanah Ndlovu

ABSTRACT

AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF MULTIGENERATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

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Higher education is grappling with a changing internal dynamic characterised by a multigenerational workforce which is becoming more heterogeneous in values, attitudes, behaviours and expectations. Current studies on generations in the higher education sector are fragmented, resulting in the lack of a comprehensive framework to assist managers to manage multiple generations effectively. The purpose of this study was to develop an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. Participants (n = 16) were drawn from nine public universities and universities of technology. Data were collected using interviews and were analysed thematically.

The study found several challenges and benefits for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector, several effective and ineffective strategies for managing them, as well as the key elements of an integrated framework for their effective management. Challenges include differences in career progression expectations, skills and experience, managing the conflict that arises from different generations working together and difficulties with planning and strategy implementation, succession planning and teamwork. Benefits include team diversity, the fact that younger academics have better relations with students, are more vibrant and have more technical skills than older academics, as well as mentoring by, and knowledge and skills transfer from, older academics.

The effective strategies for the effective management of a multigenerational workforce include adherence to policies and planning, communication, consultative management

in decision making and problem solving, workload management and work–life balance, interpersonal skills, principles and values, performance management, adaptability and human capital development. The use of an authoritarian leadership style is an ineffective strategy. The key elements that comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector include generational perceptions, challenges related to having multigenerational academic staff members in a department, the benefits of having multigenerational academic staff members, effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members in a department, and ineffective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members in a department.

This study made several contributions to the human resource management body of knowledge on the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the faculties of institutions that participated. On the theoretical level, firstly, the findings extended Hamlin's (2004) generic model of managerial and leadership effectiveness by adding adaptability as a positive/effective leadership behaviour in the effective management of multigenerational staff members in the higher education sector. Secondly, the study confirmed the suggestion in the framework for understanding generational identities in organisations (Joshi et al., 2010) that in mechanistic organisations with a weak normative context, such as the higher education sector, there exists resistive intergenerational interactions characterised by conflict. Thirdly, it developed a theoretical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. On an empirical level, an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector was developed.

Keywords: higher education; multigenerational workforce; effective management; university; university of technology; academic staff members; Baby Boomers; Millennials; Generation Y; Generation Z.

OKUCASHUNIWE

UHLAKA OLUDIDIYELWE LOKUPHATHWA NGEMPUMELELO KWABASEBENZI BEZEMFUNDO BEZIZUKULWANE EZININGI EMKHAKHENI WEZEMFUNDO EPHEZULU ENINGIZIMU AFRIKA

ngu

Zamandlovu Sizile Makola

Imfundo ephakeme ibhekene nokushintshashintsha kwangaphakathi okubonakala ngabasebenzi abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi abashintshashintshayo ngokwezindinganiso, izimo zengqondo, ukuziphatha kanye nalokho okulindelekile. Izifundo zamanje ezimayelana nezizukulwane emkhakheni wezemfundo ephezulu zihlukene phakathi, okuholela ekuntuleni kohlaka oluphelele lokusiza abaphathi ukuphatha izizukulwane eziningi ngempumelelo. Inhloso yalolu cwaningo kwakuwukwenza uhlaka oludidiyelwe lokuphatha ngempumelelo abasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emkhakheni wezemfundo ephezulu eNingizimu Afrika. Abahlanganyeli (n = 16) bathathwe ezimfundweni eziphakeme zomphakathi eziyisishiyagalolunye nezimfundo eziphakeme zezobuchwepheshe. Imininingwane yaqoqwa kusetshenziswa izingxoxo futhi yahlaziywa ngokwendikimba.

Ucwaningo luthole izinselele nezinzuzo ezimbalwa zokuphatha ngempumelelo kwabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emkhakheni wezemfundo ephezulu eNingizimu Afrika, amasu amaningana aphumelelayo nangasebenzi kahle okuzilawula, kanye nezingxenye ezibalulekile zohlaka oludidiyelwe lokuphatha ngendlela ephumelelayo. Izinselele zihlanganisa umehluko ekulindelweni kwenqubekela phambili komsebenzi, amakhono nolwazi, ukulawula ukungqubuzana okuvela ezizukulwaneni ezahlukene ezisebenza ndawonye kanye nobunzima bokuhlela nokusebenzisa isu, ukuhlela ukulandelana kanye nokusebenzisana. Izinzuzo zihlanganisa ukuhlukahluka kwamaqembu, iqiniso lokuthi izifundiswa ezisencane zinobudlelwane obungcono nabafundi, zinomdlandla futhi zinamakhono ezobuchwepheshe amaningi kunezifundiswa ezindala, kanye

nokwelulekwa, kanye nokudluliselwa kolwazi namakhono okuvela ezifundweni ezindala.

Amasu asebenzayo okuphatha ngempumelelo abasebenzi bezizukulwane eziningi ahlanganisa ukuhambisana nezinqubomgomo nokuhlela, ukuxhumana, ukuphatha ngokubonisana ekuthathweni kwezinqumo nasekuxazululeni izinkinga, ukuphathwa kobuningi bomsebenzi kanye nebhalansi yempilo nomsebenzi, amakhono okusebenzisana phakathi kwabantu, izimiso kanye nezindinganiso, ukuphathwa komsebenzi, ukuzivumelanisa nezimo kanye nobuntu. bokuthuthukiswa kwezimali. Ukusetshenziswa kwesitayela sobuholi obunegunya kuyisu elingasebenzi. Izingxenye ezisemqoka ezihlanganisa uhlaka oludidiyelwe lokuphatha ngempumelelo kwabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emkhakheni wezemfundo ephezulu eNingizimu Afrika zifaka imibono yezizukulwane, izinselele ezihlobene nokuba nabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emnyangweni, izinzuzo zokuba nabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi, amasu asebenzayo okuphatha abasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emnyangweni, kanye namasu angasebenzi kahle okuphathwa kwabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emnyangweni.

Lolu cwaningo lwenze amagalelo aminingana emgudwini wolwazi wokuphathwa kwabasebenzi ekuphathweni ngempumelelo kwabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi kumakhono ezikhungo ezibambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo. Ezingeni lombono, okokuqala, okutholiwe kwengeze isifanekiso esijwayelekile sika-Hamlin (2004) sokuphatha nobuholi ngempumelelo ngokwengeza ukuzivumelanisa nezimo njengokuziphatha kobuholi okuhle/okuphumelelayo ekuphatheni ngempumelelo kwabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emkhakheni wezemfundo ephezulu. Okwesibili, ucwaningo luqinisekise isiphakamiso ohlakeni lokuqonda ubunikazi bezizukulwane ezinhlanganweni (Joshi et al., 2010) ukuthi ezinhlanganweni zemishini ezinomongo obuthakathaka obujwayelekile, njengomkhakha wemfundo ephezulu, kukhona ukusebenzisana okuphikisayo kwaphakathi kwezizukulwane okubonakaliswa ngukungqubuzana. Okwesithathu, luthuthukise uhlaka lombono lokuphatha ngempumelelo kwabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emkhakheni wezemfundo ephezulu eNingizimu

Afrika. Ngokwezinga elikhombisayo, kwasungulwa uhlaka oludidiyelwe lokuphatha ngempumelelo kwabasebenzi bezemfundo abavela ezizukulwaneni eziningi emkhakheni wezemfundo ephezulu eNingizimu Afrika.

Amagama asemqoka:

higher education

imfundo ephezulu

multigenerational workforce

abasebenzi bezizukulwane eziningi

effective management

ukuphatha okusebenzayo

university

imfundo ephakeme

university of technology

imfundo ephakeme yezobuchwepheshe

academic staff members

abasebenzi bezemfundo

Baby Boomers

abantu abazalwa phakathi kuka-1946 kuya ku-1964

Millennials

abantu abazalwa phakathi neminyaka yawo-1980 kanye nasekupheleni kwawo-1990

Generation Y

ngokuvamile yizingane ze-Baby Boomers

Generation Z.

abantu abazalwa phakathi neminyaka yawo-1990 kanye nasekuqaleni kwawo-2010

KAKARETŠO

TLHAKO YE E KOPANTŠWEGO YA TAOLO YA MALOKO A BAŠOMI BA THUTO BA MELOKONTŠI MO LEKALENG LA THUTO YA GODIMO KA AFRIKA BORWA

ka

Zamandlovu Sizile Makola

Thuto ya godimo e šogana le phetogo ya lenaneo la ka gare leo le laetšwago ka bašomi ba melokontši seo se fetogago ka go fapana ka mekgwa, dikgopolo, maitshwaro le ditetelo. Dinyakišišo tša kgauswanyane go meloko mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo di kgaogane, gomme di tšweletša dipoelo tša tlhako ya go phatlalala go thuša balaodi go laola meloko ye mentši gabotse. Nepo ya dinyakišišo tše e be e le go kaonafatša tlhako ye e kopantšwego go laola gabotse maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo ka Afrika Borwa. Bakgathatema (n=16) ba hweditšwe go diyunibesithi tše senyane tša setšhaba le diyunibesithi tša theknolotši. Data e kgobokeditšwe go lebeletšwe dipoledišano gomme di sekasekilwe di amanywa le merero.

Dinyakišišo di utollotše gore ditlhohlo tše mmalwa le dikholego tša taolo ye botse ya maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo ka Afrika Borwa, mekgwa ye mmalwa ya go šoma gabotse le ya go se šome gabotse ya go ba laola, gammogo le dielemente tša motheo tša tlhako ye e kopantšwego go taolo ya bona ye botse. Ditlhohlo di akaretša diphapano mo go ditetelo tša tatelano ya mošomo, mabokgoni le maitemogelo, go laola thulano ye e ka tšwelelago go tšwa go meloko ya go fapana yeo e šomago mmogo le mathata ka go beakanya le go phethagatša mekgwa, peakanyo ya tatelano le go šoma ka sehlopha. Dikholego di akaretša phapano ya sehlopha, lebaka la gore dirutegi tše difsa di na le dikamano tše dikaone le baithuti, gape ba na le mafolofolo gape ba na le mabokgoni a sethekniki a mantši go feta dirutegi tše dikgolo, gammogo le go tlhahlwa ke, le tsebo le phetišetšo ya mabokgoni, go tšwa go dirutegi tše digolo.

Mekgwa ye mebotse ya taolo ye botse ya bašomi ba melokontši e akaretša go latela dipholisi le peakanyo, kgokagano, taolo ya poledišano mo go tšeeng diphetho le go rarolla mathata, taolo ya mošomo le tekanyetšo ya Bophelo bja mošomo, mabokgoni a leago, mekgwa le maitshwaro, taolo ya phethagatšo, go fetogafetoga le kaonafatšo ya bokgoni bja batho. Tšhomišo ya mokgwa wa boetapele bja kgatelelo ke mokgwa wa go se šome gabotse. Dielemente tša motheo tšeo di akaretšago tlhako ye e kopantšwego ya taolo ye botse ya maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo ka Afrika Borwa, e akaretša dikgopolo tša meloko, ditlhohlo tše di lebanego le maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo ka kgorong, mekgwa ya go se šome gabotse ya go laola maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši ka kgorong.

Dinyakišišo di file maele a mmalwa go lekgotla la taolo ya mothopo wa batho ya tsebo go taolo ye botse ya maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši ka mafapheng a diinstitušene tšeo di kgathilego tema mo dinyakišišo tše. Mo legatong la teori, sa mathomo, dikutollo di katološeditšwe go mmotlolo wa kakaretšo wa Hamlin's (2004) wa go šoma gabotse ga boetapele ka go tsenya go fetogafetoga bjalo ka maitshwaro a boetapele a mabotse/a go šoma gabotse mo taolong ye botse ya maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo ka Afrika Borwa. Sa bobedi, dinyakišišo di kgonthiša kakanyo ya tlhako ya go kwešiša boitsebo bja meloko ka mekgatlong (Joshi et al., 2010) yeo e lego mekgatlo ya go se kwagale ya go ba le tikologo ya tekolo, go swana le lekala la thuto ya godimo, moo go na le tsenelano ya meloko ya go tsenelana ye e šireleditšwego ya go ba le dithulano. Sa boraro, e kaonafaditše tlhako ya teori ya taolo ye botse ya maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo ka Afrika Borwa. Mo legatong la maitemogelo, tlhako ye e kopantšwego ya taolo ye botse ya maloko a bašomi ba thuto ba melokontši mo lekaleng la thuto ya godimo ka Afrika Borwa e kaonafaditšwe.

Mantšu a motheo: thuto ya godimo; bašomi ba melokontši; taolo ye botse; yunibesithi, yunibesithi ya theknolotši, maloko a bašomi ba thuto; Baby Boomers; Millennials; Moloko wa Y; Moloko wa Z.

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ATD	Association for Training and Development
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
UK	United Kingdom
USAf-ACU	Universities South Africa-Association of Commonwealth Universities
WLB	Work–life balance

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background to and motivation for the study, as well as the problem statement, research questions and objectives. The study delimitations and statement of significance and the key concepts are clarified. It also discusses the research assumptions and provides an overview of the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter concludes with an outline of the research methodology and discusses the ethical considerations and the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness, followed by a detailed outline of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Generational diversity in academic environments has mainly focused on pedagogical aspects and the relationship between each generation's unique culture and characteristics in a teaching and learning context (Jayson & Chavez, 2015). Although such a focus is necessary, another area that requires investigation is how generational diversity affects workplace interactions and relationships in an education-oriented workplace context (Chakradhar et al., 2018; Jayson & Chavez, 2015).

Today's workforce is not only diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, gender, workstyles, and culture but also age (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Kunze et al., 2013). The modern workplace consists of at least five generations, namely, the Silent Generation/Traditionalists (born between 1925–1945), the Baby Boomers (born between 1946–1964), Generation X (born between 1965–1980), Generation Y (born between 1981–1995) and Generation Z/Nexters (born between 1996–2014) (Bejtkovsky, 2016; Knight, 2014). Some scholars have emphasised that these generational labels and years of birth are based on the United States (US) and are not universal globally (Cogin, 2012; Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Ikram et al., 2021; Sarraf, 2019). A detailed discussion of generational cohorts in different countries is provided in Chapter 2.

1.2.1 An international perspective on generational issues in the higher education sector

Many higher education institutions are faced with an ageing workforce (OECD, 2022; Pritchard et al., 2019). The age structure of the academic workforce has been a concern in many Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries since at least the 2000s (OECD, 2022). The OECD is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1961 to stimulate global trade and economic progress. It has 38 member countries shown on Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

OECD member countries

Australia	Finland	Korea	Slovak Republic
Austria	France	Latvia	Slovenia
Belgium	Germany	Lithuania	Spain
Canada	Greece	Luxembourg	Sweden
Chile	Hungary	Mexico	Switzerland
Colombia	Iceland	Netherlands	Türkiye
Costa Rica	Ireland	New Zealand	United Kingdom
Czechia	Israel	Norway	United States
Denmark	Italy	Poland	
Estonia	Japan	Portugal	

The proportion of young academic staff (under 30) is relatively low across OECD countries: 7% in short-cycle tertiary education (vocationally oriented, occupation-specific and practically based education) and 9% at bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels combined. Most OECD-affiliated countries, except for Costa Rica and New Zealand, have a low percentage of young academic staff at the short-cycle tertiary level. In many of the OECD countries, young academics enter academia while enrolled in a doctoral programme or shortly thereafter (OECD, 2022). Over 40% of academic staff in OECD-affiliated countries are 50 years old or older (OECD, 2019, 2022). During the period 2015 to 2020, Austria, Canada, Germany, Korea and Portugal saw their rates increase by at least four percentage points (OECD, 2022). This is because many academics continue to work after they retire. The OECD (2019, 2022) estimates

that only one-third of countries (Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) have increasingly being populated by younger academics. Figure 1.1 depicts the age distribution of the academic staff among the OECD countries in 2020. The countries are ranked in descending order of the share of academic staff aged 50 and over.
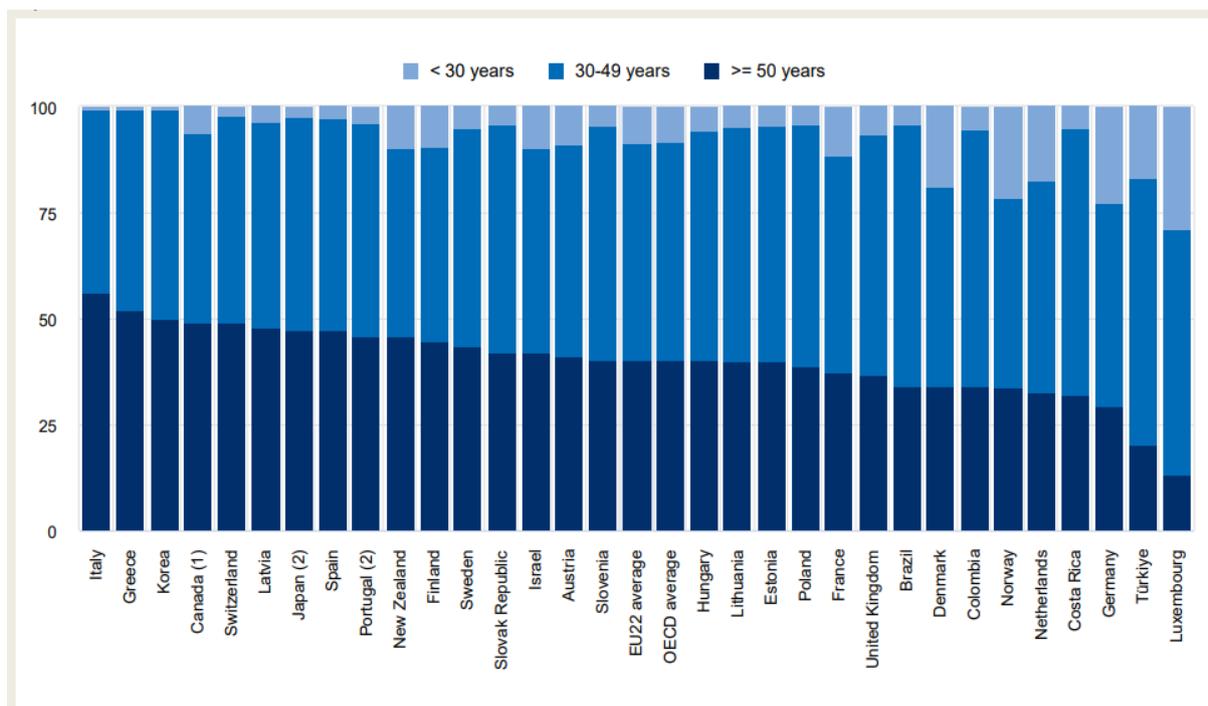
Figure 1.1: Age profile of academic staff (2020)
Source: OECD (2022)

Currently, in the United States of America (USA), most academics are either Millennials (born between 1981 and 1995), Generation X (1963–1981) or Baby Boomers (1946–1963). Generation X constitutes most of the academic workforce (Kyrousi et al., 2022). In the UK, some 7090 academic staff members aged 66 years old and older were employed in the higher education sector in 2017, accounting for 3,4% of the 206 870 academic workforce. This figure of academic staff in the UK is more than double that of 2011, in which only 1,9% of the academic workforce was aged 66 and older (Grove, 2018). At the end of August 2017, 27 570 academic staff aged 30 or under were employed at UK universities compared with 25 000 in 2011. However, increased staff numbers meant a decline in the proportion of academics aged 30 or under from 13,9 to 13,3% (Grove, 2018). In 2021/22, there were 7450 (3%)

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academic staff aged 25 and under and 45 390 (19%) of academic staff were aged 56 and over in the UK (HESA, 2023). Staff aged 35 and under tend to be concentrated more in research-only roles than older staff. For example, 60,5% of staff aged 51–55 were in teaching and research roles, while 52,9% of staff aged 26–30 were in research-only roles (Advance HE, 2020, p.47). Academic staff in non-SET (science, engineering, and technology) subject areas tend to have an older age profile than those in SET, with 36,4% of non-SET academic staff over the age of 50 compared with 26,6% of SET academic staff (Advance HE, 2020, p. 47).

Australian universities also contend with an ageing population and subsequent ageing academic workforce (Loomes et al., 2019). In 2017, around 23% of the academic workforce was over 55 years. A deeper inspection of the data further shows that 42% of academic staff at senior lecturer level and above (full-time and fractional) are over 55 (Loomes et al., 2019). While these data raise concerns, this impact may be more gradual than first anticipated owing to people phasing into retirement (Loomes et al., 2019). In addition, as the Baby Boomers withdraw from the academic workforce, Australian universities may be faced with an increasing need to recruit from overseas (Earl et al., 2017; Loomes et al., 2019; McChesney & Bichsel, 2020). Australian academics, for example, are older than the general workforce and many experienced academics intend to keep working, even if only part-time or casually (Hutchings et al., 2022).

Several factors influence the profile of academic staff members in the OECD-affiliated countries mentioned above. Firstly, the academic career path structure in some countries, where a long career ladder means that academic staff can take a long time to advance to the professorial level (OECD, 2019). Secondly, the legislation on the retirement age can affect the age profile of staff. For example, in the USA legislation has eliminated the requirement to retire at 70, in the Flemish community academic staff members can continue working after the retirement age of 65 years, and in Norway the retirement age is 67 years with the maximum deferral age for retirement at 75 years (OECD, 2019). In addition, more than six out of every 10 academic staff members want to stay employed longer if they remain healthy and do not find anything more desirable to do (Kaskie, 2017; Zarling, 2018). Lastly, some countries have lengthy training periods for doctoral students and the age of new academics is

increasing. For example, while doctoral studies take three to four years among the OECD participating jurisdictions, in the case of the United States, they can take from six to nine years, depending on the subject and institution (Berk, 2013; OECD, 2019).

The ageing of academic staff can have a significant budgetary impact, as older staff are more likely to be in senior positions and therefore draw higher salaries and are members of pension schemes (OECD, 2019). The impact of higher education systems' massification in the 1960s and 1970s and the related recruitment of large numbers of academic staff is now leading to more concern about staffing levels and budgetary implications. In some countries, it is becoming more challenging for younger people to enter the academic labour market or find permanent employment. For example, in the Flemish Community about 9,8% of academic staff younger than 34 years of age have an ongoing employment contract. Academic staff members aged 45–59 years and 60 years or older, on the other hand, make up more than 70% of those with ongoing contracts. In Norway, 23% of academic staff members 35 years and under have an ongoing employment contract, while 77,5% of academic staff members aged 45–59 years and 85,3% of academic staff members aged 60 years or older are on ongoing contracts (OECD, 2019).

1.2.2 A South African perspective on generational issues in the higher education sector

In South Africa, social inequalities were entrenched and manifested in all spheres of social life, systematically excluding blacks and women under colonialism and apartheid (Badat, 2008; Lephakga, 2017). The higher education system was no exception (Badat, 2010). Owing to colonialism and apartheid, knowledge production in South Africa has largely been the preserve of white males (Badat, 2010).

The South African higher education sector faces similar changes to other countries. According to the OECD (2012), universities in the country, particularly the historically white institutions, are challenged by the rising average age of academics over 50 and low levels of new entrants. These findings are similar to those of the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), which indicate that, in 2004, 16% of academics were 55 years and older (DHET, 2017). This figure increased to 22% in 2017. However, the number of academics under 35 declined from 23% in 2004 to 20%

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in 2017. According to Van Schalkwyk (2019), who analysed data from the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) HEMIS for the period 2007 to 2021, the analysis of the datasets did not support the notion that academic staff were ageing in South Africa. Van Schalkwyk (2019) concludes that the interventions developed and implemented by the government such as the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP), which supports the recruitment, development, and retention of early-career academics, as well as giving appointees with limited formal academic experience an opportunity to enter the academic profession, develop a pipeline of academics to gradually replace retiring academic staff members are effective.

Notwithstanding the effectiveness of pipeline development initiatives, higher education institutions face challenges in retaining early career academics (Barkhuizen et al., 2020; Kerr, 2022). Firstly, institutions in the higher education sector are competing with industry for retaining skilled young academics, where corporate remuneration is more competitive than academic salaries (Pienaar & Bester, 2006; Selesho & Naile, 2014). According to Higher Education South Africa (HESA) (2014), the remuneration packages of junior lecturers and lecturers were generally lower than those for comparable levels in the public sector but comparable to the private sector. HESA has acknowledged that the academic sector faces the challenge of attracting young graduates into academia. Therefore, South African universities have missed opportunities for growth and development because of the limited information on Generation Y academics.

Considering the projected shortages of academic staff members in academia, this could have an impact on organisational staffing and performance. The view that academia is a less attractive career option could have extensive costs for the higher education sector, the economy and society in general (Badat, 2008; Selesho & Naile, 2014). Secondly, higher education institutions should equip early career academics with appropriate teaching skills to enhance student employability. However, career development infrastructure and government funding are significant barriers to academic staff development initiatives (Barkhuizen et al., 2020). Thirdly, novice academics play an important role in shaping institutional cultures, especially at historically white universities. Lastly, most higher education institutions (HEIs) continue to practise unfair discrimination and inequity in employment (Hemson &

Singh, 2010). According to Bonti-Ankomah (2020), equity, diversity and inclusion and broader transformation strategies are not addressing the challenges facing all equity-seeking groups, even though the opportunities for access are improving. Additionally, Asha, Phaduli and Mokoena's (2023, p. 128) study found that most respondents (36%) disagreed with the university's recruitment and retention strategies for drawing people from the designated group. Furthermore, three-quarters of respondents indicated that the barriers to EE in the University included remuneration, institutional culture, recruitment practices, selection criteria, retention of designated groups, succession planning, and reverse discrimination.

In 2019 the Universities South Africa – Association of Commonwealth Universities (USAf-ACU) symposium echoed the case for building a new generation of academics. At this symposium, there was some consensus that the sector needed to pay attention to strategies in place for a) attracting and recruiting new talent into academia and b) formulating career progression paths to a professorship (USAf, 2019). The ageing of employees in the higher education sector raises several challenges and opportunities vital to the continued fiscal health, educational quality and public reputations of colleges and universities. These challenges include increasing salary and benefit pay-outs at the top of the age distribution, creating budgetary pressures and exacerbating the stagnation of job opportunities for new academic staff members and possible downturns in productivity or workplace morale among senior employees (Kaskie, 2017; Stevens & Kirst, 2015). On the other hand, opportunities presented by the ageing workforce include mentorship, sustained research productivity, as well as the institutional reputation boosts provided most reliably by senior professors (Kaskie, 2017; Petersen et al., 2014; Xie & Shauman, 2003).

Indeed, the next generation of academics working together with older generations brings new challenges for higher learning institutions. Such a situation requires institutions to develop innovative human resources and organisational development policies and practices to address the unique challenges of attracting, managing, retaining, and developing their most valuable human resources (Robyn & Du Preez, 2013).

1.2.3 Specific issues, challenges, and benefits of a multigenerational workplace

A multigenerational workforce provides a distinct advantage for organisations. Organisations benefit from having a breadth of knowledge and ideas from a diverse group of people (Swan, 2012). The benefits organisations can gain from having a multigenerational workforce include highly motivated employees, better organisational culture, work satisfaction and loyalty and an improved company image than would otherwise be the case (Swan, 2012). Other benefits include lower perceived age discrimination and procedural and distributive justice, which can result in lower voluntary turnover and higher team performance (Ali & French, 2019; Kilduff et al., 2000). For example, Boehm et al. (2014) found a significant negative relationship between age-diverse work organisations and turnover intentions.

However, each generation comes into the workplace with different leadership styles, communication styles and career development expectations (Boehm et al., 2014). These differences result from each generation coming to maturity at specific times in history. The socioeconomic, political, and cultural atmospheres in which they grew up shape their beliefs, views and perspectives on the meaning of work (Boehm et al., 2014). For this reason, a multigenerational workforce poses some challenges for human resource management (HRM) in organisations. According to Pawlak et al. (2022), these challenges include team communication, intergenerational conflicts, work–life balance and the ability to learn from colleagues. Furthermore, being more credentialled, the younger generations are often promoted into positions where they manage people older than themselves (Boehm et al., 2014).

Research by Polat et al. (2019) and Stanley (2010) shows that generational conflict exists in the workplace and that generational differences ultimately lead to conflict and misunderstandings. When exploring these differences, Kogan (2001) found that Generation X commonly wanted to be treated as equals regardless of their status or experience, while Baby Boomers expected to be looked up to and respected. Traditionalists were commonly described as old-fashioned or even out of touch, while Baby Boomers were characterised as workaholics. Generation Y is characterised as disloyal, demanding, and impatient, while Generation X has been described as the slacker generation.

These generalisations about the different generations may lead to stereotyping, biases and conflict regarding career progression opportunities and work satisfaction, resulting in a frustrating, demanding, and stressful workplace (Gunawan et al., 2020; Rani & Samuel, 2016). Changes in organisational demographics mean that successful organisations will need to ensure that different generations understand each other and can work well together. More importantly, organisations have an opportunity to develop a dynamic multigenerational workforce (Coventry & Hays, 2021; Kogan, 2001).

Although the presence of different generations in the workplace benefits organisations in terms of diversity (Choi & Jarrott, 2021; Chun & Evans, 2021; Tamunomiebi & Wobodo, 2018), these generational differences and their associated challenges present unique workplace opportunities and constraints for human resource (HR) professionals and organisational leaders (Bennett et al., 2012; Mahmoud et al., 2020; Schroth, 2019). For example, in an HRM study on organisations with 500 or more employees, 58% of the managers surveyed reported conflict between younger and older workers (Cogin, 2012). Furthermore, the study by Deal et al. (2010) attributed intergenerational conflicts to managers directing 65% of work performance to organisational problems, as well as the fact that 44% of leaders spent more than 20% of their time mitigating workplace conflicts and 25% of their time dealing with employee turnover.

Most HRM policies in organisations reflect the influence and aspirations of the Baby Boomer generation, which rose through the ranks over time. As Ng and Parry (2016) put it, Baby Boomers developed the existing HRM policies and practices. However, these HRM policies and practices may not represent modern organisations. Therefore, comparing generational differences regarding attitudes, career expectations and work values would provide insights to update current HRM policies and practices for the benefit of future workforce generations (Ng & Parry, 2016).

Baby Boomers perceive long working hours as a source of pride in contributing to their organisation (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Therefore, they may perceive Generations X and Y, who prioritise their personal life over their work life, as nonchalant (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Ahn and Ettner (2014) allude to the need for different leadership and

management styles to address the conflict that may arise owing to the generational difference in career priorities and work values. Mokoka et al. (2010) echoed these findings when they found that nurse managers faced shortcomings in their leadership and managerial skills within a multigenerational nursing workforce.

South African studies have also found several generational differences that influence the HRM function. For example, Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010) highlighted generational differences regarding work values and co-worker relationships, work–life balance, rewards, and retirement. Bussin and Van Rooy (2014) also found significant differences in reward preferences across generational cohorts. Both these studies support international literature with their findings.

According to Bell and Hughes-Jones (2008), perceptions drive behaviour, in this case each generation's perceptions of the other generations. These perceptions, therefore, justify the notion that the perceptions are accurate for each generation. Consequently, misconceptions can result in misunderstandings and discrimination. For example, a study by Deyoe and Fox (2012) found that managers used their misguided perceptions that Generation Y lacked a work ethic and had a sense of self-entitlement to purposely discriminate against Generation Y when they crafted their job descriptions. Organisations, therefore, need to put perceptions into perspective to minimise issues such as contracted development and growth and organisational incompetence (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011).

The exodus of the Baby Boomers from the workplace means that organisations need to manage the knowledge transfer from the older employees leaving the organisation to the younger employees (Burkey, 2022; Flood, 2020; Myers, 2020; Ng & Parry, 2016). On the other hand, younger employees can support and transfer new skills to older employees, like the use of new technology and social media (Ng & Parry, 2016; Younas & Bari, 2020). Joshi et al. (2010) argue that effectively transferring organisational knowledge from the older to the younger generations is challenging for HR managers. Research indicates that the institutional knowledge and the large amount of corporate knowledge vested in the brains of employees that leave the organisation when an employee exits the organisation is both tacit and explicit (Burmeister & Deller, 2016; Joe et al., 2013). Employee departures negatively affect

an organisation's knowledge base, especially the departure of senior executives (Burmeister & Deller, 2016; Joe et al., 2013). Wagner (2009) suggested that organisations need to consider the learning styles of different generations for organisational knowledge transfers. Owoyemi et al. (2011) also advise Nigerian employers to retain a balanced workforce composition by ensuring that they hold onto older employees who researchers (and often managers too) view as more committed and less likely to job-hop than younger employees. Owoyemi et al. (2011) also recommend that the management of Nigerian organisations develop different HR models to entrench cooperation and compatibility between different generational cohorts. Therefore, for organisations to ensure effective knowledge transfer, they have to retain Baby Boomers for longer to cushion the shortage of skilled workers (Ng & Parry, 2016).

Martins and Martins (2014) argue that organisations will need to pay attention to what Millennials (born ± 1978 and 2000) need, such as training, development, and interpersonal relationship skills. This capacity development of training, development, and interpersonal relationship skills can improve their relationship motivation and aspects such as social relationships, friendships, affiliation, and group work and, eventually, their employee satisfaction. On the other hand, organisations need to focus on Baby Boomers and Generation Xers to ensure they devise strategies to enhance their satisfaction levels.

Therefore, generational differences also require organisations to find the right combination of means to attract young employees while at the same time retaining older employees. Organisations must now modify their recruitment plans by incorporating multiple recruitment methods that align with the different generations' expectations (Bosco & Harvey, 2013). For example, Generation Y is digitally inclined and prefers to use the internet and social media when looking for jobs, whereas Baby Boomers rely on print media (Ehrhart et al., 2012). Considering the existing generational difference articulated, organisations need to understand how to lead and manage different generations because each presents distinct challenges (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014; Derville-Gallicano, 2015; Haeger & Lingham, 2014).

The higher education sector is not only grappling with external drivers of change, such as shifting social and economic demands, increasing fees and rapidly changing technology (Pincus et al., 2017; Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe, 2020), but also with the changing internal dynamics of a multigenerational workforce which is becoming more heterogeneous in values, attitudes, behaviours and expectations (Berk, 2013; Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Reynolds & Wallace, 2016). Managing multigenerational work contexts is challenging in every industry, but it is especially challenging in the academy (Strawser et al., 2021). As a result of their generational affiliations and perceptions of the institution, academic staff members may re-examine the role they play in the organisation and how it relates to them (Strawser et al., 2021).

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Multiple scholars have shown that intergenerational conflicts can occur owing to the purported differences between generations in the workplace (Dencker et al., 2007; Lancaster & Stillman, 2009; Pritchard & Whiting, 2014; Rudolph & Zacher, 2015). Employees from these different generations hold different work values and beliefs. The failure to address these differences can lead to conflict in the workplace, misunderstandings, and reduced productivity among employees. In the workforce, this differentiation is called workforce diversity. An employee diversity of this magnitude poses a challenge to managers because they must deal with people with differing work ethic, ambition, view, mindset, and style (Pitout & Hoque, 2022; Schroth, 2019).

There have been several studies conducted in South Africa on elements of HRM across generations. For example, Heyns and Kerr (2018) investigated multigenerational workforces and employee motivation from the perspective of a self-determination theory; Lesenyeho et al. (2018) examined the factors that would attract early career academics to South African HEIs; Grobler and Jansen van Rensburg (2019) investigated the generational perspective on organisational climate, person–organisation fit and turnover intention within a South African HEI; Jonck et al. (2017) and Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010) explored work values from a generational perspective; Kahn and Louw (2016) explored generational competence in enhancing the public service HR capacity; Bussin and Van Rooy (2014) and Close and Martins (2015) studied generational motivation and preference for reward and recognition; Martins and Martins (2014) investigated the satisfaction with organisational practices

of employees from the different age generation groups; and Hlongwane and Ledimo (2015) examined generational differences on work engagement levels of employees in a South African government healthcare institution.

Several studies for example Bussin and Van Rooy (2014), Heyns and Kerr (2018) and Grobler and Jansen van Rensburg (2019) investigated different individual aspects linked to the presence of and/or management of multiple generations in the workplace. Although these studies (Bussin & Van Rooy, 2014); Heyns & Kerr, 2018; Grobler & Jansen van Rensburg, 2019) provide a better understanding of each generational aspect, they are distinct and do not provide a framework that offers a holistic view of the challenges, benefits, and strategies for effectively managing a multigenerational workforce. The lack of a comprehensive framework makes it challenging for managers to manage the different generations in the workplace effectively. Furthermore, Eberz (2020) states that even though many companies have already implemented initial measures to adapt to the varying needs of a multigenerational workforce, there still is no comprehensive approach to the effective management of multiple generations.

The forgoing literature points out several challenges related to a multigenerational workplace, including:

- an ageing academic staff complement,
- junior academics' entrance and induction into the académe, and
- the lack of a framework to guide institutions in effectively managing a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education context.

Thus, this study seeks to develop an integrated framework for the effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector. The framework would guide managers to effectively manage and balance the interests and aspirations of the different generations of employees employed in the South African higher education sector today.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the challenges discussed above, the following research questions were formulated to guide both the theoretical and empirical phases of this study:

1.4.1 Central research question

The central research question that this study sought to answer was: "What elements should comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector?"

1.4.2 Research questions regarding the literature review

In terms of the literature review, the research questions were formulated as follows:

- **Research question 1**: How is the concept of "generation" conceptualised?
- **Research question 2**: Are there several generations of academic staff members working in the South African higher education sector today and how are they conceptualised in the literature?
- **Research question 3**: What are the key elements of the existing generational theories, frameworks and/or models?

1.4.3 Research questions regarding the empirical study

The following research questions were formulated for the empirical study:

- **Research question 1**: What are the human resource management challenges faced by heads of departments in managing the different generations of academic staff members employed in the South African higher education sector?
- **Research question 2**: What are the human resource management benefits experienced by heads of departments in managing the different generations of academic staff members in the South African higher education sector?
- **Research question 3**: How could the diverse expectations of different generations of academic staff members be managed by heads of departments in the South African higher education sector?
- **Research question 4:** What are the key elements that comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector?
- **Research question 5**: What recommendations can this study offer universities in general and heads of departments in particular for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in South African higher education?

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS

The following aims were formulated from the above research questions:

1.5.1 Primary aim

The primary aim of this study was to determine the elements that comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.

1.5.2 Specific aims of the research

The specific aims formulated for the literature review and the empirical research follow below:

1.5.2.1 *Specific aims regarding literature review*

- **Research aim 1**: To investigate how the concept of generation is conceptualised.
- **Research aim 2**: To determine whether several generations of academic staff members are working in the South African higher education sector today and how they are conceptualised in the literature.
- **Research aim 3**: To determine the key elements of the existing generational theories, frameworks and/or models.

1.5.2.2 *Specific aims regarding empirical study*

The specific aims of the empirical study were the following:

- **Research aim 1**: To explore the human resource management challenges faced by heads of departments in managing the different generations of academic staff members employed in the South African higher education sector
- **Research aim 2**: To investigate the human resource management benefits experienced by heads of departments in managing the different generations of academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.
- **Research aim 3**: To analyse how heads of departments in the South African higher education sector could manage the diverse expectations of different generations of academic staff members.

- **Research aim 4**: To determine the key elements that comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.
- **Research aim 5**: To formulate recommendations to universities and heads of departments for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.

1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Delimitations are aspects that define the boundaries and limit the scope of the study (Simon, 2011). Delimitations include the sample size, population, and location of the study. This study was limited to the South African public higher education sector. Higher education contributes to the economic and social development of a country through four key missions: firstly, through the development of human capital; secondly, by establishing knowledge bases through research and development; thirdly, through the distribution and use of knowledge; and lastly, by means of the maintenance of knowledge through intergenerational storage and knowledge exchange (Pouris & Inglesi-Lotz, 2014). The National Development Plan of South Africa acknowledges that higher education is the primary driver of the information and knowledge systems that are crucial for economic development (National Planning Commission, 2012). This link between education and the economy is also supported by researchers such as Takawira et al. (2014) and Van Heerden et al. (2007).

Furthermore, the National Development Plan of South Africa acknowledges that higher education is essential for good citizenship and enriching and diversifying citizens' lives (National Planning Commission, 2012). However, there is a shortage of academics, particularly in the human, actuarial, natural and engineering sciences (National Planning Commission, 2012). Therefore, the academic profession requires renewal if South African universities are to expand, compete and drive the knowledge society and economy (National Planning Commission, 2012).

1.7   STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This study is significant and relevant for the South African higher education context, emphasising how institutions can manage a multigenerational workforce effectively. The study contributes to three levels: theoretical, empirical, and practical.

1.7.1   Theoretical level

At a theoretical level, this study provides a foundation that contributes towards understanding the elements that should comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff in the South African higher education sector. The study makes three theoretical contributions to the HRM body of knowledge as follows: firstly, by extending Hamlin's (2004) generic model of managerial and leadership effectiveness through the insertion of adaptability as a positive or effective leadership behaviour in managing multigenerational staff members in the higher education sector; secondly, by confirming the suggestion in the framework for understanding generational identities in organisations (Joshi et al., 2010) that in mechanistic organisations with a weak normative context, such as the higher education sector, there exist resistive intergenerational interactions; and lastly, by contributing a theoretical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.

1.7.2   Empirical level

The study developed an empirical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. The framework details the effective behaviours managers should display and the ineffective behaviours that managers should avoid in managing multigenerational academic staff members. In the context of South African higher education, no framework is currently available that focuses on effective management of multigenerational academic staff. As a result, this study makes a significant contribution to HRM discourse due to its empirical development of an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the context of higher education in South Africa. Future research on the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in human resources management will be guided by the newly developed framework.

1.7.3 Practical level

At a practical level, the framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector will assist the following sectoral stakeholders: heads of academic departments, university management and the DHET. These stakeholders will gain insights into how to effectively manage a multigenerational workforce. Additionally, the government and university management will obtain important information on the sector's challenges regarding managing a multigenerational workforce and how to evaluate existing programmes, human resources policies, practices, and procedures and/or develop new interventions to address the challenges.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following key concepts serve as points of departure for discussion in this study:

1.8.1 Academic department

An academic department is a unit within the faculty, school or college responsible for teaching, research and service in a specific topic or field of study (Boyko, 2009).

1.8.2 Academic staff members

Refers to the academic staff members comprising lecturers and professors involved in teaching in an HEI (Collins dictionary). Additionally, according to the South African Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (HEA), academic staff refers to "any person appointed to teach or to do research at a public higher education institution and any other employee designated as such by the council of that institution" (Republic of South Africa, 1997, p. 6).

1.8.3 Heads of Department

A head of department is responsible for an academic department's academic, managerial and administrative functions (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2010).

1.8.4 Effective manager

An effective manager possesses and displays various skills such as teamwork, motivation, communication and objectives. In addition, a successful manager guides,

leads, clarifies and organises subordinates' activities using appropriate tools and methods for task completion (Druker, 2011).

1.8.5 Effectiveness

Amjad and Bhaswati (2014) define effectiveness as something a manager creates from a situation by properly handling it to achieve results or reach goals in all aspects of an organisation's operations. Therefore, effectiveness is a crucial attribute for managers to achieve operational requirements successfully (Analoui et al., 2010).

1.8.6 Higher education sector

There are 26 South African public-sector universities (DHET, 2019). Further, three university types exist in South Africa, including 11 traditional or general academic universities, six universities of technology and nine comprehensive universities. Their establishment and operations are regulated by the HEA.

1.8.7 Management

Management refers to the process of optimising and effectively using limited or scarce resources to meet organisational goals and objectives (Haimann et al., 1985).

1.8.8 Managerial effectiveness

According to Drucker (1970), managerial effectiveness results from a manager's ability to grasp multifaceted practices like effective decision-making, time management, developing resilience, results orientation and concentrating on select strategic areas.

1.8.9 South African public universities

According to the HEA, a public university is any higher education institution that is established, deemed to be established or declared as a public higher education institution under the Act (Republic of South Africa, 1997).

1.9 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

Merriam and Tisdell (2014) assert that assumptions are the primary principles that the researcher assumes are likely to be true for the research study. Therefore, the following assumptions underpinned this study:

- Multiple generations of academic staff members exist in the higher education sector.

- Management faces the challenges of managing multiple generations in the workplace.

- The South African higher education sector is in the process of transforming.

- The South African higher education sector faces difficulties attracting and retaining young academics.

1.10 AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretically, this study draws on the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness (Hamlin, 2004) with a specific interest in theoretical insights on generational identities in organisations (Joshi et al., 2010). The framework for understanding generational identities in organisations conceptualises generations as one of the dimensions influencing generational identity. Additionally, it defines the conditions under which these dimensions can be activated in organisational settings and draws implications for intergenerational relations (Joshi et al., 2010). The Generic Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness Model outlines six "positive" criteria, which indicate the behaviours managers and leaders should exhibit to be regarded as effective by their superiors and subordinates. Additionally, five "negative" criteria describe management and leadership behaviours that lead to ineffective or inefficient leadership or management. Leadership and managerial effectiveness can improve dramatically when managers and leaders avoid these behavioural contra-indications (Hamlin, 2004, p.196). Chapter 4 discusses this framework and model in greater detail.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study, which pertained to a multigenerational workforce in higher education, adapted the methodological framework developed by Ngulube (2015) and was grounded in an interpretivist paradigm. Therefore, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate. An exploratory multiple-case study design was applied because it assisted the researcher in generating in-depth information and insights from the participants. Research participant selection was principally conducted through purposive sampling and semi-structured, online interviews using Microsoft Teams

were used to collect primary data. The data were analysed thematically. A detailed discussion of the research methodology is presented in Chapter 5.

1.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The quality of qualitative research is assessed through its trustworthiness. The evaluative criteria for assessing research trustworthiness lie at the levels of credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Bless et al., 2013). A detailed discussion of the actions that the researcher implemented to enhance the trustworthiness of the study is presented in Chapter 5.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics aim to reduce the risk of harm to study participants. Therefore, the researcher must ensure that the study is conducted ethically (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). The ethical principles adhered to in this study included obtaining ethical clearance, respecting participants' autonomy, non-maleficence, fidelity, fairness, authenticity, and ethics in reporting. A detailed discussion of the actions that the researcher implemented to comply with ethical standards and conventions in this study is presented in Chapter 5.

1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of seven chapters, which are summarised below.

Chapter 1: Orientation to study

Chapter 1 discusses the background to and the motivation for the study, the problem statement, as well as the research questions and aims. Additionally, it considers the study delimitations and statement of significance and clarifies the key concepts. It further tables the research assumptions and provides an overview of the theoretical framework. Lastly, the chapter presents the research methodology, discusses ethical considerations, and reflects on the trustworthiness of the study findings, and concludes with a detailed outline of the study.

Chapter 2: Conceptualisation of generations

This chapter discusses the literature relating to the conceptualisation of generations. Firstly, a brief historical background for the term 'generation' is given, followed by

definitions for and the conceptualisation of this term. Finally, a discussion on generational cohorts across different countries is provided.

Chapter 3: Contemporary issues in managing a multigenerational workforce

This chapter discusses the challenges and benefits of, and effective strategies for managing a multigenerational workforce in the higher education sector. The chapter begins by discussing the benefits and challenges of a multigenerational workforce in the higher education sector. Thereafter, it presents effective strategies for managing a multigenerational workforce.

Chapter 4: Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses the framework and theory guiding this study by giving an overview of the key theoretical concepts and how previous studies have used the frameworks and theories. It also discusses the rationale for adopting the specific theoretical framework for the study and the extent of its applicability. The theoretical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector was developed based on elements of the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations by Joshi et al. (2010), the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness by Hamlin (2004), the literature on the conceptualisation of generations (Chapter 2) and contemporary issues in managing generations (Chapter 3).

Chapter 5: Research methodology

This chapter discusses the methodological framework used in this study, including the research paradigms, approaches, designs and methods, the steps taken to ensure the credibility of the study, and the ethical principles applied.

Chapter 6: Research findings and discussion

Chapter 6 presents the findings of this study. It begins with a profile of participants, followed by the presentation and analysis of the interview data and the formulation of the study findings. In its end, the chapter evaluates the research aims against the study findings to determine whether these aims were achieved.

Chapter 7: Conclusion, limitations, and recommendations

This is the final chapter of the thesis which presents the conclusions of the study in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for practice and future research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a personal reflection on the researcher's journey.

1.15 SUMMARY

This chapter, Chapter 1, offered an introduction to the thesis. This was followed by an overview of the study, delineating a brief background, rationale and significance. It also detailed the research problem, questions and methodology. Lastly, an outline of the chapters comprising this thesis was given.

The next chapter (Chapter 2) focuses on conceptualising the concept of generations.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALISING GENERATION AND CHARACTERISING GENERATIONAL COHORTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the conceptualisation of the term 'generation'. Firstly, the chapter briefly discusses the historical background of the concept. This historical discussion is followed by the definitions of the term 'generation' and its conceptual elaboration. The subsequent section in the chapter analyses generational cohorts by explaining the key historical events that shaped each generation across different countries. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TERM 'GENERATION'

In sociology, scholars tend to use one of two approaches in defining a generation: the first is cultural and the second is familial-reproductive (Brannen & Nilsen, 2006; Burnett, 2003; Kertzer, 1983). The cultural perspective views a generation as a group of people born within the same date range (typically delineated by year) and sharing similar cultural experiences. This approach to delineating a generation as a distinct social grouping based on a shared existence within a specific period only emerged in the 19th century (Levickaitė, 2010). On the other hand, the familial-reproductive perspective refers to the average time between the first offspring of a mother and, later, of her daughter, which is around 25 years (Levickaitė, 2010). In addition, most research has concentrated on kinship structures and their transmission of values from one generation to another (Brannen & Nilsen, 2006; Kertzer, 1983).

By contrast, sociological research has focused on generations as a social force (Burnett, 2003). Gilleard (2004) argues that sociology has focused more on vertical divisions, for example gender and class, than on horizontal divisions within society, that is, cohort or generation. The pervasive focus on vertical divisions was due, in part, to gender and class divisions being more visible than cohort or generational divisions when the discipline of sociology emerged.

However, as modern society became increasingly periodised, the horizontal divisions gained more traction. The ascendance of these divisions can be discerned, for

example, in the sociology of generations scholarship (Bristow, 2015, 2016; Kelan, 2014; Nakai, 2015). Literature (Eyerman & Turner, 1998; Laufer & Bengtson, 1974; Wohl, 1979) suggests that a few trends in the 19th century encouraged a new idea of generations as split into different groupings of people based on age. These trends were associated with industrialisation or modernisation. The changing economic structure at the time in Europe brought about a change in personal values and mentality in people, who now considered themselves more and more as part of a society and encouraged identification with groups beyond the local (Eyerman & Turner, 1998; Laufer & Bengtson, 1974; Wohl, 1979).

A social identity is essential for people to feel a sense of sameness and belonging and a generation offers this (Ellemers et al., 2002; Turner & Oakes, 1986), including other known concepts such as class, race and gender. Because these concepts are fluid, it is the everyday situations and a specific social context within which an individual's identity becomes important (Nugin, 2010). Research suggests that people are more aware of their generational identity than those belonging to other social groups (Finkelstein et al., 2001; Roberto & Biggan, 2014). The rise in generational consciousness may have resulted from societal changes that have reached an unpredicted pace and extent (Nugin, 2010). Thus, Edmunds and Turner (2002) argue that in stable societies, the transference of values and cultural knowledge from one generation to the next for the socialisation of young people becomes inadequate in new social conditions. The appearance of new socialising patterns among the youth has led researchers to develop several labels for the different generational groups such as Baby Boomers, Millennials and Gen Z (Nugin, 2010).

Having provided the historical background of term generation, the following section presents the different definitions of the concept of generation.

2.3   DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF GENERATION

Literature (for example, Mannhein, 1952; Ryder, 1965; Strauss & Howe, 1991) provides numerous definitions of the term 'generation'. Although the definitions are similar, they have expanded over time. According to Mannheim (1952), also supported by Pilcher (1994), a generation is a group of individuals of similar ages who have experienced a noteworthy historical event within a set period. Ryder (1965, p. 845)

describes a generation as an "aggregate of individuals who experienced the same event within the same time interval". Both Mannheim and Ryder adopt the idea that a generation is a cohort of people of similar age who experience common historical events. Strauss and Howe (1991) define a generation as the average of all individuals born over a period of approximately twenty years or the duration of one life phase, which includes childhood, young adulthood, midlife and old age. The definition by Kupperschmidt (2000, p. 66) includes a developmental aspect and refers to a generation as "an identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location and significant life events at critical developmental stages". Edmunds and Turner (2002, p. 7) define a generation as an age cohort that gains social significance by constituting and asserting itself as a cultural identity (Finkelstein et al., 2001; Roberto & Biggan, 2014). Snelgar et al. (2013) define a generation in terms of cohorts, life experiences or historical experiences. Debevec et al. (2013) defined a generational cohort as a group of individuals born during the same period who journey through life together. Clark (2017) defined a generation as individuals born and living within a specific period sharing collective knowledge and historical events that affect their thoughts, attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviours and lived experiences. According to Clark (2017), people who grow up in the same period experience similar social and historical events that form their core values and characteristics.

Commonalities among these definitions of the term generation include the conceptualisation of a generation as a cohort of individuals of similar age who share significant historical events, experiences, and developmental stages. These definitions emphasize the collective impact of shared temporal and contextual factors on the formation of common values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours within a specific group of people. Although there are some commonalities in the definitions, the operationalisation of the term 'generation' in research has some challenges, for example, the lack of consistency on the start and end dates for each generation. Costanza et al. (2012) argue that generational differences are due to age and the group's shared experiences. Thus, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (2020) argue that the concept of generation is a complex mix of age, context, and location. However, it is often not operationalised as such.

Contemporary generational literature in management studies capitalises on the existence of generational groups characterised by specific traits and posing unique organisational challenges (Bejtkovsky, 2016; Boehm et al., 2014; Joshi et al., 2010; Knight, 2014; Kowske et al., 2010; Myers & Davis, 2012; Swan, 2012; Thomas et al., 2014; Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010). Consequently, through this scholarship, the following generational identity classifications have emerged: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z and Generation C. These are part of everyday discussion in the workplace, homes and media (Hitchcock, 2016). Table 2.1 presents the generational categorisations in the Global North based on birth years. However, Table 2.1 below shows that there is no scholarly consensus on the age distribution framework for different generations.

Table 2.2

Categorisation of generations in the global north based on years of birth

Generational groups	Zemke et al., 2003	Howe et al., 2000	Tapscott, 2009	Twenge et al., 2010	Parry & Urwin, 2011	Gursoy et al., 2013
Traditionalist	1922-1943	1925-1944			1925-1942	
Baby Boomers	1943-1960	1945-1964	1946-1964	1946-1964	1943–1960	1946-1964
Generation X	1960-1980	1965-1979	1965-1976	1965-1981	1961–1981	1965-1980
Generation Y	1980-2000	1980-2000	1977-1997	1982 -1999	1982–	1981-2000
Generation Z			1998			

Sources: Parry and Urwin (2011, p. 80); Sarraf (2019, p.43); Tapscott (2009, p. 16)

The following section discusses generational cohorts in different countries.

2.4 GENERATIONAL COHORTS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

In the following section, the generational cohorts from different countries are discussed.

2.4.1 Generational cohorts in North America

Generational theory is originally an American concept, but it is widely applicable to anglophone countries (Akhavan et al., 2017; Okros, 2020; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Pendergast, 2010). In other words, those who speak English natively or by adoption have a cultural background associated with it, regardless of their ethnicity or geographic location. Globalisation, information and communications technologies and the world wide web have propelled the anglophone influence and the monoculturalisation of society. This has increased the number of people who can be included in the generational cohorts (Pendergast, 2010).

The conventional classification uses an age-based approach and has been widely adopted in the United States and European countries for decades. As a result of this classification, these countries now have five generations: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z (Sarraf, 2019). These generations are now discussed.

2.4.1.1 Traditionalists

In its early years, the Traditionalist, also known as the Silent generation suffered through the Great Depression and World War II and expressed great concern for security and a desire to avoid the risks and disasters they had witnessed (Ralston et al., 1999; Strauss & Howe, 1991).

2.4.1.2 Baby Boomers

After the Second World War, most Western countries experienced a baby boom. It is estimated that the Baby Boomers, born during or after the Second World War, represent the largest generation in American history. Since they lived through such dramatic times and were a large number, these individuals have left a profound impression on American and global society. In addition, as young adults, they witnessed the birth of rock and roll, the space race and women's liberation. Consequently, their personalities are often optimistic, idealistic and driven (Glass, 2007; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010; Ralston et al., 1999).

2.4.1.3 Generation X

The term 'Generation X' was coined by Charles Hamblett and Jane Deverson and popularised by Douglas Coupland (Glass, 2007). These Generation X children were born when divorce rates were double those of Baby Boomers. As a result of more accessible birth control culminating in smaller families, this generation is significantly smaller than the boomer generation. However, during the 1960s, the UK experienced a second baby boom, increasing the size of Generation X. During the same period, the US social security system came under scrutiny for possibly being unable to pay out retirement benefits to Generation Xers. The term 'latch-key children' originated when many households had two working parents. These kids literally had a key on a chain and arrived home to an empty house. The 1980s saw one of the first waves of widespread corporate layoffs, which affected many Generation X members' parents and their outlook on the world of work (Glass, 2007, p. 99; Strauss & Howe, 1991).

2.4.1.4 Generation Y

As early as elementary school, this generation had access to computers and was taught how to surf the internet to complete their research papers. A downside for Generation Y, also known as Millennials, is that they also witnessed terrorist attacks as they grew up. As the most ethnically diverse generation in American history, this group does not have clear-cut ethnic and racial boundaries. Owing to this diversity, Millennials are characterised by a sense of social responsibility and a revival of patriotism, particularly in America after 11 September 2001 (Glass, 2007).

2.4.1.5 Generation Z

This generation has no memory of prosperity before the disastrous global financial meltdown in 2008. They also do not remember any president before America's first African American President, Barak Obama. Following the September 11 attacks, most post-9/11 infants believe that the purpose of government is to keep them safe, as they were raised in the shadow of American-Asian wars and the new Department of Homeland Security. They spent more time at home (with their multiple digital platforms) than any child generation in history because their parents raised them with hands-on technology and will not let them take the same risks they did (Life Course Associates, 2012; McCrindle, 2014).

2.4.2 Generational cohorts in Australia

The six generations in Australia are the Federal generation, Builders, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z (Botha & Vera-Toscano, 2022; McCrindle, 2014).

2.4.2.1 Federation generation

The Federations are Australia's oldest living generation, with the generation's last members having been born in 1924. They endured the Depression and fought in the two World Wars. Several iconic events have occurred during the Federation generation's lifetime and unprecedented changes have been witnessed. In addition, they witnessed the abolition of slavery and the introduction of voting rights for Australian women (Botha & Vera-Toscano, 2022; McCrindle, 2014).

2.4.2.2 Builders

The Builders, also known as the Lucky generation, were born between 1925 and 1945. They are currently Australia's senior generation. They were labelled the "lucky" generation owing to the years of relative comfort that followed World War II (Botha & Vera-Toscano, 2022; McCrindle, 2014).

2.4.2.3 Baby Boomers

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Baby Boomers are those born in Australia or overseas between 1946 and 1964. A critical event that shaped the Western world's generations was the end of the Second World War. Compared to the war years, the post-war years were marked by economic growth, full employment, a baby boom and immigration programmes (McCrindle, 2014; Stoker et al., 2014; Winefield et al., 2016).

2.4.2.4 Generation X

Generation Xers are those born between 1965 and 1979. As the so-called "bridge generation", they are perceived as having fewer opportunities than their Baby Boomer forebears and as feeling closer in age to the members of the following generation (Generation Y), with whom they can therefore connect to some extent in terms of culture, views and even values (Botha & Vera-Toscano, 2022; McCrindle, 2014).

2.4.2.5 Generation Y

This generation was born between 1980 and 1994. Although this generation has also been referred to as "Millennials", the "Dot.com Generation" and KIPPERS (Kids In Parents Pockets Eroding Retirement Savings) in Australia, the global label Generation Y has stuck. Members of this generation grew up in the era of globalisation and technological advances (Botha & Vera-Toscano, 2022; McCrindle, 2014).

2.4.2.6 Generation Z

Generation Z members were born between 1995 and 2009. Social media, digital technologies and the internet were all part of this generation's upbringing. Furthermore and likely as a consequence of their insertion in the information age, some scholars have characterised this generation as "prematurely mature" and already displaying traits like social compassion and environmental responsibility, bucking the stereotype of entitlement associated with the Millennial generation (Bogueva & Marinova, 2020; McCrindle, 2014).

2.4.3 Generational cohorts in Brazil

Five distinct generational cohorts are identified in Brazil, and these are discussed below:

2.4.3.1 Nationalist generation

This cohort is also known as the Vargas Era cohort, born between 1913 and 1928 (Perryer et al., 2014). The Nationalist generation experienced a period of transformation. During this period, Brazil was heading towards a new phase as a modern society (Sandhu et al., 2015). Therefore, the Nationalist generation espoused the values of a hopeful future, national pride and the vigour to work hard to realise this future (Perryer et al., 2014). These values also supported the resilience needed when facing subsequent governments' failed promises (Sandhu et al., 2015).

2.4.3.2 Populist Democracy generation

The Populist Democracy generation is also known as the Optimism generation and came of age from 1955 to 1967 (Motta & Schewe, 2008; Ostermann et al., 2019; Schewe & Meredith, 2004). This generation experienced what, at the time, was considered a moment in Brazil's pursuit of a culturally and politically progressive world

with no limits to shaping the perfect individual and society amid the redesign of values, behaviour, interests, and institutions (Sandhu et al., 2015). This generation is characterised by belligerence, solidarity, alienation, silence, monopolistic thinking, safety-seeking and value education (Ostermann et al., 2019).

2.4.3.3 Oppressed generation

This generation came of age from 1968 to 1979, during the period referred to as the Iron Years (Schewe & Meredith, 2004). The Oppressed generation experienced an oppressive military regime that suppressed those who challenged it. Thus, this generational cohort's values included rebellion and hard work against oppression while still holding onto the notion of a better society. As a result of censorship, fear, dictatorship and frustration, these people value individualism and materialism (Perryer et al., 2014).

2.4.3.4 New Republic generation

This generation is also referred to as the "Be on your own" cohort and came of age between 1992 and 2004 (Motta & Schewe, 2008; Schewe & Meredith, 2004). The New Republic generation has seen the re-emergence of democracy in Brazil and its rise as a global player. This has resulted in values demonstrating confidence and acknowledging the country's place in the global community (Sandhu et al., 2015). According to Ostermann et al. (2019), in contrast to earlier cohorts, this one exhibits self-sufficiency, consumerism and a strong regard for ethical standards.

2.4.3.5 Internet generation

The members of this generation were born in 1991. In this cohort, the internet is not only a tool for communication but also a means of creating relationships. The economic crisis had a direct impact on their consumer relations and they incurred the consequences on a global and national level (Monteiro et al., 2020).

2.4.4 Generational cohorts in China

Four generational cohorts are identified in China, and they are discussed below:

2.4.4.1 Republican generation

The first generational cohort is referred to as the Republican generation, born before 1949. This generation's lives were shaped by uncertainty, conflict and fear (Sandhu et al., 2015), with its main influences being family relationships and hard work. Because of several conflicts, revolutions and the Japanese invasion, the Republicans depended on hard work, valuing the relative safety and security of family life and being dedicated to their employers to survive (Sandhu et al., 2015).

2.4.4.2 Collectivist generation

The Collectivist generation was born between 1949 and 1965 and experienced communist consolidation (Ralston et al.,1999). After the 1949 communist victory, there was a pervasive sense of collectiveness and hopefulness about the future. However, these feelings did not last long because the authoritarian system valued service to the nation and loyalty (Sandhu et al., 2015; Sun & Wang, 2010). This change supported the collective ideal but stifled optimism, although progress was being made in the agricultural and industrial areas of the economy (Sandhu et al., 2015). For this generation, the communist government's inauguration resulted in hopefulness and a strong focus on the value of the collective over the self. Accordingly, this generation valued patriotism and harmony above everything (Sandhu et al., 2015; Sun & Wang, 2010).

2.4.4.3 Pragmatic generation

The Pragmatic generation was born between 1966 and 1979, which began with the Cultural Revolution, in which the Communist Party fought against the central principles of Confucianism. Educated Chinese were incarcerated, re-educated, and directed to serve society through agricultural work. Therefore, the family unit crumbled because of young people's support of this new ideal. The Pragmatic generation collected some of the promises and many of the let-downs of major communist initiatives (O'Hara-Devereaux, 2013; Sun & Wang, 2010).

This generation entered the labour force during the initial ten years following Deng Xiaoping's open-door policy, thus taking advantage of the opportunities provided by China's reformed market structure (Yang et al., 2018). They benefited from the vast broad-based manufacturing industry. Most have had careers in state-owned

enterprises or the government and because few are well educated, advancement was difficult. They had and still have stressful lives. The Pragmatists focus on their children's education, saving for the future, job security and maintaining traditional social networks (O'Hara-Devereaux, 2013; Yang et al., 2018). This cohort's survival depended on their practical and realistic approach to life, being hard-working and independent (Sandhu et al., 2015).

2.4.4.4 Me generation

The current generation is called the Me generation, born between 1980 and 2000. By 1980, the change-over towards a market-based system had begun. Between 1980 and 2000, China became one of the most extraordinary economic transformations in history. These changes were coterminous with the One Child Policy, where small families amid increasing wealth were better able to provide more for their children when compared to previous generations (Erickson, 2009; Sandhu et al., 2015). This also meant that the children had more attention from their parents and were more materialistic than their parents. These children also have the latest fashion and technology and interact more with their friends (Erickson, 2009; Sandhu et al., 2015).

2.4.5 Generational cohorts in India

In India, there are four generations, and these are discussed below:

2.4.5.1 Freedom generation

The first generational cohort is the Freedom generation, born before 1946. The British who colonised India used English to introduce educated Indians to Western culture, philosophy and science (Sandhu et al., 2015). The Indians who were educated in Western ideology led the struggle for freedom. This struggle for freedom characterised this generation. Although the British introduced Western institutions and sought to impart Western values, it did not sway people's age-old belief in karma (people's acts in "this life" decide what kind of "future lives" they would lead) (Sandhu et al., 2015). This generation held on to their traditional values and beliefs while recognising Western approaches and technologies.

2.4.5.2 Socialist generation

After independence, a new generation emerged, the Socialist generation, born between 1947 and 1968. Members of this generation believed in socialism as a means for societal and national progress, a belief driven by Jawaharlal Nehru's charismatic leadership (Sandhu et al., 2015). For this generation, coming of age in a newly independent India, the dominant values were hope and a deep belief in socialist ideology. They exhibited loyalty to socialist ideals, resilience, and entrepreneurial drive (Sandhu et al., 2015). Conservatives emphasised social conformity above individualist aspiration, respect for the established order and protectionist views on international trade. They also had high levels of national pride. This generation was technophobic, held the civil service in high respect and was known for being voracious savers (Ghosh & Chaudhuri, 2009).

2.4.5.3 Regulation generation

The next generation is the Regulation generation, born between 1969 and 1989. The salient feature of this period was extreme regulatory controls, to the extent that private businesses required government-issued licences to conduct business and the issuing of licences was corrupt (Sandhu et al., 2015). This was also the only period in which India became a dictatorship for 21 months. Bold structural reforms were implemented in 1991, following decades of economic decline. The Regulation generation was characterised by anti-business mentalities and widespread corruption. Owing to the competitive environment, this generation believed in personal connections and bribes to get ahead in life (Sandhu et al., 2015). Additionally, owing to the tech-services boom, the country's college graduates experienced economic optimism and, unlike their parents' and grandparents' generation, this group expected vibrant job prospects (Ghosh & Chaudhuri, 2009).

2.4.5.4 Liberalisation generation

The Liberalisation generation was born between 1991 and 2000. This phase saw India on a new social and economic path. The rapid, widespread economic reforms, together with increased exports and investments, created the conditions for new business entrants and overall business flourishing (Sandhu et al., 2015). This generation has grown amid increasing economic prosperity and opportunities, with the

economy growing at a rate of 7 to 8% annually during the post-liberalisation stage. They are characterised by "quiet confidence" (Sandhu et al., 2015, p. 149).

The Liberalisation generation supports capitalism, unlike the previous generations. The main values of this generation are entrepreneurship, confidence and risk-taking (Sandhu et al., 2015). They are prepared to make purchases on credit and do not view debt as a liability. They can now more easily pursue good education and employment. They have an individualistic justification for their personal and professional lifestyles, including their career choices, how they manage work and life and their sexual orientation. They make decisions in life with confidence and pursue their goals without fear. They are a part of the generation that was born into opportunity and possibility (Ghosh & Chaudhuri, 2009).

2.4.6   Generational cohorts in Iran

According to Sarraf (2019) and Sarraf et al. (2017), there are five generational cohorts in Iran, which are discussed below:

2.4.6.1 Older generation (A)

The members of this generation were born between 1937 and 1961. This generation corresponds to the traditionalist and Baby Boomer generation in Western countries. As one of their common characteristics, they all passed through socialisation processes before the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

2.4.6.2 *Middle-aged generation (B)*

This generation was born between 1962 and 1976 and corresponds to Generation X in Western countries. The formative years of this generation were during the war between Iran and Iraq.

2.4.6.3 *Global Materialist generation (C)*

The Global Materialist generation was born between 1977 and 1986. Members of this generation resemble Generations X and Y in Western countries. They spent their formative years during the reconstruction period following the war.

2.4.6.4 Middle-aged generation (D)

This generation was born between 1987 and 1996 and encompasses Generation Y in Western countries which is heavily influenced by globalisation. Members' formative years covered the period of extensive political and social reforms in Iran.

2.4.6.5 The Last generation (E)

This generation was born from 1997 onwards and aligns to Generation Y in Western countries. Members of this generation are still in the beginning stages of their formative years and are even more at the coalface of globalisation than previous generations.

2.4.7 Generational cohorts in Malaysia

In Malaysia, various studies (Mustafa et al., 2022; Ting et al., 2018) have found that there are four generations in the country. These are now discussed.

2.4.7.1 Pre-Merdeka (pre-independence) generation

Members of the Pre-Merdeka generation (born in 1944 and earlier) are now in their late 70s and early 80s and vividly recall the hardships and food scarcity during the Japanese occupation. The most important thing to them is the country's security and peace (Mustafa et al., 2022; Sarraf, 2019; Ting et al., 2018).

2.4.7.2 Merdeka generation

The Merdeka generation was born between 1945 and 1964, an era primarily remembered for the racial and political hostilities that occurred before Malaysia gained independence (e.g. the racial riot incidents on 13 May 1969) (Mustafa et al., 2022; Sarraf, 2019; Ting et al., 2018).

2.4.7.3 Reformist generation

The Reformist generation consists of people born between 1965 and 1984. They vividly recall various achievements and developments in sports, politics and computer technology over this period (Mustafa et al., 2022; Sarraf, 2019; Ting et al., 2018).

2.4.7.4 Internet generation

The Internet generation was born from 1985 onwards and mainly recall the impact of social media and smartphones while recollecting Malaysia's rebirth in 2018 (Mustafa et al., 2022; Sarraf, 2019; Ting et al., 2018).

2.4.8   Generational cohorts in Mexico

In Mexico, eight generations have been identified (Fernández-Durán, 2016), which are discussed below:

2.4.8.1   Patriotic generation

This generation was born between 1911 and 1932 and had its formative years between 1928 and 1949. The historical events this generation experienced included the oil and rail expropriation, the Second World War, President Alemán gaining absolute power and the devaluation of the peso in 1948. Members of this cohort are nationalists who follow authority.

2.4.8.2 Conservative Generation

This generation was born between 1933 and 1943. Its formative years were between 1950 and 1960, during which members of this group experienced women receiving the right to vote in 1953, economic development, the devaluation of the peso in 1954 and the medical doctors and students strike in 1965. This generation is characterised as ultra-traditionalists who believe in the hierarchy of society. They worry about financial security and are non-materialistic.

2.4.8.3 Sixties

The members of this generation were born between 1944 and 1953. Their formative years were between 1961 and 1970 during which they experienced the 1968 student repression and killing in Mexico City, the 1968 Olympic Games and the 1970 FIFA World Cup. They are free capitalists and traditionalists and are not socially concerned.

2.4.8.4 First progressive generation

The first progressive generation was born between 1954 and 1965 and had its formative years between 1971 and 1982. Members experienced presidents Echeverría and López Portillo in office, the devaluation of the peso in 1976, high inflation, the oil boom which resulted in economic prosperity, the rapid increase in

external debt and the devaluation of the peso in 1982. They are characterised as capitalists but under state direction; they respect authority and are traditionalists who are socially concerned.

2.4.8.5 Pop achievers

The members of this generation were born between 1966 and 1977. Their formative years were between 1983 and 1994 during which they experienced presidents de la Madrid and Salinas in office, high inflation, video games, HIV, the 1985 earthquake, the 1986 FIFA World Cup, the restructuring of external debt, economic prosperity with low inflation, the murder of presidential candidate Colosio, revolts in Chaipas and the devaluation of the peso. This generation is characterised as being result-oriented, self-sufficient, self-directed, self-reliant, and cynical about government.

2.4.8.6 Liberation from Pri

The Liberation from Pri generation was born between 1978 and 1983 and members' formative years were between 1995 and 2000. They experienced President Zedillo in office, substantial economic problems and the election of the first president from an opposition party, President Fox. They are described as highly socially concerned, seeking harmony among individuals, hopeful for a better future and being innovative.

2.4.8.7 Fox 9/11 freedom

This generation was born between 1984 and 1988, with its formative years between 2001 and 2005. Members of this generation experienced economic growth with low inflation, record housing construction and international reserves. They are characterised as feeling free and not controlled by the government.

2.4.8.8 Drug war and internet boom

This generation was born between 1989 and 1991. Members' formative years were between 2006 and 2008. They experienced Lopez Obrador protest, President Calderon's electoral win, President Calderon's war against criminal organisations and drugs and the 2008 world economic crisis. They are characterised as hopeless about a better future, indulgers who do not believe in hard work and who believe in universal access to goods and services such as the internet. They are socially concerned and cynical about the government.

2.4.8.9 Flu pandemic crisis generation

The flu pandemic crisis generation was born in or after 1992 and had its formative years from 2009 onwards. They experienced President Calderon's war on drugs, the H1N1 flu pandemic, the world economic crisis, the 2010 Mexican independence, bicentennial celebrations and President Pena winning the elections. They are characterised as knowing their civil rights and they believe in bureaucracy and conformity with the government and do not trust others.

2.4.9 Generational cohorts in the Netherlands

According to Becker (1992, as cited in Dekker & Ester, 1995), Bontekoning (2011) and Kraus (2018), there are four different generations in the Netherlands. These authors identify some of the characteristics of each generation, as listed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.3

Generational cohorts in the Netherlands

Generational cohorts				
	Protest generation Baby Boomers	Connecting generation Generation X	Pragmatic generation Generation Y Screenager Einstein	Authentic generation Generation Z
Year of birth	1940–1955	1955–1970	1970–1985	1985–2000
Age group	60-75	45-60	30-45	15-30
Life phase at work	Senior	Leadership	Middle	Junior

Sources: Bontekoning (2011, p. 300); Dekker and Ester (1995, pp. 58–59); Kraus (2018, p. 51)

2.4.9.1 The Protest generation

The members of this this generation were born between 1940 and 1955 (Bontekoning, 2011; Dekker & Ester, 1995; Kraus, 2018). Post-war economic growth in the Netherlands shaped the lives of this generation. In their youth, this generation felt empowered by the spirit of modernism and progress, which gave them an awareness that the world was theirs for the taking (Kraus, 2018). In addition to having heightened

social skills and other typically "feminine" traits, this generation is more educated, more focused on learning, less traditional, more spirited, determined, and idealistic. They appear to be searching for new ideas (such as super specialisation), have a high sense of self-importance, seek to contribute actively and meaningfully to working life and want to work more flexibly and independently. They are on their way to changing the senior role (Kraus, 2018).

2.4.9.2 Connecting generation

This generation was born between 1955 and 1970 (Bontekoning, 2011; Dekker & Ester, 1995; Kraus, 2018). The notable characteristic of this generation is that it entered the workforce at the start of a recession. During this time, pay constraints, reduced government spending and private sector change were major political issues in the Netherlands. As a result, childhood for this generation was more challenging than for previous generations. Owing to the recession, there were high levels of youth unemployment (17% in 1984) and university budgets were curtailed (Bontekoning, 2019). Furthermore, many members of this generation could not pursue their desired studies owing to limited academic options. As such, they were labelled the "lost generation" (Bontekoning, 2011).

2.4.9.3 Pragmatic generation

The members of this generation were born between 1970 and 1985 (Bontekoning, 2011; Dekker & Ester, 1995; Kraus, 2018). As the economy's steady recovery ensued from 1985 onwards, this generation's goal-oriented, more individualistic and pragmatic members entered Dutch organisations in the 1990s. As a result, women's average educational attainment and labour force participation has dramatically increased. Remarkably, women were more educated than their male counterparts. As a result, there was an increase in female leaders, which resulted in more workplace equality (Kraus, 2018), consequently embedding a more feminine culture in Dutch society and its institutions (Bontekoning, 2019).

2.4.9.4 Einstein or Authentic generation

The Einstein or Authentic generation was born between 1985 and 2000 (Bontekoning, 2011; Dekker & Ester, 1995; Kraus, 2018). The main events that shaped this generation include the economic crisis and high levels of youth unemployment (1995–

2001), the 9/11 incident (2001), the "internet bubble" burst and the assassination of the revolutionary Dutch right-wing politician, Pim Fortuyn (Bontekoning, 2011). In 2012, the youth unemployment rate reached 16% in the Netherlands, placing many members this generation in the same predicament as their parents in 1984 during the recession. Several members left the country to places like Australia owing to the lack of jobs or spent an extra year finishing their degrees. By the end of 2015, things had changed for the better and the youth unemployment rate had fallen to 11% (Kraus, 2018).

This generation is also greatly influenced by their parents (the pragmatic generation) and spends more time with their children compared to their parents and grandparents. Hence, they are also referred to as the authentic generation (Bontekoning, 2017).

2.4.10 Generational cohorts in Nigeria

According to Amah (2020) and Solaja and Ogunola (2016), there are four generations in the Nigerian workforce, as shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.4

Nigerian generational cohorts, work ethic/values and major life events

Generations	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Years	1928–1948	1949–1965	1965–1979	1980–2000
Work ethic/Values	• Dedication to duty • Sacrifice • Hard work • Respect for authority • Orientation to details • Duty before pleasure • Job security in exchange for loyalty to organisation • Willing to delay gratification	• Personal identity • Workaholic • Sees long working hours as evidence of success • Hard work • Loves titles • Questions authority • Team orientation • Job security	• Impatient and needs flexibility • Values work–life balance • Willing to leave a legacy • Appreciates empowerment • Does not like micromanaging • Loves feedback • Indifference to authority • Loyal to peers, not company • Entrepreneurial	• Optimistic • Tech-savvy • Ambitious and strong sense of self • Hero mentality • Likes to be involved in decision-making • Multi-tasking • Very vocal
Event	• Colonial era • Witnessed foreign domination and forced obedience to hierarchy	• Witness early part of independence	• Boom in the economy • Witnessed high corruption Military regime with autocratic leadership style	• Shortage of funds in the country • Massive corruption • End of job security • Saw the detrimental effect of corruption on delayed gratification of their parents

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Sources: Amah (2020, p. 242); Solaja and Ogunola (2016, p. 51)

2.4.10.1   Traditionalist

The Traditionalists were born between 1927 and 1945 and few are still employed. They stress loyalty to the company, respect for authority, sacrifice and delay in gratification. Work is more important to them than leisure (Amah, 2020; Solaja & Ogunola, 2016).

2.4.10.2   Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1963. They are workaholics who see working long hours as a sign of success and attribute their success to their work habits (Amah, 2020; Solaja & Ogunola, 2016).

2.4.10.3   Generation X

These are individuals born between 1964 and 1980. They aspire to achieve work–life balance, are willing to make a mark in their company and appreciate an environment that lets them explore diverse methods to achieve the ultimate goal. They appreciate regular feedback (Amah, 2020; Solaja & Ogunola, 2016).

2.4.10.4   Generation Y

Members of this generation were born between 1980 and 2000. They enjoy independence and do not like to be micromanaged. They are tech-savvy and in control of massive amounts of information. Speaking out is not a problem for them and they always question organisational decisions as they look for solid reasons for decisions taken. They also look for immediate gratification (Amah, 2020; Solaja & Ogunola, 2016).

2.4.11 Generational cohorts in Russia

Four generations exist in Russia which are discussed below:

2.4.11.1   Stalinist generation

The oldest cohort in Russia is the Stalinist generation, born between 1932 and 1944. This generation grew up under the socialist regime of Joseph Stalin (Sandhu et al., 2015). It faced famine, detractors' ruthless suppression and economic sacrifice. This period resulted in forced collectivisation, which created a strong sense of patriotic nationalism and a centralised planned economy which contributed to Russia becoming

a military and industrial powerhouse. This cohort feels neglected and exhibits a high degree of patriotism. They also dislike youth freedom (Schewe & Meredith, 2004).

2.4.11.2   Soviet generation

The generation that followed the Stalinist generation is referred to as the Soviet generation, born between 1945 and 1968. This generation came of age under the Khrushchev regime following the death of Stalin. The Khrushchev regime eased the autocratic measures of Stalin's regime and restricted the powers of the secret police (Sandhu et al., 2015; Schewe & Meredith, 2004). During this period, more economic resources were geared towards improving citizens' lives through housing, agriculture and education investments. The illiterate developed a simplified version of socialism and the working classes lost faith in educated technocrats and intellectuals (Sandhu et al., 2015). The lax policies and attitudes during this period saw the Soviet generation growing up in an economically supportive and technologically advanced environment that was less oppressive. This cohort was more individualistic, urban and educated (Perryer et al., 2014).

2.4.11.3   Perestroika generation

The Perestroika generation was born between 1969 and 1987 and came of age between 1986 and 1991 (Schewe & Meredith, 2004). Members of this generation reached adulthood under Gorbachev's rule, which exhibited dramatic economic, political, and social changes through perestroika. Thus, young perestroika entrepreneurs took the opportunities afforded by the free-market economy's lenient laws, resulting in a new Russian middle class (Sandhu et al., 2015). Consequently, there was social optimism concerning educational and professional aspirations, which amplified material demands. This era generated a more risk-taking and entrepreneurial generation, strongly influenced by the Western lifestyle (Sandhu et al., 2015). This generation promotes political activism, rejects centralised authority, wants to reside outside Russia and tends toward materialism (Schewe & Meredith, 2004).

2.4.11.4   The Market generation

The youngest Russians are referred to as the Market generation and were born after 1988. This generation grew up in the current post-Soviet market economy, which highlights social inequalities. They experienced major economic crises in 1998 with

the Russian financial crisis and 2008 with the global financial crisis (Khotkina, 2013; Sandhu et al., 2015). They also faced accusations of electoral fraud, criminal control of markets and the return to autocratic rule under Vladimir Putin. This generation experienced the weakening of their aspirations because of these economic crises. This situation engendered ethnocentrism and pessimism, encouraging pragmatic self-sufficiency. The Market generation is viewed as streetwise and amoral in their approach to life (Perryer et al., 2014; Sandhu et al., 2015; Schewe & Meredith, 2004).

2.4.12 Generational cohorts in South Africa

There are five generations in South Africa, and these are discussed below:

2.4.12.1 *Pre-apartheid generation*

This is a generation of young people who were born before 1933 and were under 15 years old at the time apartheid was adopted as a policy. They grew up in the pre-apartheid era and although racial segregation existed at that time, it was not codified (Lappeman et al., 2020).

2.4.12.2 *Apartheid generation*

Born between 1938 and 1960, the Apartheid generation cannot remember South Africa before the institutionalisation of apartheid (Mattes, 2012). The adolescent years of these individuals were shaped by an environment of laws that imposed racial segregation. Members of this generation experienced some forms of protests, such as pass protests, bus boycotts and the creation of the ANC's Freedom Charter. Black South Africans mainly staged these boycotts and protests to render the country ungovernable (Butler, 2017).

Several authors point to the 1960 Sharpeville massacre as the definitive turning point in South Africa's political and policing landscape (Beck, 2014; Dubow, 2015; Mackinon, 2012). The apartheid state's violence rendered Sharpeville the rallying point for anti-apartheid movements (Beck, 2014; Dubow, 2015; Mackinon, 2012). In its wake, Albert Luthuli encouraged black South Africans to participate in a nationwide stay-at-home. The then Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, retaliated with further repression and banned both the ANC and the PAC, rendering them illegal organisations (Beck, 2013).

The government also implemented the Bantustans or Homelands to remove black South Africans from suburbs and cities (Butler, 2017; Mattes, 2011). Black children were moved from missionary to government schools in the Bantustans (Mattes, 2011). Owing to rapid economic growth and industrialisation during this time, urban townships were born to meet the growing need for industrial labour (Mattes, 2012).

2.4.12.3   Struggle generation

This generation was born between 1961 and 1980 (Deal et al., 2010; Mattes, 2012), a period that saw the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement led by Bantu Biko and the Soweto uprisings led by black youth (Beck, 2013; Mattes, 2012). This generation experienced the first television broadcast. South Africa's neighbouring countries were undergoing the dismantling of colonial rule and an anti-apartheid approach by the USA, a global powerhouse (Mattes, 2012). However, Deal et al. (2010) question the use of the term "Struggle generation" for whites born during this period, as many did not participate in the struggle. For example, most whites at this time considered the ANC a terrorist organisation, whereas blacks considered it a movement of freedom fighters (Deal et al., 2010).

Deal et al, (2010) assert that white males in this generation had to attend two years of compulsory army training and could have participated in the "border war" against the banned armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Therefore, although black and white individuals may have been born on the same date, the key differences between these members of the same cohort would have been along the racial lines and whether they believed the "struggle" related to the need to entrench or end apartheid (Deal et al., 2010). Although the Apartheid and the Struggle generations experienced political unrest in the country, they are perceived as more accepting of authority than younger generations (Mattes, 2012).

2.4.12.4   Transition generation

Members of the Transition generation were born between 1981 and 1993 (Deal et al., 2010). This generation is likely to know about apartheid-related violence during their childhood even though, by their adolescence, the country was already a democratic system (Deal et al., 2010). They experienced freedom of movement, work and where

to live and whom to love (Mattes, 2012). They have experienced several peaceful elections. They have easy access to widely available uncensored local and international TV shows and news. However, their childhood was spent during the apartheid period during which their parents and older siblings would have participated in the struggle in some way (Deal et al., 2010). The combination of several growth-oriented economic reforms in 1996 and a lengthy period of growth in the early 21st century ensured the South African government was able to provide citizens with infrastructure such as houses and access to services such as electricity, water and clinics and expanded welfare subsidies to indigent households. In addition, this period saw a rapid increase in the new black middle class (Mattes, 2012).

Deal et al. (2010) contends that as adults, the transition generation lives in a class-based South Africa and no longer a race-based system. This generation has experienced high levels of unemployment. The Transition generation is believed to be less accepting of authority and compliance than preceding generations (Deal et al., 2010).

2.4.12.5   *Born-free generation*

The Born-free generation comprises individuals born between 1994 and 2000 (Mattes, 2012). They have not directly experienced apartheid. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations "Born free but in chains" report, the Born-free generation totals 27 million and constitutes half the country's population (Mazanderani, 2019). The Born-frees have also not experienced the segregation laws imposed during apartheid in all spheres of life. As such, many institutions previously reserved for white people, such as universities and former Model C schools, have large numbers of black students (Cronje et al., 2015). Martins and Martins (2012) consider this generation to be the Millennials of South Africa. These authors contend that Born-frees are part of the global village, given their access to television and information technology (Martins & Martins, 2012). Like the Transition generation, the Born-frees have different leadership expectations compared to the Apartheid generation (Mattes, 2012). This generation is experiencing high levels of unemployment, resulting in disillusioned individuals (Durmaz, 2021; Maree, 2021).

In the foregoing discussion, it has been shown that the various countries have experienced different events that are unique to each of them. These events affect the way people in different generations develop, resulting in different generations reflecting different values and characteristics (Cogin, 2012; Parry et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2021; Sarraf, 2019). Furthermore, the differences in the number of generations, as well as the beginning and end dates of cohorts in different countries are highlighted. As such, it would be remiss to apply a single generational theory across the globe (Parry et al., 2012; Sarraf, 2019).

Researchers from non-Western countries have found differences in generational characteristics owing to different national contexts (Cogin, 2012; Parry et al, 2012). Therefore, Ng and Parry (2016) suggest that future research needs to move away from the simplistic use of the American categorisations. Lyons and Kuron (2014) support this view and state that researchers need to consider the social and historical conditions of the nation in which research is being conducted and define the generational groups unique to that national context. In support of Lyons and Kuron's (2014) view, a study by Lyons and Schweitzer (2017) and another by Piekut and Valentine (2021) found that the participants used the term "generation" as a conceptual structure to make sense of "young" and "old" within a particular historical context.

According to Lappeman et al. (2020), accepting the United States (US) age segmentation definitions in a country like South Africa is problematic in logical and pragmatic ways because of the differences in characteristics such as education, income, living conditions and access to technology between countries at different stages of their development. Additionally, there are some divergences between traditionally accepted US terminology and that of South Africa, as colloquial terms such as Afrilennials and Buppies have become popular in South Africa, yet academia continues to use the US definitions. Some authors such as Mattes (2012) have not taken a market segmentation approach but rather a political stance. Mattes (2012) described the group called the Born-frees as those who were born in 1980 and turned 16 after 1996. However, other authors have used the term "Born-free" to describe South Africans who were born after the first post-apartheid democratic election in 1994 (Lappeman et al., 2020).

In addition to these nuances, the history of South Africa was largely (although not exclusively) written using a colonial lens (Lappeman et al., 2020). Similarly, US generational history has been viewed from a colonial conquest lens, with US natives being accorded a limited voice (Lappeman et al., 2020). In the late 20th century, South Africa showed a significant shift towards black South Africans writing South African history that is representative of blacks. A similar historical challenge is faced by the African research community, which is trying to understand how to approach indigenous knowledge in a more critical and representative way (Du Plessis, 2021; Himonga & Diallo, 2017; Lappeman et al., 2020). Therefore, rewriting South African history from an African perspective is a positive step for the country and continent (Lappeman et al., 2020).

Based on the above discussion, this study has adopted the South African generational categorisations as discussed in section 2.4.12 Additionally, the current study heeds the suggestion of Lyons and Kuron (2014) that future studies should investigate organisational variables, such as industry context, organisation size, organisational culture, and structure, to gain deeper insights into the phenomenon. Thus, the South African higher education context was chosen as the focal point of this study. This is because although non-academic organisations have already witnessed this mix and the impact of the generational differences, little has appeared in the higher education literature (Berk, 2013). Therefore, research on the higher education sector is necessary to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon of multigenerationalism in the South African workplace.

The following section discusses the characteristics of the different generational cohorts and how they relate to the workplace.

2.5   DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GENERATIONAL COHORTS AND THEIR RELATION TO WORKPLACE DYNAMICS GLOBALLY

This section discusses the common generational characteristics that are popularly used to profile each generation and how these relate to workplace intergenerational dynamics.

2.5.1.1 Traditionalists

According to Gibson (2009), traditionalists have high regard for discipline, authority and conformity. They are financially conservative and often live with their extended families. Through the radio, movies, magazines and newspapers, the consistent messages were "hard work is the key to success," "the common good above all," "be thrifty and save your money for a rainy day – there are hard times ahead," "there are good people and there are bad people," "authority deserves respect," and above all, "one should be loyal to one's family, friends, job, country, and community". The members of this generation recall their parents repeatedly recounting the impact of the Great Depression and the Second World War. These themes and events shaped this generation's mindset significantly (Dziuban et al., 2005, p. 87).

The technological innovations experienced by this generation include trans-Atlantic radio signals, phonographs that play stereo recordings and the origin of electronic computers (Wendover, 2002). Compared to younger generations, Traditionalists spend more time at work, putting in extended hours (Weeks et al., 2017). Traditionalists' views of the workplace encompass mutual respect, using their expertise in a mentorship capacity and preparation for their retirement, similar to the Baby Boomer generation (Martin & Otteman, 2016). This generation respects authority has a strong work ethic and is logical, ambitious and conformist. While 10% of traditionalists spend long hours at work owing to financial challenges, the remainder is retiring or preparing to retire (Martin & Otteman, 2016). Traditionalists believe in policies, procedures, and guidelines (Arrington & Dwyer, 2018). In this regard, they are conflict-averse and struggle with change (Woodward et al., 2015).

2.5.1.2 Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are known for their spending power and positive outlook on consumerism. They grew up when people had access to good education, stable jobs and post-war prosperity (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013; Young et al., 2013). Until 2019, they were the largest living generation. Their peak was in 1999 at 78,8 million. This number is projected to reduce to 16,2 million by mid-century (Fry, 2020). As a result of their large numbers, this cohort wielded significant influence in the workplace (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013). Owing to their workplace numbers, Baby Boomers' retirement will have a substantial impact on the workforce (Harvey, 2012; Tang et al., 2012). Often

described as workaholics because of their commitment to their jobs and careers (Young et al., 2013), Baby Boomers' commitment has facilitated a comfortable lifestyle for their Generation X and Generation Y children (Tang et al., 2012).

Baby Boomers challenged the status quo in the workplace and believed in the big picture and interpersonal communication. They are believed to be highly competitive, making them dedicated and loyal employees who value independence and professionalism (Young et al., 2013). According to Christensen et al. (2018), Lewis and Wescott (2017) and Weingarten (2009), their core values are personal growth, optimism, wellness, health and involvement. Owing to advances in technology, science and medicine and improvements in education and nutrition, iconic figures like Bill Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, and David Letterman are redefining what it means to age (Berk, 2013).

2.5.1.3 Generation X

According to Coupland (1991), Generation X is a group of individuals who seek to let go of conforming to the money, status and social climbing of the time. Generation X grew up in dual-career families, with increasing divorce rates, organisational downsizing and rapid technological and communication developments (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016). In the USA, Generation X is now the largest (33%) cohort in the workforce (Lewis & Wescott, 2017; Munsch, 2021). As the children of Baby Boomers, much of Generation Xers' beliefs, values and views of the workplace are shaped by what they saw and experienced of their "workaholic" parents (Schullery, 2013). Hence, they are the first generation to introduce the need for fun in the workplace and work–life balance because they prefer to work to live and not to live to work (Brown, 2012; Usmani et al., 2019; Young et al., 2013). Because Generation X favours independence and flexibility, they are perceived by Baby Boomers as being lazy (Brown, 2012). According to Weeks et al. (2017), this generation does not believe in being loyal to any company and can utilise information to look for other employment and career opportunities.

Organisations are concerned about Generation X's lack of loyalty because they are a smaller group than the Baby Boomers they will replace (Book et al., 2019; Guerrero et al., 2021; Ropes, 2013). Generation X is considered to be more entrepreneurial than

previous generations because of its need for flexibility and independence (Khor, 2017). Therefore, Generation Xers' core values are focused on global thinking, technological literacy, independence, work–life balance, travel, having fun, informality, and diversity (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016; Weingarten, 2009).

2.5.1.4 Generation Y

This generation is also known as the internet Gen, nexters and Millennials. They are also referred to as the Peter Pan generation because they are seen as not wanting to grow up; staying home longer than their parents or grandparents did (Kolnhofer-Derecskei & Reicher, 2017; Levickaitė, 2010; Rusdi et al., 2023). The rise of new media, instant communication technologies and social networking have changed the classical meaning and understanding of communication, working and socialising habits. This has had a considerable impact on Generation Y (Levickaitė, 2010). They are considered technology savvy and masters of mobile phones, the internet and video games. Thus, this generational cohort believes that their opinions matter and should be freely expressed (Muskat & Reitsamer, 2020; VanMeter et al., 2013). They enjoy multitasking and are eager to collaborate or participate in decision-making as much as possible. They value, modesty, confidence, teamwork, morality, achievement, street smartness, civic duty and diversity (Solaja & Ogunola, 2016). They are also reported as multitaskers, team-oriented, optimistic and tenacious (Lapoint & Liprie-Spence, 2017). Generation Y is better educated, affluent and ethnically diverse than any previous generational group (Weingarten, 2009). However, they are often perceived as narcissistic, entitled, goal-oriented and assertive (VanMeter et al., 2013).

Generation Y has changed how organisations relate to and manage their employees (Elena-Aurelia & Adriana-Florina, 2014). Significantly, Generation Y prizes belonging to a group such that employers who neglect this feature find little success motivating them (Irvine, 2010). Millennials opt for structure, guidance, and supervision, whereas previous generations valued individualism (VanMeter et al., 2013). This generation's parents, the Baby Boomers, exert pressure to succeed. However, their focus is on exploring their opportunities and being challenged rather than launching a traditional career (Elena-Aurelia & Adriana-Florina, 2014). Millennials are viewed as having short attention spans; employers are therefore advised to give them varied and stimulating tasks and duties (Chhateja & Jain, 2014). Unlike the previous generations, Millennials

are impatient about their career development and will leave an organisation if their career aspirations are unmet (Mofokeng, 2017).

2.5.1.5 Generation Z

Generation Z is also known as Digital Natives, as well as the Silent and New Silent Generation (Bucovetchi et al., 2019; Kahawandala et al., 2020) and are the newest generation in the workplace (Barhate & Dirani, 2021; Schroth, 2019). Strauss and Howe (1991) offered the term the New Silent Generation. Cora (2019) define Generation Z (Gen Z) as the world's first 21st-century generation: the Digital Natives, the Dot-com Kids and Generation Media. According to Levickaitė (2010), Generation Z is different from Generation X and Generation Y along three axes, namely, ontological factors related to life stage and age, sociological factors linked to the unprecedented speed and magnitude of technological change and lastly, and historical factors including experiences and events. They were born approximately between the years 2000 to the present. They are growing up faster, are in education earlier and are being exposed to marketing younger (Schenarts, 2020). They communicate with others mainly through the World Wide Web, resulting in their lack of the interpersonal skills that are needed to communicate. This generation takes the internet for granted and considers social media as their community where one can have many acquaintances without personally meeting them (Kahawandala et al., 2020). Given how internet savvy this generation is, its members readily multitask.

This generation values speed over accuracy and moves quickly from one task to another (Arar & Öneren, 2018). According to Freehling (2022), Generation Z is projected to make up 30% of the labour force in the United States by 2030. The entry of this generation into the workforce is accompanied by the retirement of Baby Boomers (Fry, 2020), possibly resulting in a marked shift in work culture and environment (Bălan & Vreja, 2018; Goh & Lee, 2018). Generation Z is a smaller generation and exhibits a different motivational trend from Millennials (Ben-Hur & Ringwood, 2017). While Generation Y places more emphasis on working to enjoy life, it also focuses on career development (Čič & Žižek, 2017). This generation is ready to work hard but expects speedy career progression. Generation Z tends to be more practical, focusing on careers that motivate them (Schenarts, 2020; Thacker, 2016; Vasilyeva et al., 2020).

The following section discusses the workplace dynamics brought on by a multigenerational workforce.

2.5.2 Generational cohort differences and similarities and workplace dynamics

The differences and similarities between the various generational cohorts influence the way they interact and collaborate. The dynamics of a multigenerational workforce are now discussed.

2.5.2.1 *Attitudes towards work values*

Dose (1997) defines work values as the norms relating to work or the work environment that individuals use to decide what is right or how to evaluate the importance of preferences. Similarly, Smola and Sutton (2002) state that work values are what is believed to be right or wrong within the work environment. According to Al-Asfour and Lettan (2014) and Gursoy et al. (2013), there are genuine generational differences in work ethics and values, which account for some of the observed conflicts in the workplace.

Twenge's (2010) review of the literature on generational differences in work values found that most studies reported that Generation X (born between 1965 and 1981) and, more so, Gen Me (born after 1982) regarded work as less central to their lives. They valued leisure more highly and showed a weaker work ethic than Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and Silents (born between 1925 and 1945). Similarly, the study by Cogin (2012) found that the principal work value for Traditionalists and Baby Boomers was "hard work", while for Generation X, it was "asceticism" and for Generation Y, "leisure". Similar to Twenge (2010) and Cogin (2012), Gursoy et al. (2013) found that work was more likely to be central to Baby Boomers, who are more likely to place more meaning in their jobs compared to Generation X and Generation Y. Twenge (2010) also found that extrinsic work values (e.g. salary) were higher in Generation X compared to Generation Y. In contrast to popular belief, no differences between generations were found in altruistic values (e.g., wanting to help others). In addition, results were inconsistent regarding intrinsic values (e.g., meaning), the desire for job stability, and social/affiliative values (e.g., making friends). Individualistic traits

were higher in Generation Y compared to Generation X. Overall, Twenge (2010) concluded that generational differences were important where they appeared.

Twenge et al. (2010) found that Generation Y does not value altruistic work values (e.g., helping, societal worth) more than Generation X or Baby Boomers. Social values (e.g., making friends) and intrinsic values (e.g., an interesting, results-oriented job) were ranked lower by Generation Y than by Baby Boomers. While the study by Twenge (2010) found inconsistent results regarding intrinsic values, Twenge et al. (2010) found no differences in intrinsic values between Baby Boomers and Gen X and a small decline in intrinsic values from Baby Boomers to Gen Y.

A study by Cennamo and Gardner (2008) compared Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y on their work values, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This study found that Generation X was more likely than Baby Boomers to value money, status and prestige. However, a cross-sectional study by Jurkiewicz (2000) found no differences between Baby Boomers and Generation X in extrinsic values such as "high prestige and social status" and "high salary". Cennamo and Gardner (2008) found that the youngest generation (Generation Y) attached more importance to freedom-related items than Generation X and Baby Boomers. This finding by Cennamo and Gardner (2008) was consistent with Jurkiewicz (2000), who also found that Generation X valued freedom more than Baby Boomers. Cennamo and Gardner (2008) also found that Baby Boomers showed a better fit in person-organisation values (vis-à-vis status values and extrinsic values) than Generation X and Generation Y, but there were no other generational differences in fit. Baby Boomers displayed a better fit with extrinsic work values (such as pay and benefits) and status than the younger groups. These researchers also found that when individual and organisational values indicated a poor fit, there was reduced organisational commitment and job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions across all three generational groups.

In her study on the generational differences in values and work ethics, Sobayeni (2015) found that generations differed in the intensity and willingness to delay gratification, work ethic, creativity, cultural identity, and altruism. For example, while Generation X and Generation Y deemed work central to their lives, Baby Boomers did

not emphasise their careers as strongly. Furthermore, Sobayeni (2015) found that work values were more important to Generation X than work ethics, while work ethics were more important to the Baby Boomer cohort than work values. The Generation Y cohort scored in the middle for work values and ethics. The study of Sobayeni showed that generational values and work ethics are determined by contextual factors. Due to the historical events and experiences that made up these differences, the specific life events may vary from generation to generation depending on the context.

Nevertheless, some studies have found no differences between generations with regard to work ethic (Costanza et al., 2012; Hite et al., 2015; Real et al., 2010; Zabel et al., 2017). The results of the study by Real et al. (2010) showed that although there were statistically significant differences between the Millennials (Generation Y) and other generations of workers, where the Millennials (Generation Y) scored higher in hard work and centrality of work and lower in morality/ethics and wasting time than both Generation X and Baby Boomers, these differences were minor and of little practical significance. In their meta-analysis, Constanza et al. (2012) found no difference in organisational commitment, job satisfaction and employee turnover across generations. Accordingly, Constanza et al. (2012)'s meta-analysis has the limitation of including mostly unpublished studies and not covering all generations. The study by Zabel et al. (2017) found no effect of the generational cohort on work ethics.

2.5.2.2 *Loyalty towards the employer*

According to Elegido (2013), employees' loyalty is a conscious commitment to promote the employer's best interests, even when doing so may compromise one's self-interest beyond what would be required by one's legal and other moral obligations. The importance of loyalty in the workplace has been widely recognised because an organisation's performance relies on the loyalty of its employees; the more the employees are loyal, the better the organisation's performance (Mohsan et al., 2011). Ferres et al. (2003) explored the differences in the levels of trust, commitment, procedural justice and turnover intention between Generation X employees (between 25 years and 34 years old) and older age group employees (between 35 years and 44 years; between 45 years to 54 years and over 55 years). The study found that although there was a trend towards lower levels of trust among Generation X employees compared with the older age group, the difference was insubstantial. Generation X

employees were found to have lower levels of continuance commitment and higher intentions to turnover than the older age group of employees. Similar results were found by Costanza et al. (2012). According to Costanza et al. (2012), the connection between belonging to a particular generation and work-related results such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intent was generally modest or insignificant.

Cennamo and Gardner's (2008) study found that Generation Y was significantly more likely to show intentions of leaving their company than Baby Boomers. Members of Generation X and Generation Y were found to have a higher likelihood of encountering a lack of person-organisational fit, leading to lower levels of commitment compared to Baby Boomers. Additionally, they were more inclined to express an intention to leave their current organisations. These results by Cennamo and Gardner's (2008) align with those of D'Amato and Herzfeld (2008), which showed that organisational commitment was also lower in Generation X than in Baby Boomers. The results of Cennamo and Gardner (2008) and D'Amato and Herzfeld (2008) confirm Deal's (2007) view that loyalty towards employers has been found to decrease depending on how "new" the generation is. For instance, about 70% of traditionalists reported that they would like to stay with their current organisation for the rest of their working life, compared with 65% of Baby Boomers, 40% of Generation X and 20% of Generation Y.

The Deloitte Global Millennial and Gen Z survey report (2021) sought the opinions of Millennials and Generation Zs from 45 countries across North America, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific. The study found that there were more Millennials (born between January 1983 and December 1994) and Generation Zs (born January 1995 and December 2003) in 2021 who reported that they would leave their existing employer within two years (36% and 53% respectively, compared to 31% and 50% in 2020) if the opportunity arose. The findings in the Deloitte Global Millennial and Generation Z survey report (2021) confirm the findings from previous studies such as D'Amato and Herzfeld (2008), Cennamo and Gardner (2008) as well as Benson et al. (2018), who also found that Millennials were less willing to remain with their current employer than Baby Boomers.

Tolbize (2008) argued that context-specific factors influence employee loyalty. For example, Generation X and Generation Y do not move from one job to another like the older generations did when they were the same age as Generation X and Generation Y. Furthermore, the rate at which employees switch from one job to another may also be influenced by the economy. Individuals are likely to change jobs more when the economy is doing well and there are plenty of job opportunities. Additionally, younger employees hold more than one job when studying and settle for one employer as they age. Therefore, Tolbize (2008) stated that loyalty is affected by other factors such as age or other circumstances based on the context. Similarly, a study by Shragay and Tziner (2011) found that Generation X employees were more committed to the job than Baby Boomers and showed the most positive and strongest effects on job involvement and organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). Although contradictory to the study by Ferres et al. (2003), who found that GenerationX employees displayed stronger turnover intentions compared to older generations, Shragay and Tziner's results support Tolbize's findings (2008).

2.5.2.3 *Learning and training styles and training needs*

Different generations are reported to have different styles of learning. A study by Obradovic et al. (2017) found that concerning computer-based training, Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000) reported that this way of acquiring knowledge on training in project management suited them best. Generation X (born between 1964 and 1979) also considered this kind of learning experience suitable for acquiring knowledge. In contrast to Generation X and Generation Y, the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1943 and 1965) did not have the same attitude. Additionally, the study also reported differences in the preferences for on-the-job training, which included tracking an experienced colleague through job rotation and job shadowing within the organisation. Generation Y reported positively on this kind of learning and type of training, which, at the same time, was the most preferred way of acquiring knowledge for them.

Additionally, more members of Generation Y and their Generation X counterparts emphasised that learning through coaching and mentoring at work was most suitable for them. Differences were also evident in the study by Wailand (2015), which found that regarding training, Generation Y was more likely to prefer online training

programmes compared to the Generation X and Baby Boomer generations. Only 23,09% of Baby Boomers and 12,5% of Generation X prefer online training programmes, compared to 50% of Gen Y.

In the study by Kriegel (2013), the results suggested that learning style preferences did not differ substantially when accounting for generation. The three generations, Generation X, Generation Y and Baby Boomers, were mostly homogeneous. Even when accounting for age, each generation fell within only a few data points of the averages cited in the previous studies that used the same Felder-Soloman Index of Learning Styles. This finding by Kriegel (2013) supports Dede's (2005) argument that, contrary to popular belief, generalisations should not be made based on generations. Dede (2005) argued that many Baby Boomers active in the corporate settings today exhibit the same neo-millennial learning styles and activity preferences as Millennials because of the ubiquitous technological and media tools available to them.

2.5.2.4 The desire for better work–life balance

Achieving a healthy work-life balance is of utmost importance to both employers and employees since it not only impacts an employee's job performance but also significantly influences their satisfaction with both work and personal life, ultimately affecting their overall well-being (Ojo et al., 2014; Stankevičienė et al., 2021). The concept of work–life balance refers to a situation in which one juggles work and home commitments without neglecting either (Duxbury & Smart, 2011; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Oosthuizen et al., 2016). Literature provides some empirical support for the divergences in the work–life desires of the different generations (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Gursoy et al., 2013; Jurkiewicz, 2000).

Previous studies indicate that Generation X and Generation Y pay more attention to work–life balance than the Baby Boomer generation (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Families and Work Institute, 2006; Gursoy et al., 2013; Smith, 2010). According to the research conducted by Cennamo and Gardner (2008), Generation Y demonstrated a greater sense of freedom, defined as work-life balance, compared to Generation X and Baby Boomers. Additionally, Generation Y exhibited notably higher scores than Baby Boomers when it came to valuing leisure in their work, such as placing importance on having more vacation time and desiring a job that allows for a slower work pace. A cross-sectional study by the Families and Work Institute found that fewer

Gen X (13%) or Gen Y (12%) were work-centric compared to Baby Boomers (22%) and more Gen X (52%) and Gen Y (50%) were family-centric than Baby Boomers (40%). A study by Gursoy et al. (2013) also found that compared to Baby Boomers, both Generation Y and Generation X were strong proponents of a split in work and personal life. However, Generation Y tended to have the least attachment to their work. While Baby Boomers' life revolved around work, for Generation X and Generation Y work was purely survivalist; life outside work was considered more important than anything at work. Friends and family, rather than work, are a more significant consideration for Generation X and Generation Y.

Smith (2010) found that Generation Y job candidates believed that a healthy work–life balance resulted in better job performance. Furthermore, they thought that a healthy work–life balance encouraged better ethical decision-making on their part. When asked about their preferred flexible work arrangements, Generation Y job candidates valued the availability of flexitime, telecommuting and holiday hours or special summer hours which are different from the normal work schedule. They were least concerned with the availability of part-time work and work-at-home options. These findings by Smith (2010) were corroborated in the study by Eberz (2020) which found that Generation Y voiced a greater need for flexible working arrangements that allow reconciliation between private, work and family life. This view was expressed by both men and women of these generations, who required childcare services, the option to work from home, flexible working hours and opportunities to take a sabbatical to dedicate their time to things other than work such as education, travel, or hobbies. The study also found that Generation X and Baby Boomers were starting to vocalise similar demands, albeit to a smaller extent.

However, the results of the study by Khosravi (2014) showed that Millennials (Generation Y) did not report the highest levels of both work-family balance (WFB) and work-nonwork balance (WNWB), followed by Generation Xers and lastly, Baby Boomers. Similarly, the studies by Chen and Choi (2008), Pitt-Catsouphes and Costa (2008), and Dokadia et al. (2015) also reported that there were no differences between the generations with regard to their need for workplace flexibility.

2.5.2.5 Attitudes towards supervision and leadership

Leadership can be defined as influencing others on the substance of effective work and the capacity to enable individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared goals (Ensley et al., 2006). Research conducted by Eberz (2020) indicates that a manager's leadership style has a substantial influence on various organisational outcomes, including turnover, job satisfaction, productivity, commitment, and professional practices. Additionally, the existing body of literature supports the idea of generational disparities in leadership preferences, with anecdotal empirical evidence supporting this notion, as highlighted by Bako (2018), Eberz (2020), Gentry et al. (2011), and Sessa et al. (2007).

An extensive literature study by Lyons and Kuron (2014) concludes that generational differences are most prominent with regard to leadership perspectives. In general, the study found that relationship-oriented leadership styles (e.g., support, trust and interpersonal dependability) were more important than task-oriented approaches (e.g. personal competence, credibility and foresight) for the younger generations. This signifies a move away from pursuing leaders who focus on task and organisational successes towards those who emphasise "individual fulfilment" (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). However, the authors caution that a theoretical framework is lacking to explain the observed trend and that existing research did not consider other factors such as maturity, tenure, and experience. For example, a study by Wieck et al. (2002) found that older workers (over 35 years of age) preferred a leader who was more detached and professional (exhibiting high integrity, fairness, and an inclination towards employee empowerment). In contrast, the younger workers (aged 18 to 35 years of age) preferred a more affirming and confidence-building leader (i.e., motivates others and is a team player). Additionally, the younger workers indicated that being knowledgeable was a desirable trait in their leader, but the older workers did not indicate this.

Regarding the least desirable characteristics, a small degree of difference was identified. The younger workers revealed that risk-taking and vision were among the least important characteristics in their leaders. They also indicated they could forgo a sense of humour for warmth and receptiveness. The older workers, however, did not identify friendliness or being available. Sessa et al. (2007) conducted a study that

revealed Baby Boomers hold a preference for leaders who exhibit qualities such as persuasiveness, diplomacy, inclusiveness in decision-making, dedication, a strategic mindset, good listening skills, trustworthiness, a clear sense of direction, a global leadership perspective, and a willingness to seek feedback.

Regarding Generation X, this study found that this generation appreciates an experienced leader who is optimistic and persuasive. Generation X also prefers a focused leader with a big-picture orientation and who is trustworthy. This generation also values a perceptive leader who recognises employees' talents, provides feedback, is capable of sharing leadership and is a good listener (Sessa et al., 2007). Drawing from their study findings, the authors reached a conclusion that the debate surrounding generational differences lies between the conventional notion that age primarily influences such variations, and the generational cohort theory, which suggests that distinct significant life events serve as the primary catalyst for these differences.

Salahuddin (2010) investigated the effects of generational differences on leadership style and organisational success. The study found that Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y valued ambitiousness more than Traditionalists. Being determined and forward-looking was preferred by the Veterans and Baby Boomers and not by Generation X and Generation Y. Being loyal and inspiring were valued characteristics of leadership by Generation X and Generation Y and less so by the veterans and Baby Boomers. Millennials highly value an ethic of care more than other generations. This study by Salahuddin (2010) supported the findings by Gursoy et al. (2013), who also found that while Generation Y expected guidance, direction and leadership, the Baby Boomers and Generation X tended to be less reliant on strong, competent leadership. This means that Gen Y values strong workplace leadership and expects managers to be role models and mentors.

A study by Eberz (2020) found that when compared to older generations, Generation Y had higher expectations of leaders. Generation X and Generation Y demanded flatter organisational structures and expected to be included in decision-making and therefore voiced less preference for a top-down leadership approach. Instead, these two generations expected a leader to be a coach and, at times, even a friend who is

accessible and provides support, guidance, and motivation. This confirms the above findings by Salahuddin (2010) and Gursoy et al. (2013). On the other hand, Baby Boomers were content with hierarchical structures and an authoritarian leadership style.

In contrast to the literature which shows differences in the leadership perspective of different generations, other studies contend that there are many more similarities than differences. Gentry et al. (2011) found no statistically significant differences in managers' leadership practices, regardless of their generation (Baby Boomers, Generation and Millennials). Overall, managers from the three generations tended to view similar leadership practices as essential or non-essential for success, notwithstanding slight differences in perceptions of leadership practices. The authors attributed these differences to the current popular perception that generations are substantially different regarding what they value at work. A study by Farag et al. (2009) found that nurses belonging to two different age groups, Baby Boomers, and Generation X, did not exhibit significant differences in their perception of their nurse managers' leadership style. Both groups perceived their nurse managers as regularly practicing transactional and transformational leadership styles, rather than displaying a passive avoidance leadership style.

2.5.2.6 Career expectations

Careers are commonly defined as the evolving progression of an individual's work experiences over time (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Scholars, including Chudzikowski, (2012) and Lyons et al. (2012, 2015) have implied that over succeeding generations, there has been a shift from the typical linear, upward professional path to more mobile, diversified, less stable and multidirectional careers. Nevertheless, elements usually associated with the traditional career type (e.g., upward career moves) have remained prevalent across successive generations. An individual's career expectations consist of thoughts that can be achieved, realistic expectations and career targets they are expected to achieve (Sari, 2019). Consequently, these expectations will influence an individual's career motivation, behaviour, education, and success in the field. Career expectations encompass various dimensions, such as freedom, learning, competition, life balance, management, organisation membership, expertise, and entrepreneurship (Sari, 2019).

The employees belonging to different generational cohorts have also been surveyed for their career expectations, as Dries et al. (2008) found that the four generations (Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y) have varied believes about careers, career types, career success evaluations and the importance of organisation security. A similar finding has been identified by Hess and Jepsen (2009), who found small differences between employees in different generations and career stages in their perception of the psychological contract. Moreover, the study demonstrated that technological changes, downsizing and restructuring have made employees' employment stability less certain, so they look for a protean career which remains relevant in an ever-changing workplace (Hess & Jepsen, 2009).

Lyons et al. (2014) examined the career mobility patterns of four generations: Traditionalists; Baby Boomers; Generation X and Generation Y. The authors compared organisational mobility, job mobility and the direction of job moves across the four groups using analysis of variance. Significant differences were visible in the job mobility and organisational mobility of the different generations, with younger generations enjoying higher levels of mobility. Nevertheless, despite notable changes in the environment, there has been a limited alteration in the diversity of career trajectories across generations (Lyons et al., 2014).

According to Dokadia et al. (2016), Generation X prefers to work for organisations where they can find fulfilment through relevant work assignments that align with their professional goals. After spending a significant amount of time working for organisations, Generation X employees place a strong emphasis on pursuing their professional goals through positions that offer them work–life balance or the chance to launch firms that make them proud. The supervisors that actively participate in holding timely, regular career discussions that are tailored to Generation Y's requirements and aspirations are preferred by this generation (Chawla, 2016).

According to Egerová et al. (2021), individuals belonging to Generation Y anticipate having longer professional careers compared to previous generations, while acknowledging that retirement may extend up to the age of 70 or potentially have no defined limit. Regarding their career expectations, Generation Y expresses a departure from the conventional notion of climbing the "career ladder" observed in

earlier generations. Instead, they envision working through "career waves," encompassing job transitions, volunteer work, and other activities. Generation Z, similar to Generation Y, rejects the traditional hierarchical career ladder and the concept of rigid job positions within organistions. They embrace career changes alongside skill acquisition and opportunities to pursue personal projects, deviating from the traditional notion of linear career advancement. A study by Barhate and Dirani (2020) found that Generation Z's career expectations include an attractive organisational culture, work–life balance, and stability. According to Lalić et al. (2020), when they start working, Generation Z employees want to have a healthy work–life balance, but they also anticipate that their careers will allow them to specialise and hone their skills. Learning to address difficulties by acquiring new knowledge and skills challenges them as well. Generation Zers do not view their careers as a competition.

Similarities between generations regarding career development expectations have also been reported. For example, in the study by Lyons et al. (2014), the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers did not differ much in career mobility and Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y did not show significant differences in the proportion of upward moves. In sum, there is evidence for changes in overall career patterns across successive generations. However, the available evidence is limited and seemingly marginal, which suggests that the traditional career is still dominant (Chudzikowski, 2012; Eberz, 2020).

2.5.2.7 Teamwork

Teamwork is an intricate social activity in which a group of people cooperate to achieve a task or goal, resulting in the integration of team members' skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Nelsey & Brownie, 2012). In organisations, teams are valuable because they promote employee satisfaction and increase companies' effectiveness and productivity. In addition, teams allow for less hierarchical forms of control and decentralisation, which may make employees feel more included and responsible for the organisation's outcome (Bennett et al., 2012; Fapohunda, 2013; Jiang, 2010).

Literature indicates that there are significant differences in teamwork behaviours and preferences between employees of different generations (Eberz, 2020; Martin & Tulgan, 2007; Sirias et al., 2007; Zemke et al., 2013). A study by Dokadia et al. (2015)

revealed significant differences between generations vis-à-vis teamwork preference. The Silent Generation and Baby Boomers showed a higher preference for teamwork and Gen Y reported the lowest preference for teamwork.

2.5.2.8 Communication

The diverse traits of the different generations also affect communication (Anderson & Morgan, 2017; Hammermann et al., 2019; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2016). Several studies (Beasley, 2017; Berisha, 2020; Danley, 2020; Goins, 2021; Graystone, 2019) have found that the effective management of a multigenerational workforce relies on communication as its cornerstone. This is because different generations enter the workplace with different desires and expectations on how they receive and convey information. A study by Zenger and Lawrence (1989) confirmed that a multigenerational workforce reduces communication frequency. The varied work values, prejudices and habits of different generations have led to miscommunication between employees and managers, reducing efficiency in the workplace (Kaifi et al., 2012; Kolarova et al., 2016).

The study by Peralta (2021) found that participants experienced difficulties communicating with the different generational cohorts. All participants cited attitudes, a lack of acceptance of the participant's job by employees, concerns with an employee's understanding of the message, a lack of an acceptable communication mode for each generation, and issues with technological savvy as causes for communication difficulties (Peralta, 2021). Similarly, the study by Colom (2021), also found that the differences in the communication preferences of different generations. This study by Colom (2021) found that the younger generation of employees had a preference to use new technology for communication whereas the mature generations preferred face-to-face meetings. Furthermore, the study by Dokadia and Palo (2022), confirmed the findings by Peralta (2021) and Colom (2021), and found that communication patterns and the use of technology in communication differed between generations.

According to the findings by Raslie's (2021) study, both Generation Y and Generation Z participants were similar in their style-typing, meaning they are aware of their own communication style. Additionally, a significant difference was found between

Generation Y and Generation Z participants in terms of style-flexing practices (the ability to adapt one's style to the style of one's interlocutors, to communicate more effectively). Raslie (2021) also found differences between Generation Y and Generation Z participants. The study found that Generation Y participants were more likely to focus on the information they wanted to present, whereas the Gen Z participants were more likely to consider the needs of their audience and tailor their slides to the target group.

The study by Egerová, Komárková and Kutlák (2021) found that fair treatment of all employees, meaningful and challenging work, open communication, flexible work arrangements and participation opportunity was required by both Generation Y as well as Generation Z participants.

The literature discussed here shows that generational stereotypes activate generational identities and differences. Hilton and Von Hippel (1996) define stereotypes as beliefs pertaining to both positive and negative attributes associated with specific groups, including explanations regarding the co-occurrence of certain traits within those groups.

2.5.2.9 Generational stereotypes

For Walter Lippmann, who introduced the stereotype concept in social sciences (Fedor, 2014; Van Rossem, 2021), stereotypes are the "image in the head" that we use to perceive and classify the world around us. Although undesirable, they are useful for their "economy of effort" (social psychologists retain this cognitive" part of the definition). Individuals, at best, will be willing to keep to these "thinking habits" lightly and change them in the face of new experiences and contradictory evidence. The skills Lippmann assumed were related to education (Seiter, 2006 p. 16). Whether or not stereotypes are true, they are influential. Stereotypes result in conflict, prejudice, and discrimination, reduce the self-esteem of stereotyped individuals, and pose stereotype threats that impair performance and positive work attitudes (Van Rossem, 2021). Regarding stereotypes and generational differences, a study by Eschleman et al. (2017) showed that stereotypes play a role in generational differences.

Similarly, a study by McCausland et al. (2015) found that people's perceptions about how others view their age group can also influence how they behave at work. Furthermore, Urick et al. (2017) found that different stereotypes about oneself and others result in intergenerational conflict. This has an impact on workplace interactions; a management challenge that can potentially impede workplace productivity (McCausland et al., 2015).

A matrix summarising the comparison of the workplace dynamics of the different generations in the workplace is provided in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

A matrix summarising the comparison of the workplace dynamics of the different generations in the workplace

Workplace dynamics	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Attitudes towards work values	• Typically emphasize a strong work ethic, often associating hard work with personal and professional success. • Their principal work values often include dedication, commitment, and loyalty to the organization. "Hard work" is a central theme. • More likely to find meaning in their jobs, valuing the intrinsic aspects of their work. • Generally view work as central to their lives, while Generation X and Y might prioritize work differently, with more emphasis on personal time and leisure. • Place higher importance on intrinsic values, such as meaningful work	• Tends to value diversity in work and often places importance on autonomy, flexibility, and a work-life balance. • May prioritise material rewards, including money, status, and prestige. • Focus on simplicity and self-discipline. • Values autonomy but might not prioritize it as much as Generation Y, which often seeks more flexibility and freedom. • Place higher importance on intrinsic values, such as meaningful work	• Often values leisure and personal freedom. "Leisure" is identified as a significant work value. • Freedom-related items are important, and they may prioritize flexibility in their work arrangements. • May exhibit lower emphasis on intrinsic work values compared to Baby Boomers. • Focuses more on extrinsic values like salary.
Loyalty towards the employer	• Exhibit high levels of loyalty and commitment to their employers. • Demonstrate a long-term perspective, with a substantial percentage expressing the desire to remain with their current employer until retirement. • Loyalty patterns may be influenced by cultural and historical factors. • Typically have a more long-term perspective on loyalty.	• Moderate level of loyalty compared to Baby Boomers. • Loyalty is influenced by context-specific factors, such as economic conditions and job opportunities. • May prioritize short-term career opportunities and experiences. • Loyalty is influenced by economic factors and job opportunities, showcasing a more adaptive approach compared to the steadfast loyalty of Baby Boomers.	• Tends to exhibit lower loyalty compared to Baby Boomers. • Context-specific factors, including economic conditions and opportunities for job mobility, impact their loyalty. • Often associated with more frequent job changes and a willingness to explore various career paths.
Learning and training styles and training needs	• Generally exhibit a preference for traditional learning methods. • May prefer on-the-job training methods like job rotation and shadowing. However, these preferences can vary among individuals within the generation. • While some Baby Boomers may appreciate traditional learning approaches, there is diversity within the generation, and some may embrace newer training methods. • While Baby Boomers may lean towards traditional methods of learning and training. • May be less inclined towards newer technological approaches.	• Tends to show adaptability in learning preferences, with positive responses to computer-based training, on-the-job training, coaching, and mentoring. • May have a preference for a mix of learning methods, valuing both traditional and modern approaches. This adaptability is influenced by factors such as individual preferences and workplace culture. • More likely to prefer online training compared to Baby Boomers but less likely than Generation Y. • Exhibits adaptability, embracing both traditional and modern training methods.	• More tech-savvy and shows a strong inclination towards technology-driven learning. • More likely to prefer online training programs compared to the other generations due to their convenience and accessibility of online platforms. • Learning through coaching and mentoring at work is highly valued by Generation Y. • Technology Adoption: The major contrast lies in technology adoption and preferences. While Baby Boomers may lean towards traditional methods, Generation Y

Desire for better work-life balance	• Often characterised by a strong work-centric orientation, with a significant portion of their lives revolving around their careers. • Compared to Generation X and Generation Y, Baby Boomers are generally found to place less emphasis on work-life balance, with a higher percentage being work-centric. • May express less interest in flexible work arrangements, such as flexitime, telecommuting, and alternative work schedules.	• Tends to prioritize a balance between work and personal life, showing a shift away from the strong work-centric focus of Baby Boomers. • Generation X often identify as family-centric, emphasizing the importance of family life alongside work responsibilities. • Similar to Generation Y, Generation X is increasingly vocalising demands for flexible working arrangements, including childcare services, work-from-home options, and flexible hours.	• Demonstrates a strong sense of freedom and places a high value on work-life balance and prioritise leisure time and desire a job that allows for a slower work pace. • Compared to Baby Boomers, Generation Y tends to have less attachment to their work, viewing work as a means of survival rather than the central focus of life. • Often expresses a need for flexible working arrangements, including flexitime, telecommuting, and special hours, reflecting a desire for a balance between work and personal life.
Attitudes towards supervision and leadership	• Prefer leaders who exhibit qualities such as persuasiveness, diplomacy, inclusiveness in decision-making, dedication, strategic mindset, good listening skills, trustworthiness, clear direction, global leadership perspective, and a willingness to seek feedback. • Are generally content with hierarchical structures and an authoritarian leadership style, showing less inclination towards flatter organizational structures.	• Values an experienced, optimistic, persuasive leader with a big-picture orientation. They appreciate leaders who are trustworthy, perceptive, capable of sharing leadership, and good listeners. • Expects leaders to be coaches and mentors, prefer flatter organisational structures, inclusion in decision-making and express less preference for a top-down leadership approach.	• Has higher expectations of leaders, desiring flatter organisational structures, inclusion in decision-making, and a leader who acts as a coach and even a friend providing support, guidance, and motivation. • Values strong workplace leadership and expects managers to be role models and mentors, indicating a reliance on strong, competent leadership.
Career expectations	• Experienced a more traditional, linear career path which emphasis upward career moves. The notion of climbing the "career ladder" was prevalent for this generation. • Valued elements associated with the traditional career type, including job stability and upward career progression.	• Seeks fulfilment through work assignments aligned with professional goals. • Appreciate supervisors who actively engage in tailored career discussions. • Exhibited variations in career mobility, emphasizing the alignment of work assignments with personal and professional goals.	• Envisions longer professional careers, challenging the traditional idea of retirement. • Embrace "career waves," involving job transitions, volunteer work, and diverse activities. Their career expectations deviate from the conventional hierarchical career ladder. • Appreciates supervisors who actively participate in timely, customised career discussions, catering to their unique requirements and aspirations.
Teamwork	• Generally, exhibit a higher preference for teamwork, value collaboration and cooperative efforts to achieve common goals..	• Demonstrates a moderate preference for teamwork, appreciate collaboration but may also value autonomy and individual contributions.	• Tends to show a lower preference for teamwork compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X.
Communication	• Tend to value more traditional and formal communication styles, prefer face-to-face interactions and written communication with proper etiquette. • May be less inclined towards digital communication tools; prefer more established communication methods. • Appreciate formal and structured feedback. They may prefer well-articulated and documented communication.	• Adaptable to various communication styles, comfortable with a mix of traditional and digital communication; valuing efficiency and clarity. • Proficient in using digital communication tools; may prefer email and other electronic means but also appreciate in-person interactions. • Values constructive and direct feedback, appreciate a balance between formality and informality in communication.	• Tends to favour informal and instant communication, are comfortable with digital communication tools, such as messaging apps and social media. • Embraces technology for communication and may prefer virtual communication platforms; value quick and accessible information. • Appreciates frequent and timely feedback; may prefer feedback that is personalised and delivered in a more casual and conversational manner.

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The following section discusses the generational differences in the higher education sector.

2.6 GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

The higher education sector is not only grappling with external drivers of change such as shifting socioeconomic demands, increasing cost of tuition and learning resources and the rapid changing technology (Naidoo, 2014; Pincus, Stout, Sorensen, Stocks & Lawson, 2017) but also with the changing internal dynamics of a multigenerational workforce of academic staff members, administrators, and other staff who are becoming more heterogeneous in their values, attitude, behaviours and expectations (Berk, 2013; Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Reynolds & Wallace, 2016). The generational differences in the higher education sector are now discussed,

2.6.1 Career progression

The topic of age diversity is prevalent in the higher education sector because older faculty members are not retiring at the traditional age of 65, therefore creating a back log in the tenure track line (Whitley, 2015). As a result, several young academic staff members in the United States of America with PhDs can mainly be employed as contingent/adjunct academic staff members without tenure. This is one reason why many departments look "older" because the younger qualified academics are not able to get track jobs (Whitley, 2015). This process, however, may not be in line with the interests of Generation X and Generation Y's who demonstrated less reliance in institutional security and lifelong jobs. Generation X and Generation Y prefer rewards linked to capability and contributions and not on tenure with an organisation. These generations both believe in self-advancement through skill development and learning more than through "paying dues". They prefer quick promotions and rewards (Berk, 2013; Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Johnston, 2006; Mofokeng, 2017). A study by Lowenstein, et al., (2007) on academic staff members at the University of Colorado's School of Medicine, found that the junior academic staff members pipeline was gradually being filled with members of Generation X, men and women who describe career success holistically and frequently take a longer view of their career trajectories. The study concluded that Generation X would therefore benefit from the relaxation of promotion or tenure clock. Therefore, the conflict between the Generation X and

Generation Y's preferences and the rigid academic promotion and tenure criteria poses management challenges in the US higher education sector.

2.6.2 Communication

Traditionally, university work is conducted through face-to-face interactions on campus. However, this is changing because many institutions have satellite campuses in multiple locations and have adopted distance and electronic learning models (Mpongose, 2020; Salta, 2022). Institutions must harness digital communication through teleconferences, video conferences and webinars to include all faculty members at different time zones and locations to meetings and seminars (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Massner, 2021). Outside of face-to-face communication, older academic staff members prefer phone and email while the younger academic staff members prefer text and use instant messaging using mobile devices to allow for immediate responses and feedback (Berk, 2013).

2.6.3 Technology

The biggest difference among the four generations in academia is the familiarity and use of the latest gadgets, technological equipment and software or apps (Berk, 2013). Students are also demanding more digital communication such as email, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook, from faculty members (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011; Poblete & Nieto, 2020; Shim, Dekleva, Chengqi & Mittleman, 2011).

A study by Mohr et al., (2011) found that Generation X and Generation Y academic staff members depended on electronic library collections and mainstream search engines to obtain articles to answer clinical questions, and they use electronic storage for the files that match their clinical interests instead of keeping a file with landmark clinical trials or review articles. Whereas senior academic staff members maintained ownership of their knowledge, using their resources for the benefit of their students and residents, they carefully study and depend on the organisation of their personal knowledge repository to apply new knowledge. The younger academic staff members appreciated medical resources as a commodity that should be made freely available for the benefit of all and do not necessarily need to be memorised in detail.

2.6.4   Work-life balance

The early years of an academic staff member's career are very demanding as she or he prepares new classes, develops a research stream, and engages in service activities (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011). According to Lowenstein et al. (2007) the junior academic staff pipeline at the University of Colorado's School of Medicine, was increasingly filled by Generation X staff members who defined career success holistically and often took a longer view of their career trajectories. The study concluded that this generation would thus benefit from more opportunities to work part-time, more flexible schedules, and family balance.

Differences in opinions regarding the combination of an academic career and motherhood can be observed across different generations. This phenomenon is evident in a longitudinal study conducted by Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012), which focused on women assistant professors with newborns up to the age of five. The study revealed generational variances in attitudes towards motherhood, including the presence of a self-centered mindset. This mindset led to conflicts between senior and junior faculty members, particularly in the social sciences where there is a higher proportion of female faculty. Senior women in the social sciences, who had chosen to forgo having children to advance in their careers, did not always respond positively to junior women who pursued a different path in their personal lives and professional endeavours. On the other hand, more recent generations of female faculty were more inclined to seek a balance between their career aspirations and family life, rather than sacrificing one for the other (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012).

Similarly, in a study conducted by Neville and Brochu (2019), it was discovered that participants belonging to three different generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials) who were student affairs professionals held contrasting opinions on work-life balance. Baby Boomers, as indicated in the study, defined work-life balance as knowing when to seek assistance or take a break. Generation X individuals shared a similar viewpoint, emphasizing the importance of self-care to effectively maintain a balance between work and personal life. On the other hand, Millennials in the study defined work-life balance as leaving the workplace on time and leaving work-related matters at the office. Additionally, Millennials believed that work should be confined to designated working hours and not necessarily confined to a traditional office setting.

Furthermore, The Chronicle of Higher Education (2020) reported differences in work-life balance perspectives between younger academic staff members and their older counterparts.

2.6.5 Feedback

Continuous, detailed feedback should be provided to tenure-track academic staff members. Younger generation academic staff members are not satisfied with annual performance reviews (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011). Generation Y has been described as emotionally needy, high maintenance and seek direction and supervision. Therefore, it is suggested that clear goals, requirements, and expectations are identified and plans to reach those goals are outlined to ensure regular feedback takes place (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011). The mentorship relationship may also be beneficial for the Traditionalist and Baby Boomers because they want to share their expertise with junior faculty and feel valued by the younger generation and organisation (Hannay & Fretwell, 2011). However, older academic staff members express frustration that Generation X seem to view mentorship as a right instead of a privilege and on the other hand, Generation X being less oriented towards institutional needs, expect their mentors to assist them (Bickel & Brown, 2005). This view is supported by Mohr et al. (2011) who opine that Generation X appreciates frequent, face-to-face contact with immediate responses and specific interactions. Furthermore, Generation X believe they are entitled to education and mentorship in the workplace, and they critically evaluate their supervisors and mentors while they are being evaluated. Generation Y is more outspoken than Generation X in the mentorship relationship, but they are mostly positive about their careers, and they respect authority. Members of Generation Y want focused, personal, positive, and frequent feedback from their mentors (Mohr et al., 2011). These contrasting perspectives on mentorship and feedback within the academic workplace can result in conflict (Mohr et al., 2011).

2.6.6 Work environment

Several issues have been raised regarding the work environment and different generations. Bullying in academia has increased over the past decade with Black, women and those on subordinate positions as targets (Berk, 2013). Age has now become another demographic reason to undermine, humiliate, belittle, marginalise, taunt or insult co-workers (Berk, 2013). A study by the Workplace Bullying Institute

(2010, p. 7) shows that Generation X (50%) are the most vulnerable and the Baby Boomers (23%) and Generation Y (27%) are the least bullied (Berk, 2013). Efforts should be made to halt the prevalence of bullying and reduce, or ideally eliminate, instances of age diversity being a prominent cause of workplace conflict in the academic setting (Berk, 2013).

The issue of appropriate dress in academia is also a challenge. Academic staff members typically wear business or picnic casual and the administrators, traditional business attire. Generation X and Generation Y however, often lean more toward casual wear (Berk, 2013).

2.6.7 Teaching and learning

Fogg (2009) argues that in the academic space, older generations of professors can become disgruntled about the comparatively high salaries that newly hired professors demand. In disciplines where the intellectual focus is shifting, the older generation of professors can feel they must protect their turf. For example, the field of psychology, has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Cognitive neuroscience now dominates over behaviouralism. The older scholars now must adapt and allow themselves to learn from young scholars (Fogg, 2009). Another area of tension is interdisciplinary studies. Baby Boomers are often doubtful of non-traditional academic staff appointments. Generation X prefer the creative freedom of an interdisciplinary institute because it enables collaboration with diverse groups of scholars. This poses a challenge for Baby Boomers who want to evaluate academic staff members in a specific discipline using traditional parameters (Fogg, 2009).

While social media platforms were initially created for social interaction, they have the potential to serve as effective tools for educational purposes, specifically to facilitate better engagement between educators and their students (Sobaih et al., 2016). Research conducted by Moran et al. (2012) and Sobaih et al. (2016) revealed that younger academic staff members utilized social media to a greater extent than their older counterparts when it came to incorporating it into their teaching practices. Similarly, Chun and Evans (2021) state that there are generational differences that can arise within an academic department regarding views of the discipline, approaches to curricula, teaching styles, and research foci. For example, in certain

departments, there is an imbalance in the distribution of curricular development responsibilities, often placing a disproportionate burden on junior academic staff members. This allocation of responsibility can lead to tensions in the relationships between junior academic staff members and senior academic staff members, who hold significant influence in determining the junior academic staff member's tenure decisions.

While research on intergenerational differences is fragmented (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Ng & Parry, 2016; Parry, 2014), generational disparities exist, at least according to employees and supervisors (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Urick, 2012). As shown in the foregoing literature, different generations are working side by side in today's organisations and each brings their own set of values and expectations to the workplace, resulting in differences and similarities in, among other things, values, commitment, leadership style and loyalty in the workplace (Bosco & Harvey, 2013; Costanza et al., 2012; Gouws & Tarp, 2017; Kaifi et al., 2012). Literature shows that these differences and similarities create challenges and opportunities for managers (Costanza et al., 2012; Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021; Rabl & Triana, 2014; Richert-Kaźmierska, 2015; Stewart et al., 2017).

2.7 SUMMARY

This chapter conceptualised the concept of generation. First, a brief historical background to the concept of generation was provided. Then, several definitions of the term "generation" were given. Thereafter, the primary historical occurrences that shaped each generation in different countries were explained by examining generational cohorts. Additionally, the workplace dynamics of a multigenerational workforce were discussed. Lastly, the generational differences in the higher education sector were discussed.

The next chapter (Chapter 3) focuses on contemporary issues relating to the management of a multigenerational workforce.

CHAPTER 3: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the challenges, benefits, and effective strategies in managing a multigenerational workforce. The chapter begins with a discussion of the benefits of a multigenerational workforce, followed by a discussion of the challenges associated with a multigenerational workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic and the generational changes it has brought to the workplace are then discussed and effective strategies for managing a multigenerational workforce in the higher education sector are presented.

3.2 BENEFITS OF A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

Diverse employees are essential to organisations' ability to achieve strategic goals and objectives, so progressive organisations are realising the value of diversity in the workplace (Nwani & Okolie, 2022). Having a multigenerational workplace brings several benefits to organisations. These benefits are now discussed.

3.2.1 Multiple perspectives

There are many benefits to having a multigenerational workplace – creativity can be driven, and perspectives can be viewed from multiple angles. Our economy and society can benefit from this approach to resolving real and urgent problems (Journey, 2022; Meniere, 2022). Generational differences can affect how people view job responsibilities and innovative thinking is facilitated by sharing perspectives among and within teams (Boatman, 2021). For example, older generations are associated with more measured reactions, using their experience for help, while younger generations are associated with quick reactions and thought processes. Both approaches are very important to the workplace (Paros et al., 2022; RecruitGyan, 2019). Creative problem-solving is sparked by fusing different viewpoints and talents. Individuals' abilities to relate to and work with people to resolve problems and conflicts are influenced by their life experiences, therefore multigenerational teams can offer a variety of approaches to solving issues (Boatman, 2021).

3.2.2 Learning/mentoring opportunities

The diversity of teams in the workplace means that individuals can learn from each other. In multigenerational workplaces, organisations gain from not only the practice of traditional mentorship where older, more experienced employees mentor younger, less experienced employees, but also benefit from reverse/cross-generational mentoring. In reverse/cross-generational mentoring, the younger employees mentor older employees (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Von Preußen & Beimborn, 2019). The initial goal of reverse mentoring was a restricted technological focus. However, the focus has expanded over time as more organisations have reaped its benefits in solving a variety of organisational problems like employee engagement, employee attrition, diversity and inclusion, leadership, and communication problems (Chaudhuri et al., 2021). The friction caused by intergenerational conflict in the workplace is significantly reduced by reverse mentoring, which actively maximises the combined intelligence of the competing generations of employees in the workplace (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019).

3.2.3 Knowledge transfer and retention

A multigenerational workplace has several advantages, including the wealth of information that exists among the many employee generations (DeMeulenaere, Boone & Buyl, 2016). Knowledge sharing has been identified as a benefit associated with an age-diverse workforce (Smeaton & Parry, 2018). A CIPD survey of 578 senior HR representatives in the UK revealed three key perceived benefits of an age-diverse workforce, with knowledge-sharing the most cited advantage (56% of respondents), followed by improved problem-solving (34%) and enhanced customer service (21%) (CIPD, 2014, p. 11). In the same study, employees identified many benefits of working with colleagues of different ages, including knowledge-sharing (66%) (CIPD, 2014, p. 11).

All employees gain from knowledge transfer in a variety of ways such as feeling appreciated and connected to others and by being better equipped to come up with original ideas (Burmeister et al., 2018). Research (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Tomlinson, 2020) shows that that organisational knowledge can be transferred between generations using reverse mentoring. Additionally, a multigenerational workforce exhibits greater resilience, fosters a robust talent pool, and contributes to staff continuity, stability, and the retention of valuable knowledge (OECD, 2020). Majumdar

(2017) suggests that there are three factors that enhance knowledge management in a multigenerational workplace. First is diversity in knowledge base because creating new knowledge requires access to a variety of sources of information. Multigenerational organisations have an abundance of experience, so this can easily be accessed by the employees. Second is the variety of competencies and skills because of the differences in technology and social environments that the different generations are exposed to. Lastly, the difference in energy and maturity levels means that employees who do not see each other as threats or competitors will be more likely to trust each other and collaborate in heterogeneous work groups.

3.2.4 Psychological and economic benefits

According to Jones (2017), the psychological benefits of a multigenerational workplace are a better organisational culture, higher levels of motivation and loyalty, higher levels of job satisfaction and a better reputation for the organisation overall. Economically, a multigenerational workplace offers advantages such as improved training outcomes, enhanced productivity, and lower early retirement expenditures. The key to getting organisations to take a multigenerational workforce seriously is showing them how it can improve their competitive edge.

Having discussed the benefits of a multigenerational workplace, the following section focuses on the challenges that come with such a workforce.

3.3 CHALLENGES OF MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

Although generational challenges such as difficulty in effective socialisation (Meyers & Sadaghiani, 2010), flexibility (Tolbize, 2008), ineffective workplace engagement (Richman et al., 2008; Wong et al., 2008) exist, it is important to understand the predominant ones. The discussion that follows focuses on the predominant generational challenges experienced in a multigenerational workplace. These include interpersonal conflict between generations, skills transfer and knowledge sharing, workplace productivity and leadership style preferences.

3.3.1 Conflict between generations

Conflict will arise whenever there are groups of people interacting with each other. This also applies in organisations with multiple generations (Costanza & Finkelstein,

2015; Hillman, 2014). Conflict in the workplace is often a result of stress caused by differing interests and views between people or between groups of people working together (Katz & Flynn, 2013; Kfouri & Lee, 2019; Martinez-Corts et al., 2015; Muscalu, 2015). Muscalu (2015) suggests that interpersonal conflict can occur when individuals with differing values, beliefs, and attitudes come into contact and interact with those who hold contrasting values, beliefs, and attitudes. Generational differences are therefore a possible source of conflict in the workplace (Bencsik et al., 2017; Rupčić, 2018; Urick et al., 2017). For example, Generation Z find it difficult to adjust to socialisation with other generations in the workplace. This lack of socialisation causes workplace conflict (Bencsik et al., 2017).

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) (2011) states that a quarter of HR professionals reported considerable levels of intergenerational conflict within their organisations. Furthermore, 60% of employees reported the existence of generational conflict with approximately 50% of younger employees questioning the skills of older co-workers and 70% of older employees questioning the skills of younger co-workers (SHRM, 2017, p. 9). In a study of 100 HR practitioners and 200 managers, Nowacka (2017, p. 124) found that that both the HR practitioners (61,6%) and managers (61,1%) reported the existence of multigenerational conflict in the workplace. Almost half (46,9%) of the HR practitioners stated that managing different generations' expectations in the workplace was a challenge for HR departments. Most of the managers (71%) indicated that managing generational conflict required having additional competences (Nowacka, 2017, p. 124). Research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2014) found that HR representatives were concerned about a lack of shared values between colleagues of different ages, age stereotyping, and internal progression/succession planning problems. Employees reported a lack of shared interests, misunderstandings and challenges associated with a lack of shared values (CIPD, 2014, p. 11).

The differences among generations result in considerable tension, preventing the completion of tasks, particularly between Baby Boomers and Millennials (De Waal et al., 2017). A study by Jassawalla and Sashittal (2017, p. 647) found that 63% of the 113 participants reported strong intensity conflicts. The study further found that the Millennials reported more conflict with the Baby Boomers (58%) followed by

Generation X (38%). The Millennials reported the least conflict with the Traditionalists (4%) and their conflict centred around the Traditionalists' limited technology knowledge. The Millennials in the study by Jassawalla and Sashittal (2017) further reported that most conflict (74%) was with their supervisors and 26% was with their colleagues. Similarly, Nowacka (2017, p. 117) stated that Gen Xers (37,6%) report more generational conflict followed by Baby Boomers (31,5%). According to Ryan et al. (2015), the fear of judgement causes tension within Baby Boomers and Millennials. Literature also indicates that there is a prevalent stereotype which asserts that Baby Boomers contribute to tension due to their perceptions of the Millennial generation (Becton et al., 2014; Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Flippin, 2017).

The unique and differing values, traits, attitudes, and beliefs of employees from different generations make it difficult for managers to maintain a work environment that is free from any conflict. However, if managers employ effective approaches, they can reduce conflicts and even use it to propel organisational change (Muscalu, 2015; Sprinkle & Urick, 2017). Managers can focus on addressing differences because positive conflict results in growth and innovation and reduces generational prejudices (Luksyte et al., 2022; McGuire et al., 2007). In a study examining intergenerational conflict, it was found that resolving differences necessitated addressing the root cause of the conflict (Urick et al., 2017). This study found that various generational differences resulted in three types of conflict: identity-based (me versus we and single versus multiple identities), values-based (traditional versus progressive and earned versus entitled) and behaviour-based (earned versus entitled and high-tech versus low-tech and skilled versus unskilled communication). These tensions are addressed through three broad strategies: achievement-oriented (focus on communication style and performing proficiently), image-oriented (being visible and managing information to control image) and ego-oriented (protecting self-interests and removing self) (Urick et al., 2017). When managers bring attention to conflicts, employees develop a reflective perspective on their generational viewpoints as well as the viewpoints of other generations, leading to the cultivation of positive intergenerational relationships (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2017).

3.3.2 Communication

Communication concerns the exchange of information between employees with the purpose of achieving business objectives (Kurtuhuz et al., 2014). Intergenerational communication refers to the communicative interactions that occur between people from different age groups or generations (Anderson & Morgan, 2017).

Generational differences within teams have led to conflicts (Ong, 2021). According to Urick et al. (2016) behaviour-based conflict occurs when one's own conduct conflicts with other's behaviour because of generational differences. Behaviour-based conflicts are often caused by differences in communication between generations. As discussed in Section 2.5.2.8, there are differences in generational communication preferences by each generation. For example, Baby Boomers prefer phone conversations or in-person meetings; Generation X members will balance face-to-face and tech-driven communication; and Millennials and Generation Z members prefer digital communication (Rathi & Kumar, 2023).

Incompatible communication styles that occur in a multigenerational workplace setting have the potential to accentuate generational differences and result in conflict and miscommunication or lack of communication, affecting the overall productivity of an organisation (Raslie & Ting, 2020). This miscommunication or lack of communication might cause individuals to operate individually rather than together, resulting in poor cooperation. The success of an organisation is contingent on managing these variances in communication styles (Appelbaum et al, 2022).

The communication challenges discussed above highlight the importance of providing more intergenerational training and formal mentoring programmes that focus on ways to disrupt the hostile interactions, enhance intergenerational communication in the workplace and create a space for structural changes to take place (Anderson & Morgan, 2017).

3.3.3 Skills transfer and knowledge sharing

The need to foster skills transfers and knowledge sharing among employees from different generations has also been identified as a challenge resulting from a multigenerational workforce (Bratianu & Leon, 2015; Gilson et al., 2013; Joshi et al.,

2010). Employees belonging to different generations exhibit variations in their attitudes, value systems, and approaches, especially when it comes to communication and learning. These differences can have a substantial impact on the process of knowledge sharing, which is crucial for the survival of organisations (Rupčić, 2018). Individuals from different generations working together might not agree on what should be transferred and reused (Bjursell, 2015). In a study by Wells-Lepley et al. (2013), employees from the government sector reported that cross-training of employees was a challenging task because of restrictions on how employees could spend their time. Organisations in other sectors indicated that older employees did not want to share their knowledge with others for fear of losing their value in the workplace. According to Majumdar (2017), the factors which hinder knowledge management in a multigenerational workplace include communication breakdown between employees from different generational cohorts, different pace of learning and lack of flexibility by the older workers.

The success of businesses relies heavily on organisational knowledge, as emphasised by Ekore (2014). The competitive advantage of businesses is contingent upon the capability of business leaders to effectively leverage organisational knowledge to generate value, as highlighted by both Ekore (2014) and Omotayo (2015). According to Bjursell (2015), knowledge sharing in organisations is the process of passing knowledge from one employee to another. It is represented as a complex interaction between emotional knowledge, cognitive knowledge, and spiritual knowledge (Bratianu & Leon, 2015). Emotional knowledge pertains to the subconscious knowledge derived from the sensory system and manifested as feelings. Cognitive knowledge encompasses rational knowledge that can be articulated through words and behaviours. Spiritual knowledge encompasses the professional and cultural values that serve as guiding principles for decision-making and behaviour (Bratianu & Leon, 2015). For example, research suggests that older workers want to feel useful in the workplace and do meaningful work (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Heisler & Bandow, 2018).

As such, Bratianu and Leon (2015) argue that knowledge is ingrained within the human mind and is reflected in individuals' thoughts, actions, and emotions. Therefore, intergenerational knowledge transfer includes the transferring of emotional, cognitive,

and spiritual knowledge from the older to the younger generation and vice versa, as well as facilitating knowledge retention within the organisation. The Baby Boomer generation is currently the largest group in the workplace, and they are approaching retirement (Harvey, 2012; Tang et al., 2012). This large exodus of Baby Boomers from the workplace will undoubtedly result in a significant loss of knowledge for organisations (Harvey, 2012). However, organisations will not only lose knowledgeable employees but also relationships, skills, and experience (Cummings-White & Diala, 2013; Harvey, 2012). Therefore, organisations need to address the threat of corporate amnesia because intergenerational transfer of knowledge is a matter of survival (Bjursell, 2015; Bratianu & Leon, 2015; Gerpott et al., 2017; Harvey, 2012).

In the era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) dominance, generational disparities appear to be particularly noticeable. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that each generation brings unique contributions and perspectives. While younger digital-savvy employees may be more skilled in ICT, older employees may have acquired deeper insights about business system relations and leverage points (Rupčić, 2018). Therefore, knowledge-sharing challenges posed by a multigenerational workforce require organisations to adjust processes and methods that include younger generations and facilitate knowledge transfer (Bjursell, 2015). However, research shows that the intergenerational transfer of knowledge is not systematic enough, or that there is no transfer at all (Harvey, 2012). According to a global survey of 583 executives by The Economist (2011, p. 4), approximately one in four (26%) of the respondents indicated that their organisations were not at all effective in their ability to transfer knowledge from retiring staff to younger staff. Similarly, Phaladi and Ngulube (2022) found that most of the state-owned enterprises sampled in their study lacked knowledge management practices in their structures. Additionally, a study by Kordova et al. (2022, p. 9) found that more than half of the of the participants had heard of the term "knowledge management" but reported that it was not implemented in their organisation and that the management did not stress the importance of knowledge management.

According to Rupčić's (2018), numerous organisations are implementing diverse intergenerational knowledge-sharing initiatives to cater to the learning habits,

knowledge requirements, and personal characteristics of both younger and older employees. Additionally, these initiatives address various contingencies and context-specific issues. Organisations can adopt a combination of technical and social approaches to facilitate knowledge sharing, opting for strategies that facilitate the transfer of explicit knowledge (such as manuals, blueprints, procedures, policies, forecasts, inventory levels, production schedules, market intelligence data, etc.) as well as tacit knowledge (knowledge that is hard to conceptualise, subjective, implicit and is part of an individual's experiences; it is evidenced in actions) (Rupčić, 2018; Schoenherr et al., 2014).

Organisations are encouraged to ensure that their retiring older employees compile crucial documents outlining their work practices, enabling their successors to have a strong foundation of the information and knowledge required for the role. This process facilitates the mapping of explicit knowledge (Rupčić, 2018). If possible, when successors are appointed while older employees are still in their positions, bidirectional knowledge transfer can occur, encompassing both explicit and tacit components (Rupčić, 2018). This enables older employees to share knowledge pertaining to the social aspects of their work, such as approaches to employ with different employees, strategies for dealing with various stakeholders (e.g., key suppliers, customers), and effective negotiation techniques (Rupčić, 2018). Retired employees could also be asked to remain as consultants (CIPD, 2015; Naegele & Walker, 2006). This may reduce the stress experienced by older employees following retirement and makes the person feel valuable and useful. Having a reliable support system in place, where successors can seek guidance from an experienced individual who can serve as an expert and facilitator during the decision-making process, has the potential to enhance productivity and reduce stress levels for the successors (CIPD, 2015; Rupčić, 2018).

3.3.4 Workplace productivity

More than 60% of employers believe generational differences cause tension between employees, resulting in decreased productivity (De Waal et al., 2017, p. 3). Literature shows that multigenerational workforces may negatively impact workplace productivity (Backes-Gellner & Veen, 2013; Garnero et al., 2014) because it is likely that a more age-diverse workplace will encounter greater communication problems and social

integration difficulties. A study by Garnero et al. (2014) found that diversity in terms of age could hamper communication and employees' joy in work and introduce interpersonal conflict, which might affect productivity. Additionally, the Association for Talent Development (2014) reported that the conflict between generations resulted in a waste of time and a loss in productivity. More than a third of the respondents in the study by ATD (2014) indicated that they wasted 12% of the work week (five or more hours of the work week) because of the unresolved conflict between generations. However, other scholars have found different results. De Meulenaere et al. (2016) found that age diversity can have both advantages and disadvantages for organisations, depending on the type of diversity present. While having a diverse range of ages in the workforce can enhance labour productivity, the presence of age polarisation has a detrimental impact.

Managers can employ strategies to reduce the potentially negative impact of a multigenerational workforce on productivity. For example, Boehm et al. (2014) suggest an organisation-wide age-diversity climate, characterised by employees' shared perceptions of an organisation's diversity-related policies, practices and procedures with regard to age, while De Meulenaere et al. (2016) and Garnero et al. (2014) suggest that managers should stimulate knowledge transfer and encourage cooperation between generational groups. Studies by Čiutienė and Railaitė (2015) and Fritzsche et al. (2014) also show that organisations need to pay attention to the physical working conditions in the workplace, especially those of older workers. Taking steps to improve the physical working conditions has been shown to serve as a motivator and enhance job satisfaction specifically among older workers (Čiutienė & Railaitė, 2015; Fritzsche, 2014). Workplace ergonomics are vital for all generational groups, especially for the older generations who face physical, psychosocial, and physiological challenges (Čiutienė & Railaite, 2015).

3.3.5 Leadership style preferences

A study by Lyons and Kuron (2014) concluded that generational differences in leadership perspectives exist. In general, the study found that relationship-oriented leadership styles (e.g., support, trust and interpersonal dependability) were more important than task-oriented approaches (e.g. personal competence, credibility and foresight) for the younger generations. This signifies a move away from pursuing

leaders who focus on task and organisational successes towards those who emphasise "individual fulfilment" (Lyons & Kuron, 2013). However, the authors caution that a theoretical framework is lacking for explaining this trend and that existing research did not consider other possible factors such as maturity, tenure and experience.

A study by Sessa et al. (2007) found that different generational cohorts value different qualities in a leader, and managers in different generational cohorts demonstrate leadership in different ways. This means that the differences in values, attitudes and beliefs of the various generational cohorts have an impact on how each generational cohort views leadership, which then manifests itself in the use of different preferred leadership styles. Traditionalists may benefit from a leadership style that is more authoritative and directive, while Baby Boomers may respond better to a leadership style that is collegial and emphasizes consensus-building. Generation Xers, on the other hand, may thrive under leaders who are proactive in addressing change and challenges. Millennials, as a generation, tend to prefer a leadership style that is inclusive and promotes collaboration (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014, Salahuddin, 2010). Although many studies on the different generation's leadership styles exist, they have not focused on the newest generation, Generation Z (Bateh, 2019). According to Bateh (2019), there is not an exact leadership standard or profile that this generation admires or follows.

Although there are contradictions in the case of leadership and the management of different generations, research shows that managers have limited skills for managing a multigenerational workforce. A CIPD (2014) study found negative views among employees in relation to the management of mixed-age teams, with 23% describing their managers as "ineffective" at promoting mixed-age team working. The study also found that 46% of line managers had received no training in promoting age-diverse teams, nor did their organisations have plans to introduce such training packages. Age diversity did not, therefore, appear to be at the forefront of corporate strategic thinking.

Making use of participatory leadership practices – i.e., actively soliciting staff input on organisational decisions – is crucial for keeping policies, programmes and practices in sharp alignment with employees' work realities, as well as for cultivating a healthy and

synergistic workplace (Guérin-Marion et al., 2018). Despite being associated with Baby Boomers, a participatory leadership style may prove effective in meeting the work needs and preferences of the different generations. It has been shown that this style can predict employees' psychological empowerment, which in turn correlates strongly with organisational performance and job satisfaction. Moreover, employees of all generations are interested in being part of decision-making. Consequently, adopting collaborative decision-making practices can be an extremely effective leadership strategy in managing a multigenerational workforce. Such practices have the potential to strike a balance between individual needs, such as personal empowerment, and organisational requirements, including workforce synergy and overall performance (Guérin-Marion et al., 2018).

It is evident from the literature that a multigenerational workforce brings not only benefits to organisations, but also challenges for managers on how to manage the different generations.

The following section discusses some of the key issues that arose in a multigenerational workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GENERATIONAL COHORTS IN THE WORKPLACE

This section discusses the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on the different generational cohorts in the workplace.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.5), generational disparities are influenced by preconceptions and the way people perceive how others view their age group affects how they behave at work. As a result of perceptions that older people waste too many resources and cling to coveted positions (e.g. succession), intergenerational tensions are frequently visible in the workplace (Lytle & Apriceno, 2022). Therefore, during situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, stereotypes of age groups may become more prominent and exacerbated because people rely more on identity assumptions than on actual knowledge of the people they deal with (Lytle & Apriceno, 2022; Urick, 2020). The findings of a study by Lytle and Apriceno (2022) showed that both hostile and benevolent ageism (older people are incompetent and warm or simply incompetent,

respectively) predicted more intergenerational tension (consumption and identity). Intentions to help older adults were lowered when consumption and identity tension were present, while they were raised when benevolent ageism was present. During the pandemic a hybrid model of work emerged where part of the workforce mostly worked outside traditional offices. According to Turner and Zuech (2021) forcing employees back to the on-site workplace, could result in a loss of up to 39% of a company's workforce (Baker & Zuech, 2021).

In a study by Qian (2022), the participants voiced generational differences in the attitudes toward telecommuting, with older generations indicating a preference for working in the office and younger generations enjoying telecommuting, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift to working remotely had led to an increase in the retirement of some Baby Boomers (Stinebaugh, 2021). However, Halpern and Scrom (2022) point out that Baby Boomers have realised that they are not financially ready for retirement and are returning to the workforce in less demanding or client-facing positions.

Similar to findings by Qian (2022), a study by the Conference Board (2021) conducted when COVID-19 was no longer regarded as a dominant fear or risk by many, found that older generations were more comfortable returning to the workplace than younger ones, where 43% of Baby Boomers were comfortable with this compared to 38% and 24% of Generation X and Millennials, respectively. A study by the International Workplace Group found that that Millennial hybrid workers are most likely (53%) to look for another job if their employers ceased hybrid working and wanted them back in the office (Kelly, 2022). There is a possibility that the skills Gen X learnt while in quarantine may explain their desire to remain remote (Conference Board, 2021; Moore et al., 2022), including a boost in communication confidence such as building trust in a new environment, conflict resolution, etc (Adobe, 2021). On the other hand, Generation Y's perspective may be influenced by their aging into parenthood and a traditional acceptance of technology (Conference Board, 2021).

A Gartner study found that 65% of Gen Z workers expected their employers to allow them to work remotely (Hoskins, 2020). This has been attributed to the fact that

Generation Z see it as solution to addressing their personal issues, travel issues and other situations which personally affect them (Toft, 2020). However, in other studies, 88% of Gen Z job seekers desire to meet frequently in-person (Becker, 2021; Gurchiek, 2021; Stinebaugh, 2021).

In a study by Raišienė et al. (2020) conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was mostly the advantage (such as saving time on commuting) and competencies (such as good time management skills) that were highlighted by younger employees whereas the drawbacks of working remotely were highlighted by older employees. The issues raised by the older employees included greater work–life conflict, the lack of direct feedback and interactions with managers and colleagues and a greater emotional burden. Additional findings from a study by Portillo et al. (2020) showed that there were generational differences in digital competences. The findings indicated that teachers who were older had less technological know-how than those who were younger during the pandemic.

Although Portillo et al.'s (2020) findings indicated generational differences in digital competence during the pandemic, according to a study by Ferreira (2021), Baby Boomers generally seem to be able to survive and prosper at work in the digital workplace. It was discovered that Baby Boomers exhibit more creative and interesting coping behaviours. Additionally, Baby Boomers exhibited higher levels of vitality in terms of prospering at work since they feel more alive, passionate, and enthusiastic about their employment. Gen Z seemed to have more positive social connections overall. They reported that they were more likely to develop friendships, feel emotions and show that their social connections are marked by trust and confidence, as well as a strong desire to participate in the workplace, all of which are indicators of the predominance of friendships in their lives. Similarly, Mockaitis et al. (2022) also found that employees in the late (50–59 years of age) and pre-retirement (60 years and older) career stages were the least affected group regarding levels of stress and burnout during the pandemic. The authors attribute this to the fact that employees in these two career stages have accrued additional resources to counteract disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Additionally, the research by Mockaitis et al. (2022), which was conducted during the initial period of the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that a lesser level of well-being was experienced by early (18–29 years old) and developing (30–39 years old) career stage employees compared to those in other career stages (40–49 years old; 50–59 years old and 60 years old and above) owing to their limited surplus resources, such as personal and job resources. A similar finding was also identified by Harari et al. (2022) in which the Generation Z participants demonstrated lower resilience in comparison with Generation X participants. In contrast to employees in other career stages, early-career (18–29 years old) employees did somewhat improve their disengagement over the study period, indicating that burnout may not necessarily start with exhaustion before progressing to disengagement during the early and developing stages of career development. When it comes to workers in the middle of their careers, Mockaitis et al. (2022) discovered that those in the consolidated (40–49 years old) career stage reported higher levels of weariness and stress over time compared to those in the pre-retirement stage (60 years old and above). All in all, the findings from a study by Mockaitis et al. (2022) show that organisations need to provide more support to employees at the early-career (18–29 years old) stage in order for them to cope and balance the job demands and job resources in the work-from-home (WFH) context.

Although a study by Harari et al. (2022), that was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that Generation Z participants exhibited lower resilience levels, they also observed that these individuals displayed higher levels of openness to new experiences and self-improvement in terms of their values in comparison to Generation X participants.. Furthermore, the study discovered that Gen Z participants had more favourable attitudes toward hybrid training in the workplace and hybrid learning (includes both face-to-face and online components). Regarding hybrid work, both generations displayed favourable sentiments.

Among the key generational differences found in Mully's (2022) research focusing on WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic, were job satisfaction, communication, and managers' perceived ability to perform their roles. Compared to Generations X and Y, Generation Z was negatively impacted by WFH when it came to communication, whereas Baby Boomers were mostly negatively affected by WFH in terms of their

ability to perform their duties effectively when compared to Generation X and Generation Y.

A study by Lee et al. (2021) conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that in general, employee retention can be improved by demonstrating greater transformational (TF) and transactional (TS) leadership skills, participating in more corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, providing employees with access to the latest and most updated technology (tech), providing them with more autonomy and providing them with better work–life balance (WLB). Different factors, however, play a greater role in employee retention for each generation (Lee et al., 2021) as shown on Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Employee retention factors for each generation

Generation	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6
General	TF leadership	TS leadership	CSR	Technology	Autonomy	WLB
Gen X	TF leadership	CSR	Autonomy	WLB		
Gen Y	TF leadership	TS leadership	Autonomy	WLB		
Gen Z	TF leadership	TS leadership				

Source: Lee et al. (2021, p. 55)

The studies discussed above show that organisations need to focus on the needs of employees from a generational lens owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employees in the workplace. For example, with the move to the hybrid work model, organisations need to find ways of increasing the sense of belonging and connectivity of employees whether an employee is working in the office or from home. Although most generations prefer remote work, Alexander et al. (2021) warn that it may be detrimental to the workforce to apply a universal approach.

Having discussed the impact of COVID-19 on generations in the workplace, the following section discusses strategies for the effective management of a multigenerational workforce.

3.5 STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE: A HIGHER EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

In the literature, best practices for managing a multigenerational workforce in the higher education sector are summarised as seven key strategies. A discussion of these strategies follows.

3.5.1 Addressing age discrimination

Manfredi's (2008) study, which comprised a comprehensive staff age survey and the findings of a series of focus groups with managers of different occupational groups and senior academics at twelve higher education institutions in the UK, sought to explore age-related issues in the higher education sector. Flowing from this study, Manfredi (2008, p. 82) made the following suggestions for higher education institutions on how to deal with perceptions of age discrimination:

- Ensure that workplace equal opportunity programmes address age discrimination and that this is properly conveyed to both staff and students,
- Improve awareness of gender age discrimination, and stereotyped and ageist behaviours through training programmes and initiatives, maintain knowledge among all workers about the negative effects of age discrimination and foster a community that respects age diversity,
- Provide line managers with guidelines on how to deal effectively with incidents of unfair age discrimination and ageist attitudes,
- Discuss age-related problems in the recruitment and hiring process to discourage ageist and stereotyped behaviours from influencing workers' recruiting and strategic decision-making processes,
- Use workplace retention polls to track workers' views of gender and age discrimination and act where necessary,
- Use the equality impact assessment process to raise awareness of and remove unfair age discrimination from employment policies and practices.

Zemke et al. (2013) identified the ACORN model (accommodate employee differences; create workplace choices; operate from a sophisticated management style; respect competence and initiative; and nourish retention) as an approach that has proven to be successful in managing multigenerational employees. These researchers examined companies that succeeded in managing their multigenerational employees. In other words, they were accommodating employee differences, utilising a sophisticated management approach, respecting competence and initiative, providing workplace choices, and nurturing employee retention.

In a study conducted by Jones (2017) at a university in northwest Florida, which involved four managers who were university administrators and focused on retaining a multigenerational workforce, it is recommended that university leaders create a workplace culture that embraces diversity, eradicates negative generational stereotypes, and values the unique contributions and differences of employees from different generations. By doing so, leaders can enhance the motivation, retention, and productivity of their multigenerational workforce. Additionally, a study by Earl et al. (2018) suggests that institutions should adopt a human rights approach instead of a human capital approach to age diversity to address the issue of ageism in the workplace.

3.5.2 Recruitment of people 30 years and younger

The findings of a study by Manfredi (2008, p.83) show that organisations should do more to attract younger staff. Additionally, Manfredi provides the following suggestions based on his study findings:

- Institutions need to improve administrative policies to track access to training by age to ensure that younger workers have access to adequate preparation and to provide relevant job advice.
- Institutions should establish a plan to enable young students to consider applying for higher education employment, including the use of student placements.
- Institutions should monitor younger staffs' levels of job satisfaction through university staff surveys.

- Institutions should consider embracing more creative approaches to job development, specifically in technical and support positions that allow workers to develop new talents and experience in a variety of fields that can contribute to "horizontal" job transfers.
- Institutions should position themselves more successfully as 'employers of choice' who can provide opportunities for doing enjoyable work and working flexibly, as well as a variety of perks, including strong holiday entitlements.

3.5.3 Training and Development of people by age

Literature (Jones, 2017; Manfredi, 2008) suggests that organisations need to develop professional learning and growth opportunities for multigenerational workers, track access to training for staff to recognise and address any problems that could discourage certain workers from taking on training and development opportunities, and review institutional approaches to career guidance to ensure that this is delivered effectively to all staff at whatever stage of their working life. According to Tolbize (2008), it is important to train employees differently based on their generational preferences. For instance, the younger generation is more likely to learn soft skills at work through coaching and examples provided by their elders.

Faculty development initiatives should include generational forecasting and planning as part of their strategic planning (Howell et al., 2009). In their article, Howell et al. (2009) provide a description of the future issues facing each generation in academic health centres and their medical schools. The authors investigated how these issues had taken shape at the University of California Davis School of Medicine (UCD-SOM). They describe faculty development programmes and other efforts at UCD-SOM that anticipate and address multigenerational workplace issues so that each generation will continue to work effectively as the future unfolds (Howell et al., 2009, p. 991). The UCD-SOM has increased its faculty development programmes with an eye to grooming faculty for the future. These programmes include the following:

- The Junior Faculty Professional Career Development Program is an interactive curriculum specifically designed to actively involve assistant professors in acquiring essential competencies required for successful career development and professional growth in the field of academic medicine.

- UCD-SOM has implemented a successful mentoring program at the department level, where each department designates a senior faculty member as the director of faculty development. These directors play a crucial role in leading mentoring activities among the faculty in their respective departments and receive a small stipend from the school in recognition of their contributions.

- Additional programs within the school, such as a midcareer program and a program tailored for department chairs and emerging senior leaders, cater for the needs of older generations.

- To ensure that faculty development programs remain relevant and responsive to current needs, a Faculty Development Council convenes monthly meetings to advise the associate dean of faculty development and faculty life, as well as the director of faculty development. The council consists of members from all generations of faculty.

- UCD-SOM provides various forms of support and resources to junior faculty members to prepare them for opportunities, such as the ones described above. This includes faculty development programs and internal grants. One example is the UCD Health System Research Award Program, which aims to encourage new research initiatives among assistant and associate professors, promote the development of new research directions for established faculty, and assist in generating preliminary data to strengthen proposals submitted to federal funding agencies.

A study by Dube and Ngulube (2013, p. 6-7) provides the following suggestions for determining retention strategies and regenerating knowledge retention initiatives:

- Academic career discussions take place through various channels such as meetings, workshops, conferences, and seminars at different levels, including within departments, between departments, across institutions, and inter-institutionally. By strengthening and actively harnessing knowledge assets, these conversations have the potential to optimize the transfer and preservation of vital academic knowledge, skills, and competencies. By aligning with university guidelines, career conversations can foster collaborative projects and initiatives.

- Establishing a well-defined regulatory framework with explicit guidelines, targets, and evaluation mechanisms is essential for HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) to enhance knowledge retention through mentorship programs.

3.5.4 Work–life balance

Addressing faculty needs for work–life balance was identified as another key challenge to be addressed by the UCD-SOM (Howell et al., 2009). The authors based this assertion on the fact that there is an increasing number of women entering the medical profession and therefore as more Gen Xers and Millennials, both males and females, enter the medical field, this issue will need to be addressed. Work–life balance initiatives include the following (Howell et al., 2009, p. 991-992):

- The promotion timeline for assistant professorship has been extended, and faculty leave provisions for childbearing and childrearing have been expanded. These initiatives have been broadened to encompass all academic series and departments.

- Department-level interventions are crucial in addressing work-life balance issues, as each work environment and responsibilities may require unique solutions. At UCD-SOM, departments are implementing measures such as flexible work hours, allowing faculty members to attend to family needs during the workday and return to work later.

- The utilization of technologies like electronic medical records, telemedicine, and remote access to health system networks has facilitated faculty members' ability to work from home or other locations more conveniently.

- A Work-Life Balance Council, comprising faculty members from different generations, actively addresses work-life balance needs, develops solutions, and shares successful strategies among departments. This council has created a work-life balance toolkit for faculty and departments.

- Faculty development workshops on work-life balance are provided, and an increasing number of programs are offered as online tutorials or videos for faculty members to access at their convenience. The online tutorials currently receive over 92 hits per month, with plans for further online additions. Interestingly, only 26% of the hits occur outside normal business hours or on weekends, suggesting that users prioritize protecting their personal or family time.

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- Most departments at UCD-SOM do not schedule standing committee meetings after 5 p.m.

It is imperative that a leader of multiple generational cohorts understands the importance of work–life balance, as each generation has a different view of what constitutes a positive work–life balance. The amount of family time or leisure time required by each generational cohort is based on how well the amount of time spent at work is balanced with that spent with family (Moore et al., 2016).

3.5.5 Collaboration and knowledge transfer

According to Howell et al. (2009, p. 991), developing a team-based culture is also important for planning the future. The authors provide the following strategies for cultivating a team-based culture:

- The younger generations who have been exposed to team-focused learning during their training have a preference for a team-based work environment. This aligns with the goals of various modern initiatives in education, clinical care, and science. By fostering a team-based culture at UCD-SOM, multiple objectives can be addressed, including attracting and retaining the younger generation of faculty.
- UCD-SOM places a strong emphasis on team-based learning in its curricular initiatives. The faculty development website offers instructional videos and virtual workshops on this approach to support faculty members.
- UCD-SOM hosts over 40 monthly interdisciplinary tumour board conferences, which serve as platforms for both clinical care and education.

A study by Dube and Ngulube (2013, p. 6) offers the following strategies for knowledge retention in select academic departments in the College of Human Sciences at the University of South Africa:

- Higher education institutions (HEIs) should develop a concise knowledge retention strategy that aligns with the institution's needs and culture. Such a strategy will help retain critical intellectual capital within the organisation.
- HEIs should not only invest in talent management but also ensure that remuneration and other institutional systems and processes are in line with the

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core principles of talent management. Neglecting to invest in talented individuals may result in the loss of critical skills and the potential of future talent.

- Conducting a knowledge audit can help identify knowledge assets at risk and reveal gaps in the depth and breadth of organisational knowledge.

- The impact of individual performance versus collective performance should be considered. While the current reward system emphasizes individual excellence, there is a growing emphasis on developmental and collective initiatives that has not been fully integrated into institutional reward systems.

3.5.6 Succession planning

The UCD-SOM has strategically planned to safeguard the optimal opportunities for advancement that are available for the younger generations such that an appropriate legacy can be created for senior generations. When a prominent tenured senior faculty member is of retirement age, the department, and the leadership in the dean's office work with the retiring employee on a succession plan in which the retiring employee mentors the younger midcareer and junior faculty employees to take over after him/her. This process is facilitated by the University of California's retirement plan. Given the university policy's requirement for competitive searches to fill tenure-track positions, implementing this succession planning process enables multiple midcareer and junior faculty members who have received mentoring from the senior faculty member to become competitive candidates during the search. As a result, this plan creates a mutually beneficial outcome for the senior faculty member, midcareer or junior faculty member, and the department and school programs (Howell et al., 2009).

According to Takure (2010), exit interviews should be taken seriously and used to address key reasons for staff exodus. These sentiments on exit interviews are echoed by Dube and Ngulube (2013). They propose that exit interviews should be designed to ensure the effective utilization, capture, and retention of valuable tacit knowledge using personification or codification methods. It is recommended that higher education institutions adopt a proactive rather than reactive approach, taking proactive measures through human resources and other suitable strategies to address identified risks and threats that could impact critical knowledge assets. By strategically and intentionally

managing this process, institutions can prevent knowledge loss and maintain a competitive advantage (Dube & Ngulube, 2013).

3.5.7 Managing retirement expectations

Based on the findings of the focus group discussions with managers drawn from different occupational groups and senior academics in the study by Manfredi (2008, p.82), the following suggestions were made for managing retirement expectations in higher education institutions:

- Monitor the workforce age profile through employee surveys to gain an understanding of employees' expectations about retirement, and to inform policies and practices to manage retirement.

- Provide clear information about pension entitlements and pre-retirement courses to encourage staff to plan in advance and make informed choices about their retirement arrangements.

- Develop separate criteria and guidelines to determine staff applications to continue to work beyond retirement for academic, professional, support and manual staff, to reflect the varying expectations and demands of different job roles.

- Consult with line managers, equality groups and trade union representatives to develop fair and transparent criteria. Embrace a transparent and fair system to regularly review staff performance to enable staff to perform to the best of their abilities at whatever age and stage of their career.

- Employ a systematic approach to succession planning to consider staff recruitment and retention needs in different areas of work. Develop post-retirement provisions. This could be of mutual benefit to universities and to retired staff.

- Consider different models of flexible retirement that can be of mutual benefit to both staff and the demand of services.

In a study by Takure (2010, p.73-74), which explored views on the retirement policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal with university administration managers, heads of schools, union executive members and employees, the following strategies were suggested:

- The institution should tie up retirement plans with succession and not retire someone without getting a replacement first to avoid rehiring that same person as a consultant at a much higher price.

- The institution to look at employees individually. If a person performs well, she or he should be allowed to stay on even after the 60-age mark without having to go through the motivation process.

- Academics with appropriate teaching and research track records should be encouraged to continue on a permanent basis after the pensionable age of over 60 with due regard to their performance. The criteria for continuation would be the same as those governing promotion as well as a willingness to concentrate on working with young and new academics in developing their research expertise.

- Academics who are eligible to continue until 65 should be relieved of administrative and committee tasks and be encouraged to apply their talents to research, research capacity building, mentoring and graduate supervision full time. Among these duties would be to attract research funds for the institution and to constitute and manage research teams.

- An additional professorial seat should be added to each department. This would be aimed at allowing the University to continue to gain from the experience of suitable and targeted academics even beyond 65 years without the University incurring any additional costs. The academics appointed would not be paid a fixed salary but would be paid a fixed proportion of the income derived directly from their fee and subsidy-earning research activities.

The study by Jones (2017) suggests the following seven strategies to leaders at a university in northwest Florida to increase motivation, retention, and productivity of a multigenerational workforce:

(a) foster a diversity friendly workplace culture,

(b) develop effective interpersonal communication strategies,

(c) value generational employees and their differences,

(d) develop professional learning and growth opportunities for generational workers, and

(e) eliminate negative generational stereotyping in the workplace,

(f) employ a formal approach,

(g) encourage a healthy work-life balance

3.5.8 Communication

Studies highlight communication as a key strategy in effectively managing a multigenerational workforce. According to Bruce and Montanez (2012), leveraging multiple communication channels is crucial as individuals have varied communication preferences. This approach fosters open communication by creating a safe environment where individuals learn to accept and respect different communication styles while maintaining professionalism. Zemke et al. (2013) further suggest that intensive communication can effectively bridge generational gaps, especially when it is tailored to meet the needs of younger employees. These needs include providing regular guidance, following up after performance evaluations, and offering prompt feedback. Importantly, this approach remains effective even if not all members of the team utilize the same communication channels.

In the studies by Lasten (2016), Phillips (2016) and Jones (2017), it was found that leaders of multigenerational workforces developed strategies and policies to improve interactions and communication between management and staff, resulting in a significant boost to employee retention and productivity. Multigenerational workforces succeed when management communicates well with staff and values their talents and experiences, as suggested by Graystone (2019). Creating an engaging environment for all generations begins with effective communication. It is therefore imperative that leaders implement ways to engage a mix of generations, regardless of whether they use social media or the internet (Graystone, 2019). Achieving an intimate understanding of the cohort, as suggested by Shrivastava (2020) and Punchi et al. (2016), can reduce the chances of poor communication and increase the chances of success.

A summary of the key strategies of the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members discussed above is depicted in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Key strategies for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members
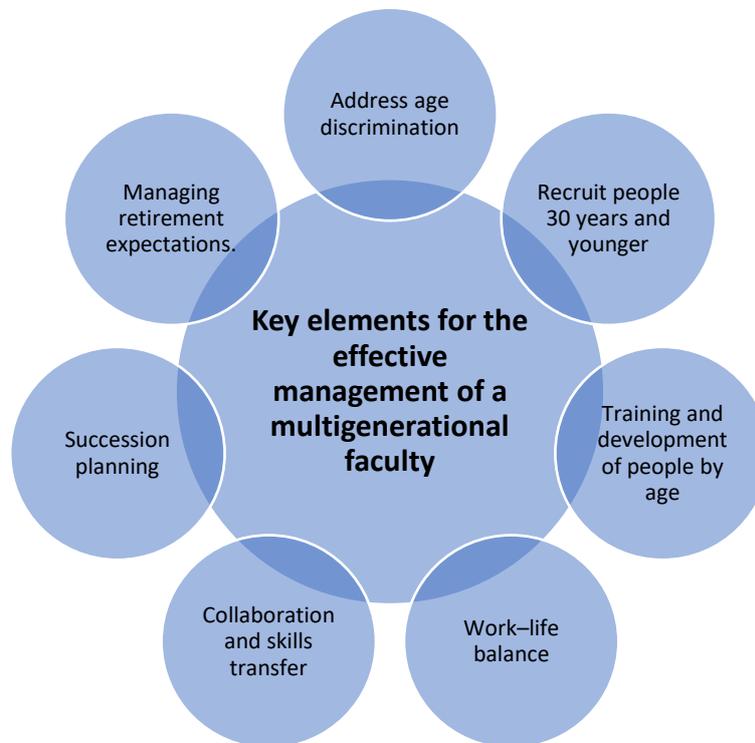
Source: Author's own compilation

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed contemporary issues related to the management of a multigenerational workforce. The chapter began with a discussion of the benefits of a multigenerational workforce, followed by the challenges associated with such a workforce. Lastly, effective strategies for managing a multigenerational workforce in the higher education sector were discussed.

In the next chapter (Chapter 4), the theoretical framework that anchors this study is discussed.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that underpinned this study. Both the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations and the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness are discussed. The rationale for using the framework and the model to guide the current study is presented. In addition, a theoretical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector is developed from the literature and presented here. The chapter concludes with a summary.

4.2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING THIS STUDY

There are various definitions of a theoretical framework in the literature, with some authors using the terms "theoretical framework" and "conceptual framework" synonymously (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Parahoo, 2006; Robson & McCarton, 2016). According to Ngulube et al. (2015) a theory is developed from models, concepts, constructs, and propositions; thus, a theory is a certain type of research frame that may be called a theoretical framework. Grant and Onsaloo (2014, p. 13) define a theoretical framework as a "blueprint" for a research study. These authors state that a theoretical framework helps to steer and support a study and helps the researcher define how they will philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically approach the study (Grant & Onsaloo, 2014).

Ngulube et al. (2015, p. 55) state that a theoretical framework assists a researcher by shaping any inquiry in some of the following ways:

- It serves as a basis for a research plan.
- It situates the researcher within a scholarly discourse and links the study to the broader body of literature.
- It provides a frame within which a problem under investigation can be understood (Bryman, 2012, p. 20).
- It shapes the research questions and helps to focus the study.
- It allows the researcher to narrow the project down to a manageable size.

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- It offers a plan for data collection.
- It operates as a tool for interpreting research findings.
- It provides a vehicle for generalisations to other contexts.

There are various ways in which qualitative researchers can use theory (Creswell, 2014; Ngulube et al., 2015). Firstly, qualitative researchers can use theory to broadly explain behaviours and attitudes, much like quantitative researchers (Creswell, 2014). Secondly, qualitative researchers may also test theory or broad explanations for a phenomenon (Ngulube et al., 2015) especially when an inductive-deductive approach is used. Thirdly, qualitative researchers may use theoretical perspectives to interrogate the real world. Such perspectives direct the researcher to key issues to be investigated such as power, oppression, marginalisation. Examples of theoretical perspectives include queer theory, disability enquiry and feminist perspectives. Fourthly, in some qualitative studies, the theory is the end point. In this case, an inductive process is followed in which a generalised model or theory is developed from the data collected (Creswell, 2014; Ngulube et al., 2015). In essence, qualitative researchers use theoretical frameworks to test theories, direct the data analysis process or generate new theories.

In this study, the theoretical framework was used as a constructive and interpretive lens to steer the conceptualisation of generations in the workplace, data collection, data analysis and the interpretation of the findings (Creswell, 2014). As indicated by Grant and Osanloo (2014, p. 13), "the theoretical framework consists of the selected theory (or theories) that undergirds your thinking with regards to how you understand and plan to research your topic, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to your topic". The Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations and the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness theories assisted the researcher with the interpretation of the data collected.

4.2.1 Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations

Joshi et al. (2010) provide a framework that allows for the multidisciplinary conceptualisation of generations; this framework is depicted in Figure 4.1. It draws on

both identity and social identity theories and introduces the concept of generational identity (Joshi et al., 2010). The authors posit that beliefs about one's generation and the other generations could result in self-categorisation, social categorisation, and generational stereotypical thinking (Van Rossem, 2021). A study by Lyons et al. (2019) showed that generations can be considered significant social categories and that individuals may identify with a generation, thus forming a generational identity.

Figure 4.1

Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations
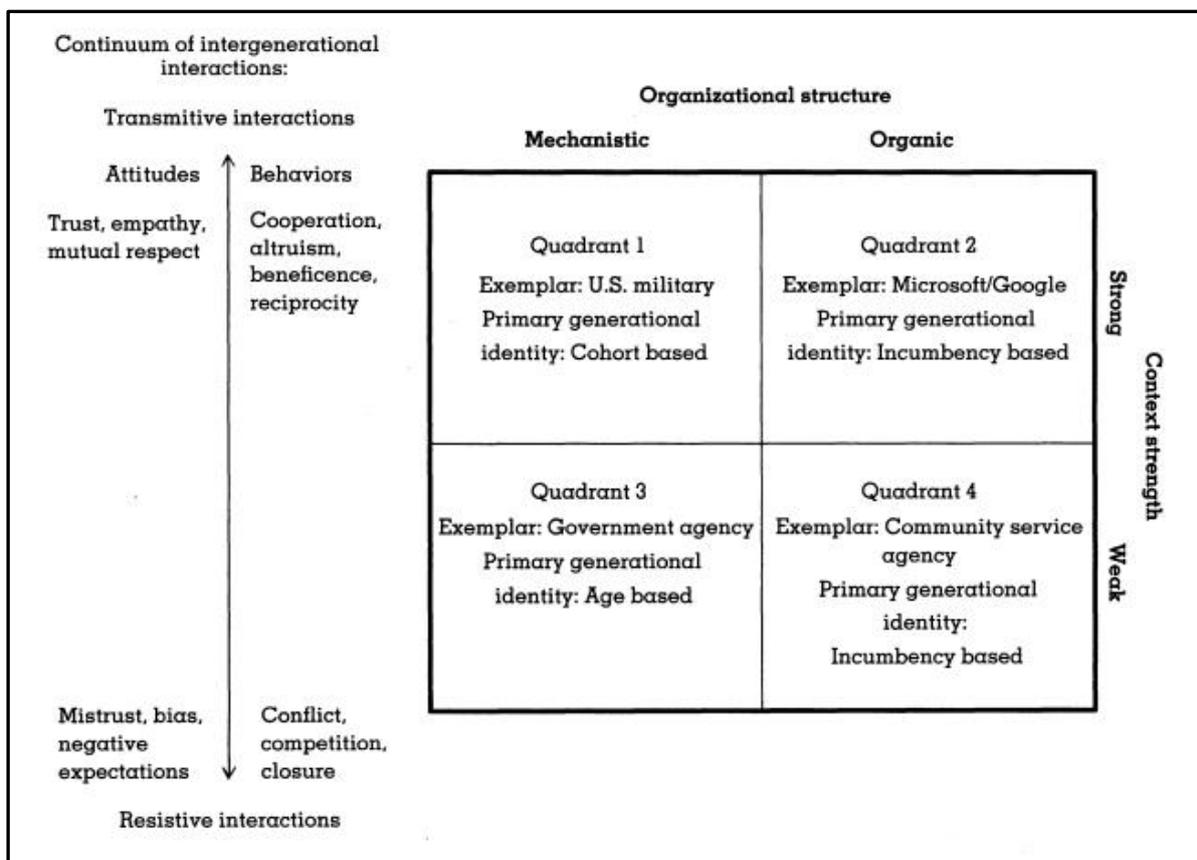
Source: Joshi et al. (2010, p. 402)

In conceptualising generations in organisations, Joshi et al. (2010) draw on several disciplines based on existing literature. These disciplines are sociology, social anthropology and family sociology, management, and political sociology. Table 4.1 provides an explanation of these approaches.

Table 4.1

Approaches that inform the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations

Approach	Conceptualisation of generations
Sociology	This perspective centres on the impact of historical events on the formation of personal memories during early adulthood. It suggests that different generations can be seen as reflections of specific historical occurrences, such as the inaugural democratic elections in South Africa.
Social anthropology and family sociology	Posits generations in relation to kinship-based groups. This approach considers intrafamilial relationships between children, parents, and grandparents as being central to the intergenerational transfer of resources and values. These descent-based roles (i.e., parents, children and grandparents) are viewed as generations.
Management	Related to descent-based groups, this approach is focused on resource exchanges between present, past, and future incumbency-based.
Political sociology	Defines a generational group as a collective of individuals who encounter a particular event, such as entering an organisation, within a defined timeframe.

Source: Joshi et al. (2010, p.394)

4.2.1.1 Key theoretical concepts of the framework for understanding generational identities in organisations

The multidimensional framework is based on three key dimensions, namely, generational identity, intergenerational interactions, and the organisational context, as shown in Figure 4.1.

a) Generational identity

According to Joshi et al. (2010), generational identity is defined as the individual's awareness that he or she belongs to a generational group that has some emotional value of importance to him or her. There are three key aspects to the framework for understanding generational identities in organisations. Firstly, the aspect of cohort-based identity, which is defined as membership in a collective that has undergone an experience at the same time, for example starting work at an organisation (Urick, 2012). Secondly, the aspect of age-based identity. This is defined as membership of

an age group that shares collective memories developed during the formative years. Lastly, incumbency-based identity. This is when an individual defines their identity based on the attitudes, skills, experience and knowledge gained because of being in a certain position for a period of time, for example the third CEO of a company being referred to as the "third generation" (Urick, 2012). Table 4.2 provides a summary of the three key aspects of the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations.

Table 4.2

Summary of the three key aspects of the framework for understanding generational identities in organisations

Facets of generational identity	Theoretical background	Definition	Relational processes between generations
Cohort-based identity	Political sociology/ organisational demography	Derived from belonging to a cohort that shares the experience of joining an organisation during a specific time period.	Based on different employment outcomes, organisational socialisation experiences (senior cohort vs junior cohort)
Age-based identity	Sociology/ gerontology	Derived from belonging to an age cohort that shares collective memories and experiences during their formative years.	Based on distinct work-related attitudes and values observed between older and younger age groups.
Incumbency-based identity	Family sociology/ social anthropology	Based on the temporary occupancy of a specific role.	Based on distinct yet interconnected skills, knowledge, and decision-making associated with a specific role, varying across past, present, and future incumbents.

Source: Joshi et al. (2010, p. 395).

As with previous generational theories such as those of Kertzer (1983) and Mannheim (1953), the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations

supports the notion of chronological succession; that is to say, each generation goes through a social system or role by succeeding one generation and preceding another. According to Joshi et al. (2010), the chronological location of each generation gives it access to a set of skills, knowledge, experiences, and resources. These can all be passed on to or exchanged with the next generation (Joshi et al., 2010).

Generational identity theory makes two key assumptions (Joshi et al., 2010). Firstly, that multigenerational identities coexist in organisations. However, in every situation, one of the three aspects of the generational identity may supersede the other two and this would therefore influence an employee's behaviour and attitude (Joshi et al., 2010). The second assumption is that multiple generations coexist in organisations. At some point members of different generations interact with the aim of achieving a common organisational goal. This would involve the exchange of skills, knowledge or experiences that could be unique to each generation (Joshi et al., 2010).

 b) *Intergenerational interactions*

Intergenerational relationships can have a significant impact on organisational change, turnover and culture (Joshi et al., 2011). According to Joshi et al. (2010), one defining feature of intergenerational relationships is the possibility of passing on the skills, information, experiences, and resources developed by one generation owing to its chronological order. Intergenerational contacts connected with a given generational identity can be classified as resistive or transmitive. Intergenerational interactions are also defined in terms of their attitudinal and behavioural components. Intergenerational contacts represent the ineffective transfer of knowledge, skills or resources associated with a generation at the resistive end of the continuum. Because there is no transfer of information, skills or resources connected with a generation, one generation accumulates organisational resources and power to the detriment of the next. Mistrust, negative expectations, and bias are all attitudinal components of resistive intergenerational interactions, while conflict, competitiveness, and closure in terms of knowledge, skills and resources are all behavioural components of these intergenerational interactions.

Transmitive intergenerational contacts, which involve the successful transfer of information, skills and/or resources, are also possible in specific situations. Trust,

empathy, and mutual respect between individuals from many generations are attitudinal components of transmitive intergenerational relationships. The behavioural component of transmitive relationships comprises reciprocity, cooperation, altruism and beneficence in terms of the knowledge, skills and resources that are unique to each generation.

c) *Organisational context*

According to Joshi et al. (2010), the nature of the intergenerational connections linked to a specific identity is context dependent. The authors propose that a certain generational identity is primed under the three conditions listed below. First, disparities in work-related experiences or outcomes are associated with certain aspects of generational identity in any given environment. Second, for people, this feature of generational identity is an appropriate form of comparison. Third, when people from various generations interact with one another, they rely on these distinctions, and these differences influence how they interact. The dimensions of the organisational context and its strength are dividends of the organisational context.

A structural organisational context and a normative organisational context are the main dimensions of the organisational context that are applicable across a wide range of organisations and are directly related to the three types of generational identity described in Table 4.2. According to the authors (Joshi et al., 2010), a structural organisational framework can be mechanistic or organic. Mechanistic organisations are distinguished by job specialisation, highly defined employer–employee relationships and expected behaviours and a focus on hierarchy and chain of command. Organic organisations are distinguished by overlapping roles, interdependent role relationships, employee obligations that are reliant on task demands rather than being codified or narrowly defined and decision-making authority that is delegated to lower levels. The normative organisational context is described as the degree to which organisational policies, practices, procedures, goals and expected behaviours and rewards are shared. Consensus, clarity and the perceived validity of organisational rules, procedures, goals and behaviours promote shared understanding of the normative framework. The strength of the organisational context, the second component, affects whether an organisation-based generational identity (such as cohort or incumbency) is salient, as opposed to a generational identity based

on formative events outside the company (age-based generational identity). A summary of the four prototypical organisational contexts and their influence on the primacy of a specific generational identity and integrational interactions is provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Summary of the prototypical organisational contexts and their influence on the primacy of a specific generational identity and integrational interactions

Quadrant	Generational identity	Intergenerational interactions	Organisational structure	Context strength	Example of organisation
Quadrant 1	Cohort based	Transmitive intergenerational interactions	Machanistic	Strong	The military
Quadrant 2	Incumbency based	Transmitive intergenerational interactions	Organic	Strong	Microsoft
Quadrant 3	Age based	Resistive intergenerational interactions	Machanistic	Weak normative	Government agency
Quadrant 4	Incumbency based	Resistive intergenerational interactions	Organic	Weak	Community service agency

Source: Joshi et al. (2010, p.402-407)

The Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations is not without its shortcomings. The critique of this framework is that empirical findings indicate that when people discuss generations at work, they mainly refer to the age-based generational identity and not the incumbency- or tenure-based identities as suggested by Joshi et al. (2010, 2011) model of generations in the workplace (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2017). Essentially, people speak of older and younger employees in relation to their values and not in relation to their experience or position. Therefore, Lyons and Schweitzer (2017) argue that this framework does not indicate an application of the concept of social generations to the workplace.

This study used the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations by Joshi et al. (2010) to examine the topic of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector. The framework was chosen because it has been developed more recently, unlike the popular Mannehaim's (1952) Generational Theory and Strauss and Howe's (1991) Generational Cohort Theory which are frequently used in multigenerational workforce studies (Otiji-Spizler, 2019; Sanner-Stiehr & Vandermause, 2017; Thompson, 2017). Additionally, several theories such as Mannehaim's (1952) Generational Theory, Ronald Inglehart's (1971, 1977) Theory of Intergenerational Value Change and Eyerman and Turner's (1998) Theory of Generations, which consider generations from a sociological point of view, contend that generations form spontaneously as lines of demarcation between young and old are created in response to historical events or conditions.

Although the sociological perspective provides valuable insights into the nature and dynamics of generations as a societal phenomenon, it does not explain how generational distinctions become entrenched as a kind of identity (Lyons & LeBlanc, 2019). On the other hand, theories such as Generational Cohort Theory by Strauss and Howe (1991), Norman Ryder's Generational Cohort Theory (1965) and Matilda Riley's Age Stratification Theory consider generations from a cohort perspective. This perspective on generations has been chastised for adopting arbitrary cut-off points and depending on generational typologies based on weak theory, as well as being peculiar to the US environment (Lyons & LeBlanc, 2019).

Generational identity studies therefore provide a detailed depiction of the personal and social significance of generations and question the commonly held belief that generations are homogeneous demographic categories that can be easily established purely based on age (Parry & Urwin, 2011). They also show how, within the context of employment, generations serve as a foundation for social identification and categorisation, making them a likely cause of inter-group stereotyping and conflict. For example, according to Joshi et al. (2010), a better understanding of generational identity has significant consequences for a variety of interpersonal workplace phenomena such as team processes, organisational diversity, workplace conflict and knowledge transfer.

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4.2.1.2 *Rationale for adopting the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations*

The current study adopted the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations for several reasons. Firstly, while most studies on generational differences in the workplace assume that differences between social generations should be obvious, this framework or theory is the only one that has provided a clear theoretical explanation for generations as an organisational phenomenon (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Secondly, based on empirical findings that show that when people discuss generations at work, they are mainly referring to age-based generational identity (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2017), this study applied the framework by focusing on its cohort-based identity and age-based identity aspects. Thirdly, the framework explains how, within the organisational context, generations serve as a foundation for social identification and categorisation, making them a likely cause of intergroup stereotyping and conflict (Joshi et al., 2010; Lyons & LeBlanc, 2019). Lastly, the current study is one of the few to apply the framework (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2017).

Accordingly, the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations is applicable to the current study as it provides a framework for conceptualising generations in the workplace, data collection, data analysis and the interpretation of the findings.

The second model adopted for this study is the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness. An explanation of the taxonomy and the rationale for its adoption in this study is now provided.

4.3 The Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness

Hamlin was perhaps the first to take a specific interest in the public and not-for-profit sectors when it comes to manager and leadership effectiveness (Davey, 2019). The Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness was the result of a comparative study of the findings from three studies on the criteria for managerial effectiveness conducted in three different types of public sector organisation in the United Kingdom, namely, secondary schools, Her Majesty's (HM) Customs and Excise (a department of the British Civil Service) and the National Health Service (NHS)Trust hospital (Hamlin, 2002).

This model has six positive criteria, namely effective organisational and planning/proactive management; participative and supportive leadership/proactive team leadership; empowerment and delegation; genuine concern for people/looks after the interests and development needs of staff; open and personal management approach/inclusive decision-making; communicates and consults widely/keeps people informed, which indicate the types of behaviour managers and leaders should exhibit to both their superiors and subordinates for them to be regarded as effective. On the other hand, five negative, namely shows lack of consideration or concern for staff/ineffective autocratic or dictatorial style of management; uncaring, self-serving management/undermining, depriving and intimidating behaviour; tolerance of poor performance and low standards/ignoring and avoidance, abdicating roles and responsibilities; resistant to new ideas and change/negative approach criteria describe the managerial and leader behaviours associated with least effective or ineffective leadership or management. Managers and leaders should avoid exhibiting these poor behavioural tendencies which may prevent superior leadership and managerial effectiveness (Hamlin, 2004).

Table 4.4 depicts the generic model of managerial and leadership effectiveness and provides a detailed description of the positive and negative criteria of effective and ineffective management.

Table 4.4

The Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness

Indications (Positive Criteria/Functions)	Contraindications (Negative Criteria/Functions)
Effective organisational and planning/proactive management: is well organised and well prepared for situations; thinks ahead and makes sure things are done in good time; does the necessary groundwork research and gathers all the facts; produces detailed plans and procedures; is well prepared for meetings and runs them efficiently and effectively with good agendas; makes effective use of systems and resources; sets and maintains high standards for self and others; ensures people follow procedures and expects them to be well prepared; takes initiative to resolve problems and proactively confronts difficult or sensitive issues	***Shows lack of consideration or concern for staff/ineffective autocratic or dictatorial style of management:*** shows lack of interest in or concern for staff; allocates work unfairly, placing unrealistic workloads or expectations on them; allows staff to operate with inadequate resources or denies them the resources that others in the organisation receive; is insensitive to individual needs; is unwilling to listen to staff concerns or answer their queries; ignores people problems, hoping they will go away; manages in a dictatorial and autocratic manner; forces or imposes changes on staff with insufficient or no consultation, takes action without considering the effects on staff
Participative and supportive leadership/proactive team leadership: provides active support and guidance to staff; responds immediately to requests for help; provides backing and personal support to staff confronted with particularly difficult or stressful operational situations; takes time to get to know staff; creates a climate of trust; actively listens to their concerns, worries and anxieties; gives praise when due; defends staff from unfair criticism or attack and protects their interests; provides coaching and training; supports the team through its problems and helps team members learn from their mistakes	***Uncaring, self-serving management/undermining, depriving and intimidating behaviour:*** withholds or fails to impart, supply, or notify the right people at the right time with accurate, reliable, consistent information; allocates work unfairly to self; encourages favouritism; is unfair in their dealings with people; takes all the credit for departmental achievements, omits to thank or give recognition or praise for the good work of others; excuses self from blame but blames others when things go wrong; adopts a narrow parochial, selfish attitude; offloads problem staff onto other managers; is not open, honest, forthright or up front in their communications or dealings with people; exhibits manipulative, politicking behaviour; goes behind people's backs and overrides colleagues; criticises and derogates people behind their backs; undermines staff by dismissing their efforts, labels them with their weaknesses, bawls them out in front of peers and subordinates; is domineering, dictatorial, autocratic and overbearing; engages in antagonistic, intimidating, threatening, abusive, humiliating, bullying behaviour; acts in an irrational, volatile manner
Empowerment and delegation: encourages staff to take on new responsibilities; gives them the freedom to make own decisions without close supervision; allows staff to develop and experiment with own ideas; encourages and empowers them to run their own unit or project and to work through their own problems; proactively and effectively delegates	***Tolerance of poor performance and low standards/ignoring and avoidance:*** condones ineffective or poor performance; fails or delays taking action to resolve problems of persistent underperforming staff; fails to recognise and attend to priority issues; procrastinates; turns a blind eye to problems; allows a "next week will do" attitude to prevail in the department; fails to organise self and others; fails to inform or notify the right people at the right time; forgets to let staff know of meetings until the last minute or to inform and invite all the right people; fails to follow correct or appropriate procedures; ignores policies and tries to bypass the system

Indications (Positive Criteria/Functions)	Contraindications (Negative Criteria/Functions)
Genuine concern for people/looks after the interests and development needs of staff: responds quickly and appropriately to staff problems; deals with difficult or personal issues concerning staff and handles them with sensitivity; allocates work to staff and self fairly; argues a strong case for obtaining resources in support of staff wishing to develop new ideas; fights hard for the department; promotes the importance or needs of the department; brings to the attention of top management the achievements and contributions of staff; congratulates and praises staff; recognises, nurtures and develops the latent abilities and potential of staff; initiates, promotes and supports their personal and career development; identifies the training needs of team members; personally takes the time to train, coach and mentor team members	***Abdicating roles and responsibilities***: makes self-absent at critical times when a subordinate, team member or colleague manager needs help, guidance, support, or advice; avoids responsibilities by leaving own managerial work unattended; fails to give sufficient time to paperwork and the administrative aspects of management; shows disinterest in his or her post; abdicates roles and responsibilities; delegates to staff own managerial responsibilities, overloads staff to the point of personal abdication; refuses to recognise problems or deadlines; avoids making decisions or taking necessary action
Open and personal management approach/inclusive decision-making: actively listens to the views and opinions of staff; encourages staff to become involved in planning, decision-making and problem-solving, particularly in change situations; invites staff to recommend how to best spend the departmental budget; includes team members in meetings and/or projects that normally would have involved higher grades of staff; uses a personal approach to managing; takes the time to get to know staff and develops in them a sense of trust	***Resistant to new ideas and change/negative approach:*** insists on sticking to traditional methods; takes no interest in keeping up to date with developments; exhibits defensiveness and reluctance to carry out any critical analysis of current methods; resists change and new working practices even to the point of sabotage; refuses to implement new systems
Communicates and consults widely/keeps people informed: consults and discusses change plans with staff; proactively canvasses and seeks their ideas; holds frequent meetings with staff; gathers all relevant facts and judges things on their merits; proactively disseminates within the team or unit major documents of importance; conducts special events to communicate major change initiatives to staff and keeps them informed	

Source: Hamlin (2004, pp. 204–207)

4.3.1 Rationale for adopting the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness

Hamlin's (2004) Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness was used in this study because there has been increased reliance on managerial and leadership skill, competence and effectiveness within HEIs in most countries, including Finland, France (Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Lekchiri, 2017) and South Africa (Davis et al., 2016; Phatlane, 2020), and leadership in higher education is not yet displaying the levels of readiness or ability required to respond effectively to the challenges surrounding the move towards a knowledge-based economy (Hamlin & Patel, 2017). Nonetheless, the growing managerialism in the higher education industry has placed demands on managers' behaviour. The perceived efficacy of managers' behaviours will have a substantial impact on whether their colleagues, subordinates and, in this study, multigenerational employees will offer or withhold contributions in organisations (Hamlin & Patel, 2017).

The findings of studies conducted in France, Hungary and Morocco by Hamlin and Patel (2017), Eversole et al. (2016) and Lekchiri et al. (2018), respectively, show that there are high degrees of similarity and congruence in the effective and ineffective behaviour of managers in the higher education sector. Furthermore, Hamlin et al. (2012), in their qualitative multiple cross-case comparative analysis study, found empirical evidence to show that there is little difference between the effective and ineffective behaviours required of managers across different sectors, organisations and countries. Moreover, a study by Bryman (2007) found that the 13 forms of leader behaviour that are associated with departmental effectiveness in the higher education sector were, in the main, the same as those found in the leadership literature generally, such as integrity, sense of direction and vision. This indicates that in the current study it could be anticipated that these effective and ineffective behaviours would be applicable in the setting of the South African higher education sector.

The Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness accordingly assisted the researcher in identifying whether managers are demonstrating productive or ineffective behaviours when managing a multigenerational workforce in the current study.

4.4 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF MULTIGENERATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

The Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations by Joshi et al. (2010) and the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness by Hamlin (2004) served to lay a theoretical foundation for this study. Drawing from the foregoing discussion (including the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3), this study developed a theoretical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. The framework is depicted in Figure 4.2.

The theoretical framework comprises four elements that are key for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members.

4.4.1 Multiple generational identities

There are five generational cohorts in South Africa based on the political transition stages experienced by the country from colonialism, apartheid to democracy. These generations are the pre-apartheid, apartheid, struggle, transition, and born-free generations. There have been several important events that have contributed to the development of the generational cohorts, resulting in different values and characteristics exhibited by the different cohorts (Deal et al., 2010; Mattes, 2012).

4.4.2 Organisational context

The organisational context of the higher education sector is characterised by a highly organised and hierarchical structure that emphasises highly defined employer–employee relationships and expected behaviours and job specialisations (mechanistic). Moreover, a lack of consensus on and shared understanding of organisational goals, expected behaviours, policies and practices and rewards also exists (weak context). As such, an age-based generational identity is prevalent (Joshi et al., 2010).

Figure 4.2.

A theoretical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African Higher Education sector

Multiple generational identities:
- Pre-apartheid generation
- Apartheid generation
- Struggle generation
- Transition generation
- Born-free generation

Organisational context:
- Mechanistic
- Weak normative
- Age-based generational identity

Resistive Intergenerational interactions:
- Career progression
- Communication
- Technology
- Work-life balance
- Feedback
- Work environment
- Teaching and learning

Effective management of a multigenerational workforce

Strategies for effective management of a multigenerational workforce

Effective managerial behaviours
- Active supportive management
- Delegation and empowerment
- Show care and concern for staff
- Actively address and attend to learning and development needs
- Open, personal trusting management approach
- Involve staff in planning, decision-making and problem-solving
- Communicate regularly and well with staff and keep them informed

Best practices
- Address age discrimination
- Recruitment of people 30 years and younger
- Training and Development
- Work-life balance
- Collaboration and knowledge transfer
- Succession planning
- Manage retirement expectations

HR policies
- Diversity policy
- Recruitment policy
- Training and development policy
- Work–life balance policy
- Talent management policy
- Succession planning policy
- Retirement policy

Source: Own compilation

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4.4.3 Resistive intergenerational interactions

As a result of the organisational context of the higher education sector, there are resistive intergenerational interactions faced by managers in effectively managing multigenerational academic staff members in the higher education sector. Resistive intergenerational interactions prevalent in the higher education sector include differences in career progression expectations, ways of communicating, familiarity and use of technology, work-life balance expectations, need for feedback, work environment expectations and teaching and learning expectations (Berk, 2013; Hannay & Fretwell, 2011).

4.4.4 Strategies for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the higher education sector

To minimise resistive intergenerational interactions, HEIs need to identify and implement strategies for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members. The strategies include effective managerial behaviours, best practices, and HR policies.

4.4.4.1 Effective managerial behaviours

Effective managerial behaviours comprise of the types of behaviour managers and leaders should exhibit to both their superiors and subordinates for them to be regarded as effective. These behaviours are effective organisational and planning/proactive management, empowerment and delegation, participative and supportive leadership/proactive team leadership, open and personal management approach/inclusive decision-making, genuine concern for people/looks after the interests and development needs of staff, communicates and consults widely/keeps people informed (Hamlin, 2004, pp. 204–207).

4.4.4.2 Best practices

Best practices include addressing age discrimination, recruiting people who are 30 years and younger, training and development, work-life balance, collaboration and knowledge transfer, succession planning, and managing retirement expectations (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Howell, Joad, Callahan, Servis & Bonham, 2009; Manfredi, 2008).

4.4.4.3 *HR policies*

To gain a competitive advantage, organisations develop policies that provide a break down various practices (Livitchi, Hacina & Baran, 2015). As Jones (2017) suggests, companies should consider adopting and implementing formal policies and procedures to help manage their multigenerational workforces. For the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the higher education sector, HEIs need to ensure that their HR policies such as the recruitment policy, retirement policy, training and development policy, succession planning policy and work-life balance policy, address the unique needs and expectations of the different generations (Howell et al., 2009; Manfredi, 2008; Tukere, 2010).

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter the theories that underpin this study, namely, the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations by Joshi et al (2010) and the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness by Hamlin (2004), were discussed. In addition, the rationale for adopting these theories in the study was provided. The chapter also presented the theoretical framework developed for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.

The following chapter (Chapter 5) explains the research methodology, aspects of trustworthiness and the ethical considerations adhered to.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodological framework that was adopted in this study. Accordingly, the chapter includes a discussion of the research paradigms, research approaches, research designs and research methods that were available to the researcher as well as a justification for the choices made in this regard. Additionally, the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this study are discussed as well as the ethical principles complied with. The chapter ends with a summary.

5.2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING THIS STUDY

Methodology is the general term used to describe the strategy, approaches, methods and procedures used in a well-planned investigation to discover something (Crotty, 1989; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The research question guides the researcher on the appropriate methodological decisions to take (Polit & Hungler, 2013). The current study subsequently adapted a methodological framework formulated by Ngulube (2019). Figure 5.1 below sketches the various elements of the framework and illustrates the hierarchical connections and relationships between the different elements. The relevant elements applicable to this study are encircled. However, some methodological elements are not included in the adopted framework and, therefore, the researcher provides additional sections in the discussion to address these.

Figure 5.1

Methodological framework underpinning this study
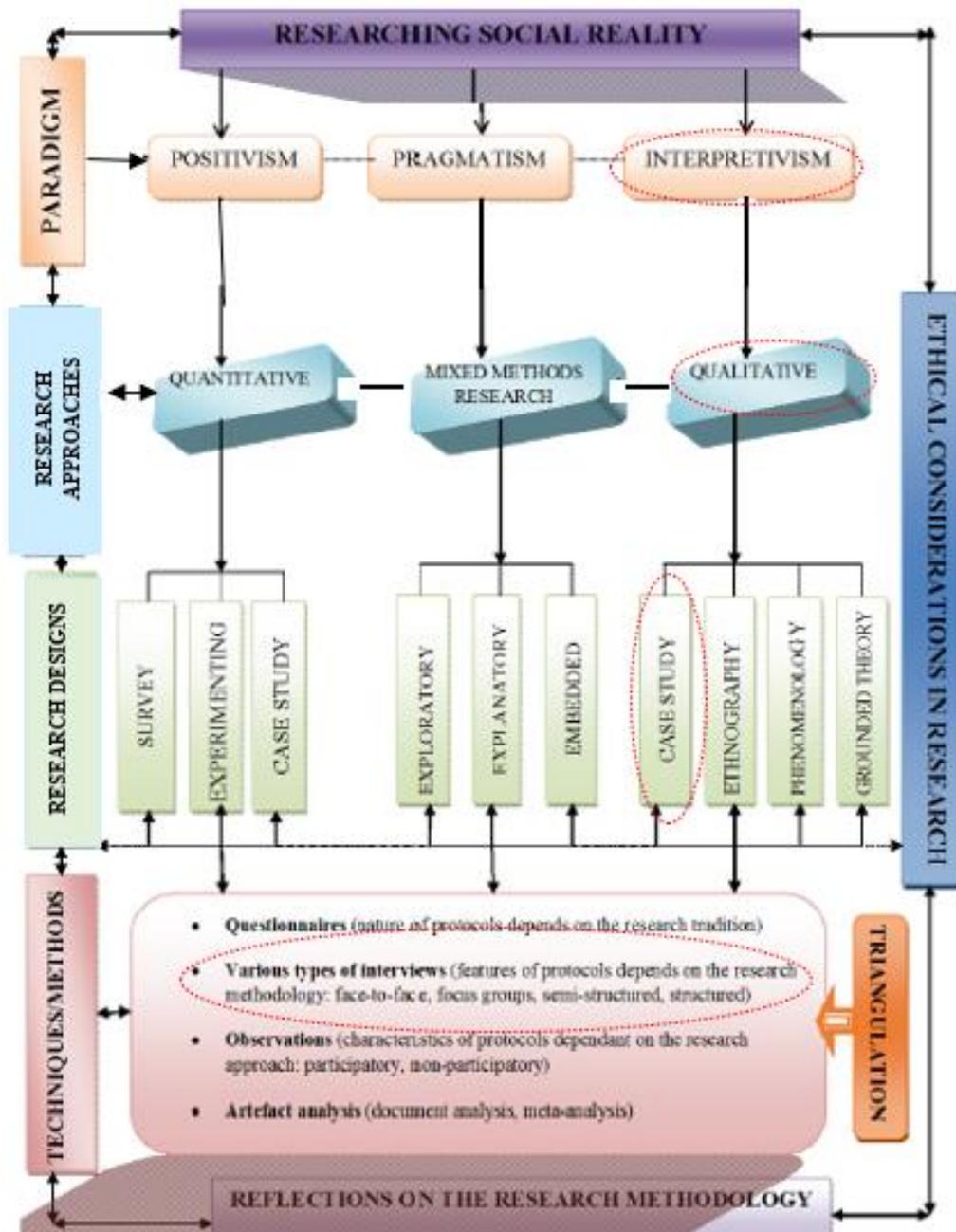
Source: Adapted from Ngulube (2015, p. 128)

5.2.1 Paradigm

According to Ngulube (2019), paradigms may be seen as analytical lenses that are rooted in the methodological foundations of the research system and provide social scientists with a viewpoint that allows them to better analyse social phenomena. The philosophical assumptions about the nature of knowledge, or the nature and existence of social reality (ontology) and what constitute that knowledge and ways of knowing

(epistemology) are the paradigmatic base of research in a subject field (Ngulube, 2019). Paradigms are used to describe different research activities. Three major research paradigms have been established: positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Ngulube, 2019). All three paradigms are underpinned by ontologies and epistemologies (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

5.2.1.1 Positivism

The positivist paradigm is founded on the philosophical ideas of the French Philosopher Auguste Comte (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Comte contended that scrutiny and reason are the best ways to understand human behaviour, thus true knowledge is founded on sensory experience and can be acquired through observation and experimentation (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Positivism supports a realist ontology because it assumes that reality is objective and that universal truths about reality can be known. Regarding epistemologies, the knowledge generated by positivist researchers is objective knowledge (Ngulube, 2019), meaning that any research phenomenon or circumstance has a single objective reality, irrespective of the researcher's viewpoint or belief (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

Research conducted within the framework of this paradigm relies on deductive reasoning, where hypotheses are formulated, tested, and supported by operational definitions, mathematical equations, calculations, extrapolations, and expressions to draw conclusions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The assumption of generalizability suggests that findings from a research project conducted within the positivist paradigm, in one particular context, can be applied to other situations through inductive reasoning. This implies that positivist researchers should be able to observe phenomena in their study and make generalisations about their expected occurrence in different parts of the world. Therefore, the positivist paradigm promotes the use of quantitative research methods as a foundation for precise description of parameters and coefficients in collected, analysed, and interpreted data to understand relationships inherent in the data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

5.2.1.2 Interpretivism

The central endeavour of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Interpretivism supports a

constructivist ontology because it argues that social fact is subjectively socially constructed and co-constructed and opposes the assumption that truth is special and can be objectively evaluated independently of the investigator (Ngulube, 2019; Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Knowledge generated by interpretivist researchers is subjective and supports the idea of multiple, coexisting definitions (Ngulube, 2019; Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Emphasis is placed on understanding the individual and their interpretation of the world around them. Hence, the key tenet of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed. The researcher utilises data gathered through interviews, discourses, text messages and reflective sessions, with the researcher acting as a participant observer (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

5.2.1.3 Pragmatism

This paradigm arose among philosophers who argued that it was not possible to access the "truth" about the real world solely by virtue of a single scientific method as advocated by the positivist paradigm, nor was it possible to determine social reality as constructed under the interpretivist paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This gave rise to a paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods as a pragmatic way to understand human behaviour – hence the pragmatic paradigm. Pragmatism advocates a non-singular reality ontology, meaning there is no single reality and all individuals have their own and unique interpretations of reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). However, they generate knowledge by considering what works to answer the research questions rather than choosing a paradigm (Brierley, 2017; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). The idea that positivism and interpretivism are mutually exclusive and centre on what works as the truth concerning the research questions of a study, is rejected by pragmatism. Therefore, both positivist and interpretivist paradigms are used by pragmatists (Feilzer, 2010; Ngulube, 2019; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

In this study, an interpretivist paradigm was adopted because it was suitable for achieving the study's primary aim, which was to develop an integrated model for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. Accordingly, the researcher sought multiple, subjective perspectives from different participants (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Through the interactions with the participants, the researcher gained in-depth and insightful information from the participants instead of numbers in the form of statistics (Thanh &

Thanh, 2015). Furthermore, Foster (2013) and Urick (2012) advise that the study of generations in the workplace can benefit from the application of non-positivist ontological paradigms.

The choice of a research approach is informed by the paradigm. The research approaches available to the researcher are now discussed.

5.2.2 Research approach

According to Creswell (2014), research approaches are defined as the research procedures which include both the broad assumptions and the detailed methods for data collection, data analysis and interpretation. Three research approaches are distinguished, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. These research approaches are briefly outlined next.

5.2.2.1 Quantitative research approach

A quantitative research approach deals with quantifying and analysing variables to obtain results. It involves measurement and assumes that the phenomena under study can be measured. It sets out to analyse data for trends and relationships and to verify the measurements made, and is essentially deductive in nature (Watson, 2015). This approach is linked to the positivist paradigm. According to Watson (2015) quantitative research is informed by the following key features:

- To discover general principles and consistent patterns,
- To investigate phenomena that are observable in a direct manner,
- To validate theories or collect factual evidence that can be used to establish laws,
- To maintain objectivity and minimize the influence of the researcher,
- To utilise explicit and standardized procedures for data collection to ensure consistency.

This research approach has some advantages and disadvantages. These are detailed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Advantages and disadvantages of a quantitative research approach

Advantages	Disadvantages
The use of statistical data saves time and resources.	Researcher detachment makes it difficult to study the phenomena in depth within their natural settings.
The use of scientific methods for data collection and analysis make generalisation possible.	In a quantitative research approach, the participants have no room to contribute to the study because the researcher is in the "driver's seat".
Replicability is another benefit derivable from the use of this research approach. Since the research approach basically relies on hypothesis testing, the researcher need not to do intelligent guesswork, rather he or she would follow clear guidelines and objectives.	As a result of using structured predetermined variables and hypotheses, the approach does not require or encourage imaginative, critical and creative thinking.
Gives room for the use of control and study groups.	
Allows for "researcher detachment" by reducing researcher bias during data collection and data analysis because the researcher is not in direct contact with the participants.	

Source: Daniel (2016, p. 92-93)

5.2.2.2 Qualitative research approach

A qualitative research approach is concerned with exploring how people understand their world. The use of a qualitative methodology and methods allows researchers to access and explore, in depth, the respondents' perspectives and constructions (Hoskins, 2020). It is possible for researchers to gain detailed insight into their participants' worlds through their eyes, giving their meanings and understandings of events. This approach is linked to the interpretivist paradigm. According to Hoskins (2020) qualitative research tends to focus on examining the following areas:

- Examining phenomena instead of conducting hypothesis testing.
- Working with relatively unstructured data instead of structured data.
- Engaging in detailed exploration of smaller data sets.
- Analysing data through explicit and thorough interpretation of the ideas and social behaviour of human participants.

A qualitative approach has some advantages and disadvantages as detailed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative research approach

Advantages	Disadvantages
The reliance on the collection of non-numerical primary data such as words and pictures by the researcher, who him- of herself serves as an instrument, makes qualitative research well-suited for providing factual and descriptive information.	In view of this, instead of generalising researchers limit their findings to the particular group of people being studied.
The emergence of theory from data allows the researcher to construct and reconstruct theories where necessary, based on the data they generate, instead of testing data generated elsewhere by other researchers.	Since the approach is characterised by feelings and personal reports, it is believed that the approach cannot give reliable and consistent data when compared to using quantifiable figures.
A qualitative research approach views human thought and behaviour within a social context and covers a wide range of phenomena to understand and appreciate them thoroughly.	Non-use of numbers by qualitative researchers makes it difficult or even impossible to simplify findings and observations.
The close relationships that exist between the researcher and the participants in this approach make it easy for the participant to contribute to shaping the research.	

Source: Daniel (2016, p. 94-95)

5.2.2.3 Mixed methods research approach

The mixed methods research (MMR) approach combines quantitative and qualitative methods to enable the exploration of more complex aspects of and relations in the human and social world. Some of these aspects and relationships may be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively (Grafton et al., 2011). This approach goes beyond the limits of triangulation which employs several research techniques in the same study. Instead, it combines the strengths of the qualitative and quantitative research approaches to produce comprehensive and broad-based research (Romm & Ngulube, 2015). This approach is linked to the pragmatic paradigm. The MMR approach has some advantages and disadvantages as detailed in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Advantages and disadvantages of the mixed methods research approach

Advantages	Disadvantages
Mixed methods add value by increasing the validity of the findings, informing the collection of the second data source and assisting with knowledge creation.	MMR is costly and time-consuming and requires specialist expertise in a range of methods.
A mixed methods approach allows for a deeper, broader understanding of the phenomenon than studies that do not utilise both a quantitative and qualitative approach.	
The integration component gives readers more confidence in the results and the conclusions they draw from the study.	

Source: McKim (2017, p. 203); Kroll and Morris (2009, p. 14-15)

Since the current study is aligned to the interpretive paradigm, it was carried out using a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach was appropriate for this study because the adaptable style of qualitative methodology caters for the participants' varying experiences, resulting in the collection of rich data (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). The focus of qualitative research outlined by Hoskins (2020) is applicable in this study as it sought to develop an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. Rather than testing hypotheses, data collected for the present study was unstructured. Furthermore, a small amount of data from a few cases (universities and universities of technology) was explored in-depth, and the data analysis included verbatim quotes and detailed interpretation of the information and ideas shared by the participants.

The choice of a research design is determined by the research approach. The research designs available to the researcher are now discussed.

5.2.3 Research design

Research designs are procedures used to in planning and conducting a study (Creswell, 2013; Ngulube, 2019). The different research approaches discussed above

use different research designs. A quantitative research approach makes use of research designs such as surveys, experiments, and quantitative case studies, while a qualitative research approach uses designs such as phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory and qualitative case study. By contrast, an MMR approach uses an exploratory, explanatory, embedded or convergent research design depending on whether data collection begins by using a quantitative or a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2013; Ngulube, 2015).

As a qualitative research approach was chosen for this study, Table 5.4 provides an explanation of the qualitative research designs that were considered and their usefulness, as well as the reasons they were either excluded or chosen for this study.

Table 5.4

Qualitative research designs considered for this study

Qualitative research approaches	Use	Reasons for excluding or choosing
Phenomenological design	Useful in maximising the depth of information collected (Burns et al., 2018)	A phenomenological design was not appropriate because the researcher wanted to investigate beyond participants' lived experiences to describe their participants.
Ethnographic design	Useful when research is aimed at studying cultural groups in their natural context (Cruz & Higginbottom, 2013)	This study is not focused on studying cultural groups but on developing an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. Therefore, an ethnographic approach was not chosen.
Grounded theory design	Used for developing theories from collected data (Maz, 2013)	Grounded theory was not deemed suitable for this research because the purpose was not to develop a theory.
Case study design	Used in providing an in-depth understanding of a case or cases; exploring a phenomenon in context using one or more data collection methods; and describing a case or cases in depth	A case study design was chosen for this study because the data were collected from a few cases (universities) and multiple data collection methods were used.

Source: Own compilation

Of the qualitative research designs indicated in Table 5.4, the case study design was chosen for this study. The next section provides a detailed discussion of the research design chosen and the rationale for this choice.

5.2.3.1 *Case study design*

According to Starman (2013), a case study is the common term for the exploration of an individual, a group or a phenomenon. According to Yin (2009), a case study involves investigating a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, especially when there are no clear boundaries between phenomenon and context. Creswell (2013) defines a case study research design as a qualitative method that involves the investigation of a specific, real-life system or multiple systems within a defined timeframe. This approach entails collecting in-depth and comprehensive data from various sources, such as interviews, observations, documents, audio-visual materials, and reports. The researcher aims to provide a detailed description of the case and identify key themes within it. The unit of analysis in a case study design can be a single case, referred to as a within-site study, or multiple cases, known as a multisite study. The use of a case study design enables the researcher to explore meaning and understanding, place emphasise on the researcher as the main instrument of data collection and analysis, and end with in-depth and rich descriptions of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Multiple sources of evidence are used in a case study design to guide the data collection and analysis processes (Yin, 2014).

According to Lapan and Armfield (2009), the characteristics of a case study research design include:

- the triangulation of data sources and data collection methods,
- providing the context of a case to give the reader certain details,
- making use of summaries to review and combine results,
- using purposeful sampling to get information-rich sources to be able to answer the research questions.

According to Yin (2014), there are three types of case study research design, namely, descriptive, exploratory and explanatory designs. In a descriptive case study research design, a researcher aims to describe the occurring themes in the specific research

context (Starman, 2013; Yin, 2014). An exploratory case study research design is appropriate when a researcher is focused on exploring a theme with the aim of developing a foundation for future research (Yin, 2014). An explanatory case study research design is applicable for researchers who want to explain causality between events with the aim of identifying how events occur and which causes may yield certain outcomes (Yin, 2014). Research studies can also use a single case study design or a multiple case study design. A single case study design is planned around one case, but a multiple case study design considers several cases. Although both single case study research design and multiple case study research design can result in fruitful case studies, Yin (2009) recommends that when an opportunity allows, researchers should opt for a multiple case study research design over a single case study research design.

Case study research design is not without criticism. The most popular opposition to this design is that it is not sufficiently robust (Woodside, 2010). This critique often concerns not the process as such, but the way in which case studies are presented, that is, the author does not provide a transparent audit trail describing her or his analysis and explaining the results (Woodside, 2010). A single case study research design is often viewed with suspicion by some researchers on the basis that a single case study cannot provide enough proof to generalise (Woodside, 2010).

Based on the primary aim of this study, which was to develop an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector, an exploratory, descriptive multiple case study research design was deemed most appropriate. This design provided an opportunity to obtain in-depth insight into the participants' actual experiences and views (Creswell, 2013) on the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. In addition, it sought to address the gap in knowledge on the effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector. According to Kilpatrick et al., (2012), a descriptive case study uses a reference theory or model that directs data collection and case description. In addition to illuminating the meaning of the explored problem, a descriptive, multiple-case study provides data for the development of patterns and themes (Goodwin, 2014).

The next section discusses the methods used in this study.

5.2.4 Research methods

According to Savin-Baden and Howell-Major (2013), research methods are the systematic ways in which data are collected and analysed. In this section, the relevant methods implemented in the research are discussed, aligning them with the previous sections. The section begins by providing the context of this study, the entrée and establishing the researcher's roles, sampling, data collection methods, recording of data, data analysis, strategies employed to ensure quality data, as well as the style used to report the study findings.

5.2.4.1 Research setting

The features of the research setting were not applicable in this study because it did not involve field research. The participants participated in online interviews in their natural setting, whether at home or at work.

5.2.4.2 Entrée and establishing the researcher's roles

South African universities and universities of technology were the target organisations for this research, as the researcher believed that suitable participants were located there who could provide valuable and relevant information to answer the research questions. Once ethical clearance was received from the University of South Africa's College of Economic and Management Science Research Ethics Review Committee and the respective HEIs, the researcher liaised with the gatekeepers identified by the different institutions.

The gatekeepers were provided with a flyer (Appendix A) which acted as a call for participation. It detailed some information from participant information sheet, namely the purpose of the study, the inclusion criteria, what their involvement would entail, and the researcher's contact details. Additionally, the ethical clearance certificates, the full participant information sheet and the consent form (Appendix B) were provided. On the occasions when a gatekeeper was not required, the researcher communicated the call for participation to the academic line managers via email. The contact details of these individuals were publicly available on the institutions' websites. Interested

participants responded to the email and their availability was discussed and the interviews were secured and entered in their diaries.

5.2.4.3 Population and sampling

For the researcher to be able to collect data, she need to identify an accessible population. Data may be collected from a sample of the population or the whole population based on the size of the population, the methodology and the aim of the study (Ngulube, 2019). In qualitative research sampling is defined as the process of selecting specific sources from which to collect data for the purposes of the investigation (Gentles et al., 2015). The principle behind sampling is that a researcher can draw conclusions about the entire population by selecting only certain elements of that population (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). Each individual member is referred to as a population element (Zikmund & Babin, 2010). According to Blumberg et al. (2014) sampling provides the following benefits:

- Reduced costs,
- Availability of population elements,
- Better speed of data collection,
- Better accuracy of results.

The six-step sampling framework suggested by Iacobucci and Churchill (2010, p. 283) was adopted for this study as shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2

Six-step procedure for drawing a sample
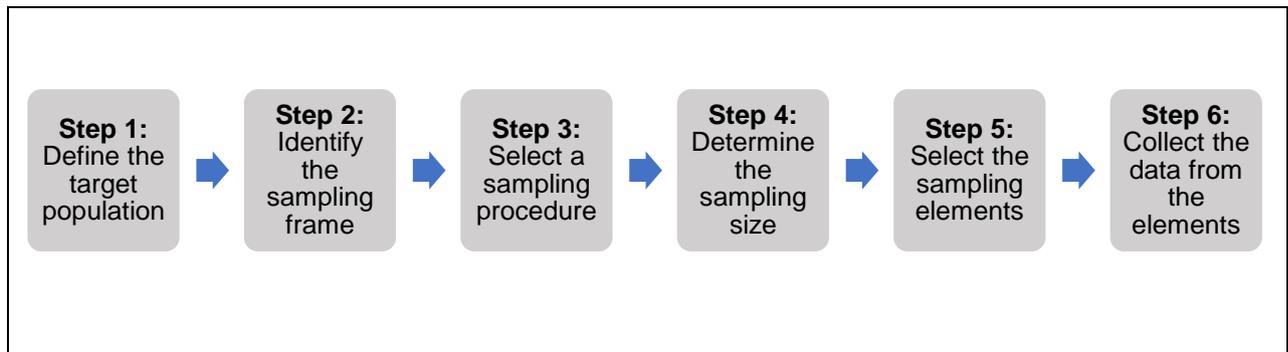
Source: Iacobucci and Churchill (2010, p. 283)

Step 1: Define the target populations

Firstly, the researcher determines what the target population will consist of such as individuals, families, businesses, or any other unit that the researcher wishes to select (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010). In this study, the population was clearly identifiable:

- Public universities and universities of technology,
- Heads of academic departments from the different HEIs in South Africa.

Step 2: Identifying the sampling frame

The sample frame is the list of all elements from which the actual sample will be drawn (Roberts et al., 2008). In this study, groups were identified, and their sizes determined using data from the universities' annual reports and websites. These comprised heads of academic departments for the targeted universities and universities of technology, giving approximately 195 members based on information gathered from HEI websites.

Step 3: Selecting a sampling procedure

According to Churchill et al. (2010), when designing the sample the researcher must stipulate the sampling frame, which is a list of the population elements from which the sample will be drawn. Furthermore, the researcher must specify the type of sampling plan to be used and as well as the size of the sample. Firstly, there are probability sampling techniques in which all participants in the target population have an equal opportunity of being selected for the sample. These include simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling and complex or multi-stage sampling. Secondly, there are non-probability sampling techniques, in

which a non-systematic process is used to select certain participants from the target population. This includes convenience sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). In this type of sampling, participants do not have an equal chance of being chosen from the target population (Elfil & Negida, 2017).

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), pure qualitative research usually applies non-probability sampling techniques while quantitative studies use probability sampling techniques. However, these authors state that no research tradition can claim a specific technique and that a variety or mix of sampling techniques can be used to answer the research question. In mixed methods research, sampling schemes must be chosen for both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

As this study used a qualitative approach, a purposive sampling technique was deemed appropriate because it allowed the researcher to select cases and participants who were information-rich concerning on the topic under investigation (Leedy & Ormond, 2015). Furthermore, purposive sampling would allow the researcher to present different perspectives on the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). However, purposive sampling can be subject to researcher bias, but only if the subjective judgements are vague, meaning the judgements are not based on clear criteria. Additionally, it is difficult to defend the representativeness of the sample (Sharma, 2017). To address these challenges, inclusion and exclusion criteria for participant selection were set for this study. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are discussed in step 5.

In addition to the advantages of purposive sampling mentioned, this technique was also chosen instead of the other sampling methods for the reasons described in Table 5.5.

Step 4 Determining the sample size
According to Iacobucci and Churchill (2010), sample sizes may either be fixed (meaning they are determined in advance of the study) or sequential (meaning more data may be collected if the initially collected data do not answer the research

question). This study aimed to work with a fixed sample of 15 participants. This was based on research findings by Guest et al. (2020) and Hennink and Kaiser (2022), showing that qualitative studies can reach saturation within a narrow range of nine to 17 interviews.

Table 5.5

Sampling techniques not chosen for this study

Sampling technique	Rationale for its exclusion
Types of non-probability sampling technique	
Quota sampling	This is a non-probability technique, which could not be used because the characteristics of the target population such as the demographic profile were not known and would have taken time to investigate. This would have been made more difficult by the infinite nature of the target population.
Judgement sampling	This is a non-probability technique, which was not chosen as it was believed to have greater potential for subjectivity and selection bias on the part of the researcher.
Types of probability sampling technique	
Simple random sampling and systematic sampling	These are both examples of probability sampling techniques, which were not chosen because they are appropriate for quantitative studies and not qualitative studies.
Stratified and cluster sampling	These are both probability techniques, which were not selected because they are appropriate for quantitative studies and not qualitative studies.

Source: Cant et al. (2008, p. 90-92)

Step 5 Selecting the sample elements

The sample elements refer to the properties of the sample (Iacobucci & Churchill, 2010). For this study, the inclusion criteria were set as follows:

- Three or more years of management experience in an academic department,
- Currently serving as an academic manager of an academic department,
- Permanent employee,
- Aged between 30 and 65,

- Managing a department with a multigenerational staff complement.

Between June 2021 and May 2022, the researcher sent out 221 emails to the identified participants. Two follow-ups by email were sent to each participant. The study ultimately included 16 participants from nine institutions as shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6

Information on the cases sampled in this study

Universities	Number of institutions invited to participate in the study	Number of institutions that participated in the study	Number of participants in the study
Traditional universities (Case A)	11	3	4
Universities of technology (Case B)	6	4	7
Comprehensive universities (Case C)	9	2	5
Total	**26**	**9**	**16**

The data collection process was guided by data saturation (the point where no new ideas or insights were presented) (Fusch & Ness, 2019). Data saturation was reached at the 16th interview. Therefore, it was no longer necessary for the researcher to continue collecting data since the redundancy point had been reached.

5.2.5 Data collection

Data collection refers to the way data regarding the phenomenon being studied will be collected (Polit & Hungler, 2013). This study used primary data which were collected through interviews.

5.2.5.1 Interviews

According to Mason (2002), the most common qualitative data collection technique is an interview. An interview is defined as a dialogue, the goal of which is to collect descriptions of the world of the research participant with regard to the phenomenon being studied (Alshenqeeti, 2014). It is a data collection technique that uses open-

ended questions (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Qualitative researchers have at their disposal three different types of interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews involve a predetermined set of questions asked in a specific order, which typically result in a limited range of responses. On the other hand, unstructured interviews involve a more casual and informal conversation between the researcher and the participants. Lastly, semi-structured interviews incorporate a prepared list of questions while still allowing the researcher some flexibility in interpreting the participants' responses. This type of interview enables researchers to ask open-ended questions that do not have predetermined answers. Scholars such as Mason (2002) and Parker (2014) have discussed the utility and characteristics of semi-structured interviews in qualitative research.

Baškarada (2014) points to some of the challenges of using interviews for data collection. The author argues that interviews can increase the risk of obtaining inadequate research results. According to Baškarada (2014), researchers need to be aware of the following disadvantages of semi-structured interviews:

- The potential for asking confusing or complex questions.
- The assumption that participants' responses will align with those of others.
- The possibility of selectively focusing on interviewees' easily comprehensible responses.
- The risk of misinterpreting or misunderstanding interview questions and responses.
- The potential for researchers to introduce biased comments that could influence participant responses.

Despite these risks, semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate for this study because they offer valuable insights and their flexible and versatile nature allows for a two-way conversation between the participant and the researcher and allows the researcher to probe participants for more information or clarity to comprehend better the interviewees' views and perspectives (Baškarada, 2014; Phondej et al., 2011; Yin, 2009). Instead of providing a predetermined list of responses, this type of interview allows participants to react on their own terms. Furthermore, they make it possible for

the researcher to gather comprehensive data that can aid in the creation of thoughts and themes (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

According to Yu et al. (2014), semi-structured interviews are not without risk because participants may not provide honest responses which reduces the reliability of the research findings. Furthermore, if participants do no provide honest information the researcher may run the risk of not collecting enough data to form themes and patterns. A researcher can mitigate these risks by drawing on psychological techniques to explore, seek and understand human behaviour (Bailey, 2014).

a) Interview procedure

An interview guide with predetermined questions based on the research questions was used. The interview guide was intended to achieve optimum use of the interview time. It also assisted in investigating the many participants in a comprehensive and systematic manner and to keep the interview focused on the desired line of investigation (Adams, 2015; Jamshed, 2014). The following standard approach was used for each interview:

- Owing to the participants' time constraints, customary pleasantries were limited.

- After greeting the participants and introducing herself, the researcher (i) explained the purpose of the interview, (ii) assured participants of anonymity and confidentiality, (iii) informed them that they could opt out at any point during the interview, and (iv) informed them of the ethical clearance provided (Appendix A).

- Verbal consent to participate in the study and permission to record the conversation for transcription was requested from the participants. Participants were advised that notes would also be taken during the interview. These served as back-up in the event of recording equipment failure (Ponelis, 2015).

- The interview began by asking participants questions relating to the inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection. These sought to confirm the suitability of the participant for the study. Then the predetermined interview questions were asked.

- The interview ended with the participants being asked if they wished to add anything so that issues that had not been considered by the researcher could emerge (Laxton, 2004).

The participants chose a date and time suitable to them for the interview. The interviews took between 55 and 64 minutes which allowed time for probing while limiting any intrusion on the participant's time. The interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) which provides various collaboration tools, including chat, meetings, calls and files, which may be accessed from any location because it is a cloud-based communication platform (Ilag & Sabale, 2022). The MS Teams recording function was used to record all the interviews. None of the participants received any incentive for their participation. As part of the research process, the researcher also kept a diary to record her ideas, field notes and reflections.

5.2.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of pulling information from different sources of evidence, such as interviews and documents, to identify the themes that explain the central research question and to bring order and meaning to the data (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017; Polit & Beck, 2004). The data analysis stage is the most significant phase in qualitative research because it has a major influence on the findings of the research (Flick, 2014; Potestio et al., 2015). The data analysis techniques used in qualitative research are different from those used in quantitative research and the process is not a technical exercise. Rather, it is an intuitive, creative, and dynamic process of thinking, inductive reasoning, and theorising (Wong et al., 2008).

The commonly used data analysis technique in qualitative studies is thematic analysis (Lester et al., 2020; Percy et al., 2015). Thematic analysis encompasses identifying, analysing, and reporting themes and patterns in qualitative data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Percy et al., 2015). It can be used to analyse different types of data, as well as a variety of data set sizes (Lester et al., 2020). Following the four-step framework by Castleberry and Nolen (2018), thematic analysis was adopted for this study to analyse the transcribed data from interviews. Figure 5.3 illustrates the four steps of the framework. The data from the interviews were analysed thematically by the researcher and an independent, experienced qualitative researcher who acted as a co-coder.

A brief description of the steps of thematic analysis are specified below.

Step 1: Compiling

According to Castleberry and Nolen (2018), this step refers to transforming the data into a usable form. In this study, this step included collecting all the audio-recorded interview files in one location and transcribing them into text that is useable in electronic format, which in this case was Microsoft Word documents. The researcher transcribed the interviews into text to help her become familiar with the data.

Figure 5.3

The four-step thematic analysis framework used in this study
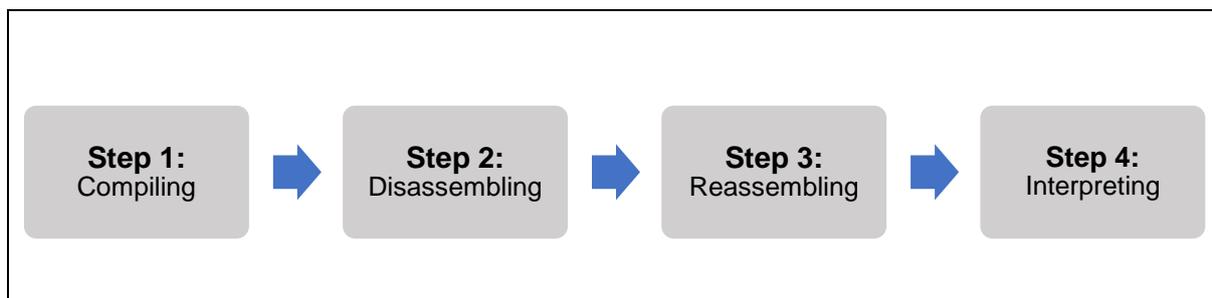
Source: own compilation

Step 2: Disassembling

Disassembling the data involves dividing the data and generating meaningful groupings (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Firstly, the transcripts were imported into Atlas.ti and allocated and labelled according to the three cases (traditional universities, comprehensive universities, and universities of technology) (referred to as "document groups" in Atlas.ti), as shown in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4

Interview transcripts in ATLAS.ti
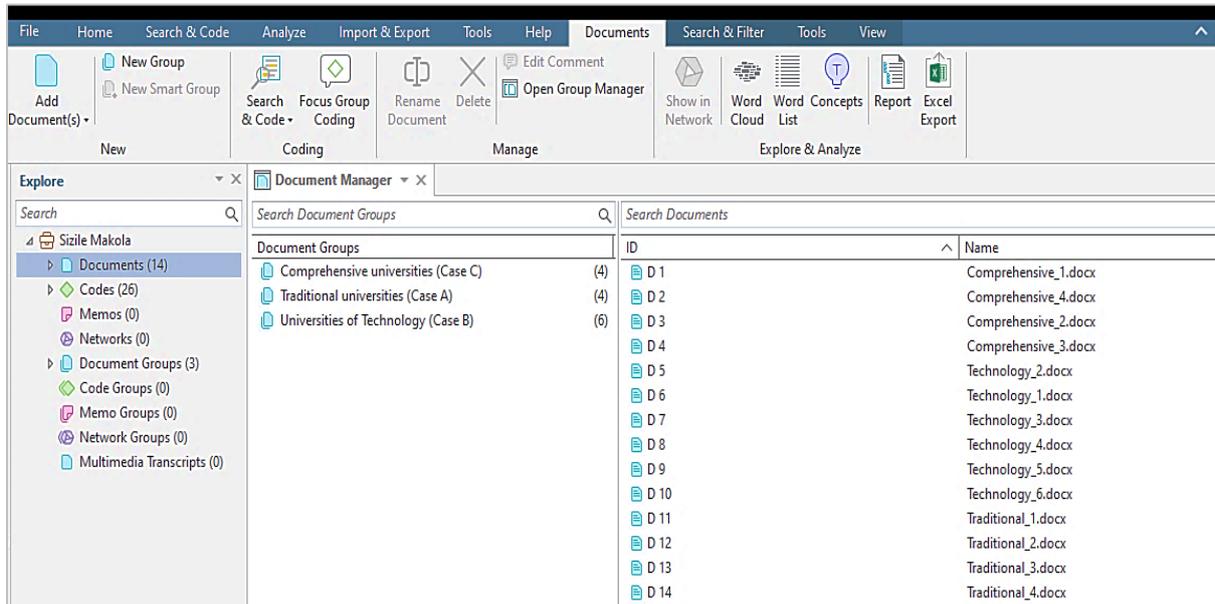
Secondly, the researcher read through the transcripts to identify recurring viewpoints and created a list of codes (i.e., word labels that describe or define and encapsulate the contents of the qualitative data). The codes were created using a combination of a deductive approach (i.e., based on themes found in the literature) and an inductive approach (i.e., new descriptors were added, and some existing ones were modified where appropriate), as shown in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5

The List of Codes in ATLAS.ti
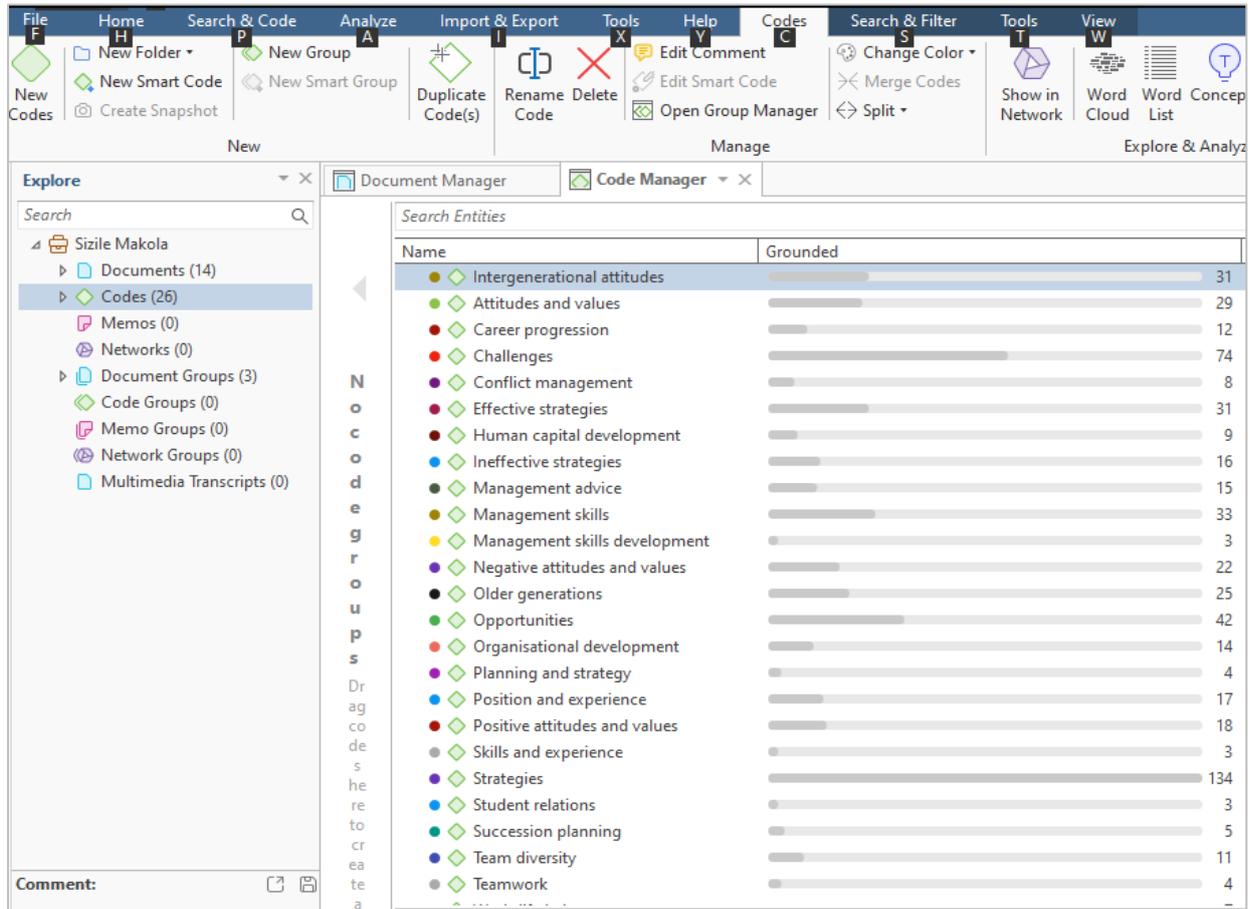
Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

Thirdly, the coding process was conducted by assigning one or more of the predefined codes to data segments in each of the transcripts based on the derived meaning of the text in question. This process is depicted in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6

The coding process in ATLAS.ti
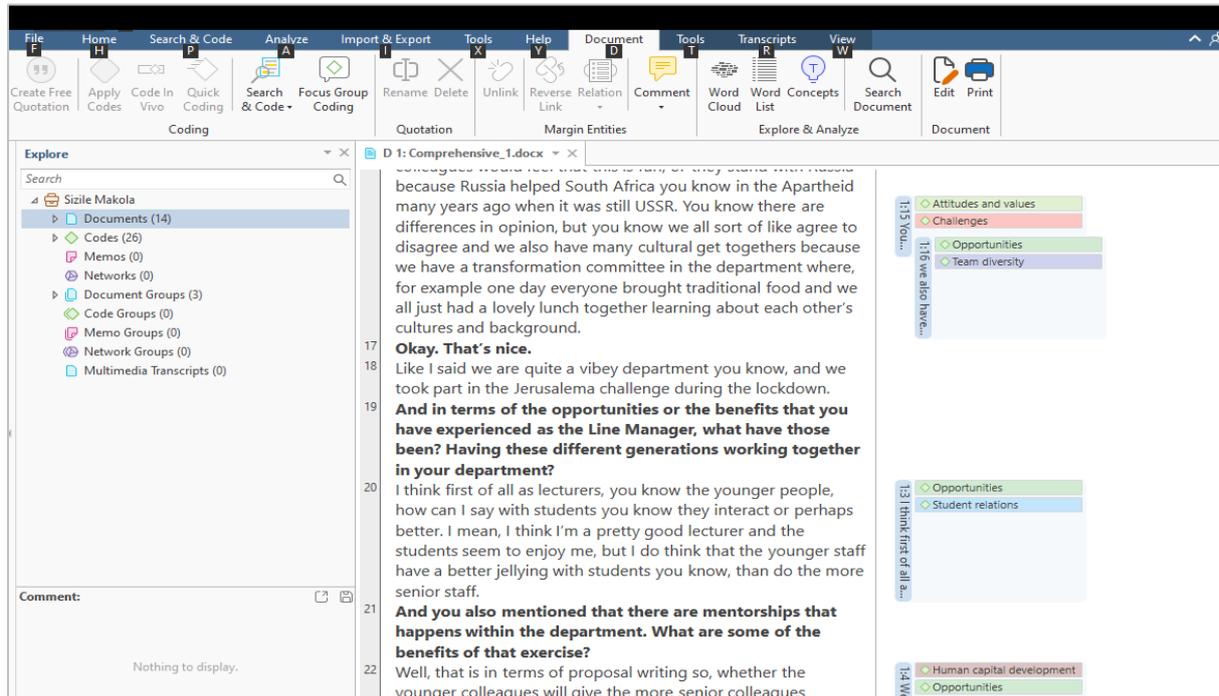
Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

Fourthly, segments of text included under specific codes were extracted and read again to identify additional codes or to modify existing ones (e.g., combining certain codes). Figure 5.7 illustrates this process.

Figure 5.7

Example of codes
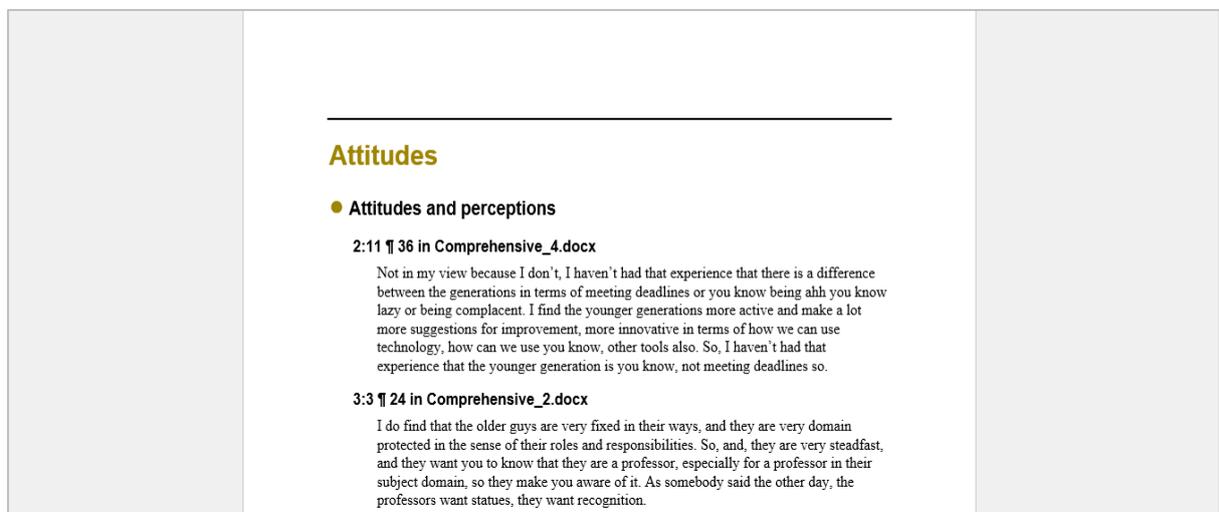
Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

Step 3: Reassembling

This step involves combining the coded data and categories in the form of themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In this study, the researcher started by running data queries to identify thematic relationships and patterns in the coded data. For example, as illustrated in Figure 5.8, "team diversity" and "organisational development" are sub-themes of the broader "opportunities" theme.

Figure 5.8

The process of forming the themes
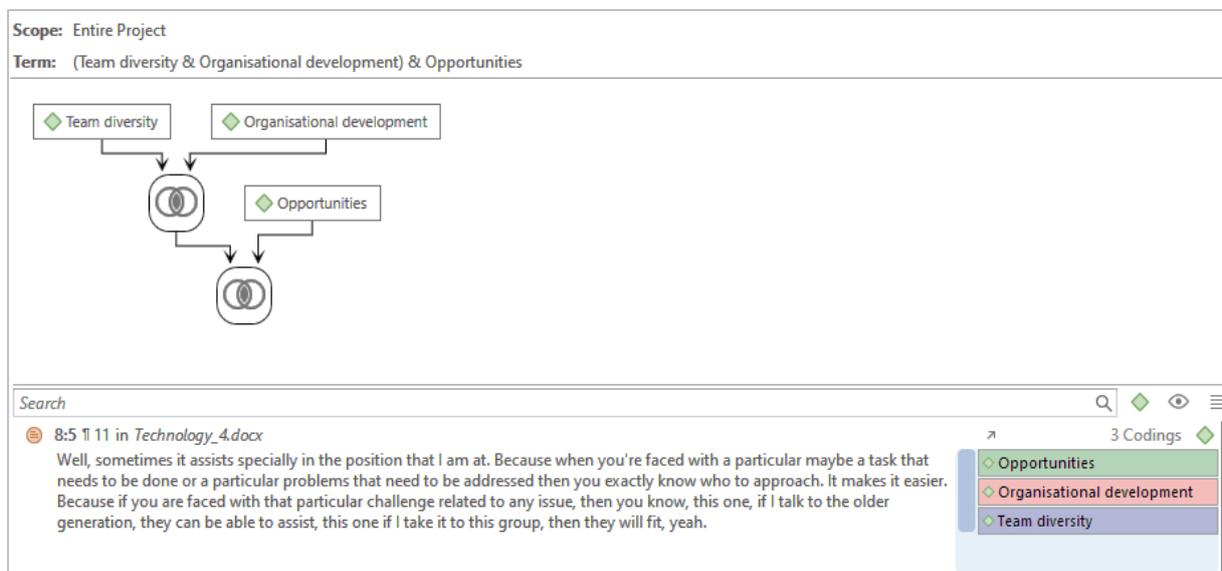
Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

Secondly, thematic coding patterns across the three types of higher education institution cases were compared, as shown in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9

Thematic coding across the cases

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

Lastly, direct quotations to be used in the narrative report were extracted, as illustrated in Figure 5.10. These are presented in Chapter 6.

Figure 5.10

Example of direct quotes for the narrative report

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

Step 4 Interpreting

In this step, the researcher draws analytical conclusions from the data analysis output (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The code co-occurrence function in ATLAS.ti was used to interpret the reported themes. The codes were used to develop code co-occurrence for the different sub-themes, which shows the normalised code count for each sub-theme. The normalised count "corrects" the bias caused by an unequal number of respondents per case and thus computes and shows what the counts would have been had the groups been equal in size (i.e., had the smaller groups been the same size as the largest group). In addition, co-occurrence frequencies help qualitative researchers uncover relationships within the data by showing which codes occur together and their frequency, thus demonstrating the importance of the combination (Friese, 2014; Guest et al., 2012).

The analytical conclusions from the data analysis output are interpreted in Chapter 6.

The quality of qualitative research is assessed through its trustworthiness. The steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of this study are discussed in the following section.

5.3   TRUSTWORTHINESS

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is based on the following elements: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Bless et al., 2013). These elements are now discussed in terms of how they were applied in this study.

5.3.1   Credibility

The credibility of a study is determined by how effectively it measures what it was designed to measure and how accurately it reflects true value (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To ensure that the data collected were credible, the researcher audited all interview transcripts. Furthermore, the study findings were submitted to the supervisor for review. Detailed comments were made on the findings by the supervisor, resulting in the elimination of any personal views inserted by the researcher.

5.3.2   Dependability

Dependability calls for the researcher to explicitly outline and adhere to a systematic research approach in his or her study report that details how the data were gathered,

recorded, and analysed. Thus, the reviewers of a study can judge its dependability based on how transparent it is about all of the aforementioned factors (Bless et al., 2013). To ensure dependability, the researcher provided a detailed account of the processes followed, from the problem formulation to the participant selection, data collection, transcription of interviews and data analysis decisions. This allowed readers to see the lengths taken to ensure that the appropriate research practices were followed (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017; Shanton, 2004).

5.3.3 Transferability

Transferability, as defined by Bless et al. (2013), refers to the degree to which the results of a study can be applicable to comparable situations, indicating the extent to which the findings can be generalized to different contexts. In the current study the researcher provided a detailed description of the methodological framework applied which included aspects such as the research paradigm, research approach, research design, research methods and data analysis framework. These detailed descriptions enable readers to draw their own conclusions and enable other researchers to replicate the study in other contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

5.3.4 Confirmability

Confirmability describes the procedures used by the researcher to show that conclusions are drawn from the data and not from their own biases (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). According to Amin et al. (2020), one evaluation criterion includes the maintaining of an audit trail so that it can be ascertained whether the interpretations, conclusions and recommendations can indeed be traced back to the original sources. In this study, the researcher kept an audit trail of the recorded and transcribed interviews, as well as presenting verbatim data in the form of quotations from the transcribed data in order to link the data to the research findings.

The study was conducted in line with the University of South Africa's ethical guidelines. As such, the ethical considerations that were adhered to are presented in the section that follows.

5.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of research ethics is to minimize potential harm to individuals participating in a study. It is the researcher's duty to ensure that the research is carried out in an ethical manner (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

5.4.1 Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance was sought from the College of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee at the University of South Africa (2020_CRERC_021 (FA)) (Appendix C) in line with the Policy on Research Ethics.

5.4.2 Autonomy

Autonomy pertains to the level of freedom that individuals possess when making choices regarding their participation in research, as described by Bless et al. (2013) and Cohen et al. (2018). Accordingly, the participants were informed about the research study and its purpose, as well as the collection and storage of data. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, who were advised of their rights in participating in the study, including the fact that they could withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any stage.

5.4.3 Avoidance of harm (non-maleficence)

This concept pertains to the safeguarding of participants from any deliberate or inadvertent harm during their involvement in research (Babbie & Mouton, 2010; Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). The researcher did not foresee any possible harm to participants' involvement in this study and the participants were informed of this in the participant information sheet they were provided with. Furthermore, only questions that related directly to the effective management of multigenerational academic staff were posed to participants in order to prevent emotional distress and the invasion of privacy. Lastly, the researcher employed a suitable data collection method and made sure that the study aims did not trump participant autonomy, rights and confidentiality (Pillay, 2014).

5.4.4 Fidelity

Fidelity refers to the researcher's commitment to acting in an honest and trustworthy manner, while also ensuring the confidentiality of participants' information (Bless et al.,

2013; Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher kept all participants' information confidential, and the participants were informed that for their protection all the personal information (such as their names, the organisations in which they worked or with which they were affiliated, etc) shared during the interview would be removed and not mentioned in the thesis or any further publication. The researcher used pseudonyms in the thesis and a pseudonym codebook was kept in a separate locked cabinet and destroyed on completion of the study. The interview transcripts were kept in a password-protected folder on the researcher's laptop, an external drive and a memory stick. Copies of the transcribed interviews will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a password-protected folder on her laptop for future research or academic purposes. After the prescribed period the folder will be deleted from the researcher's computer.

5.4.5 Justice, rights and dignity

This principle relates to ensuring fairness and eliminating any form of discrimination in the treatment of research participants (Bless et al., 2013). In this study, the researcher conducted herself professionally and maintained objectivity, as well as upholding and protecting participants' dignity throughout the research process.

5.4.6 Authenticity

This principle relates to the researcher's capacity to effectively convey the experiences of the research participants to the reader, enabling the reader to vividly understand and imagine the participants' lived experiences (Botma et al., 2010). Verbatim extracts from interviews were used in this thesis.

5.4.7 Ethics in analysing and reporting

Fabricating or falsifying data is a serious ethical violation that researchers must be cautious about (Bless et al., 2013). To ensure ethical behaviour in the analysis and reporting of research, the researcher provided a comprehensive account of the categories and themes derived from the data analysis, accompanied by relevant literature pertaining to these themes. The limitations of the study were reported on.

5.5   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research methodology adopted in this study, including the research paradigm, research approach, research design, research methods and data analysis framework used in the study. Furthermore, steps to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations applicable were discussed.

The next chapter (Chapter 6) presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected from the interviews. Thereafter, the research findings are reported on and assessed against the specific empirical aims of the study. The empirical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector is presented. The chapter ends with a summary.

6.2   PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section presents the study participant profiles, tabulated in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1

Profile of heads of academic departments

Case	Participant	Colleges/Faculties	Race	Gender	Years of experience
(Traditional universities) Case A	P1	Management Sciences	White	Female	3
	P2	Management Sciences	African	Male	3
	P3	Management Sciences			4
	P4	Sciences	White	Female	3.5
(Universities of technology) Case B	P1	Management Sciences	White	Female	9
	P2	Art and Design	African	Male	3
	P3	Management Sciences	African	Male	3
	P4	Management Sciences	African	Male	5
	P5	Engineering	African	Male	10
	P6	Health Sciences	Indian	Female	5
	P7	Humanities	African	Male	4
(Comprehensive universities) Case C	P1	Sciences	White	Male	4
	P2	Management Sciences	White	Male	5
	P3	Management Sciences	White	Male	3
	P4	Sciences	White	Female	3
	P5	Education	African	Male	4

Source: Own compilation

As shown in Table 6.1, the participants in this study were 16 heads of academic departments (HoDs) that met the inclusion criteria. Participants came from various university faculties/colleges, such as management sciences, education and the natural sciences. Their managerial experience as HoDs ranged from three to ten

years. In the following section, the interview data collected are presented and analysed.

6.3 DATA FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Four themes emerged from the data, namely: (i) generational differences (Theme 1); (ii) the challenges of managing multigenerational academic staff members (Theme 2); (iii) the benefits of managing multigenerational academic staff members (Theme 3); and (iv) effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members (Theme 4).

6.3.1 Theme 1: Perceptions about generations

The responses to the following question gave rise to Theme 1: Perceptions about generations.

> What are the main differences you have experienced regarding the attitudes, perceptions and values of the generations you manage?

Table 6.2 presents Theme 1, its sub-themes and related codes for the three cases.

Table 6.2

Summary of generational differences themes by cases

Cases	Positive attitudes and values		Negative attitudes and values	
	Younger generations	Older generations	Younger generations	Older generations
Traditional universities (Case A)	• Energetic	• More collegial • More understanding • More likely to meet deadlines	• Not respectful of lines of seniority • Misaligned personal visions • More challenging to manage • Poor time management	• Lethargic
Universities of technology (Case B)	• Think out of the box • Bring new energy • More flexible to change • More adaptable • High levels of enthusiasm • Willing to take up challenges	• Dependable • Follow the rules • Committed to their work • Better institutional memory • Willing to support others • Community engagement • Good work ethic • More caring/ empathetic	• Do what pleases them • Do not do things as prescribed • Inappropriate dressing • Concerned with own needs • Do not give everything of themselves	• More resistant to change • Reluctant to take instructions • Resistant to digitisation • Technologically challenged • Inflexible in their ways • Less open to extra work • Operate in "retirement" mode
Comprehensive universities (Case C)	• More active • Willing to learn • Innovation oriented • Technologically literate • Open to suggestions • Relate better to students	• Conscious of roles and responsibilities • Willing to give guidance • Willing to explain things • Operate within the rules • Target oriented • Professional conduct • More understanding • Receptive to suggestions	• Do not meet deadlines • Willing to bend the rules • Display a sense of entitlement • Motivated by monetary benefits • Defensive/do not take correction • Make excuses	• Rank and position conscious • Hungry for recognition • Strict and rigid • Not receptive to new ideas

Source: Own compilation from interview data

6.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Positive generational associations

They relate well with students; they do what they got to do. Right. So, I think that's what I will say, I mean and the rest of us in our 50s and so on) **(Case A, P2)**

The younger generation are more flexible to change, they are more flexible in their operations and their enthusiastic levels are much higher than the older **(Case A, P3)**

I suppose a different way of having to look at things, I mean, we have had occasions where, where we had issues and all of that and the younger ones would tell us to perhaps apply a different method, okay to dealing with it. So, they are bringing new energy and new thinking around it **(Case B, P5)**

The work ethic and attitude are much better than the older ones. I also think they're more and easily adaptable **(Case B, P6)**

I find the younger generations more active and make a lot more suggestions for improvement, more innovative in terms of how we can use technology, how can we use other tools also **(Case B, P4).**

I do find that the young crowd know what they want, but they are also open to suggestions. They are very eager to learn **(Case C, P2).**

I can describe these colleagues of mine is that the ones who are much older are committed…The other two, I think, feel that they are still young. And, you know, they can still mess around and so on **(Case B, P1).**

In terms of the work ethic, they (older generation) do try. They do try and follow what's happening and they do have an attitude of caring and being concerned. Basically, making a follow up of what is requested from them **(Case B, P4).**

We have policies in place, and we have rules and regulations in place, and I do find that the older generations tend to stick to that. The younger generation is always up for negotiations on that **(Case C, P2).**

I must say, the ones 35 upwards, they know what to do. They have the values to go with the university. They're there to meet the targets, very matured and very professional in what they do **(Case C, P3).**

I will say again, the ones that are above 35, you see that they are much easier to understand, they are much more understanding when you put forth a problem or when you tell them that this is what you need to do, and this is

what you're not doing. So, they're very receptive to suggestions and improvements, whereas the younger millennials become very defensive, in the sense that they think what they're doing is right and they do not want to take corrections **(Case C, P3).**

The participants expressed positive associations in relation to both the younger and older academics they managed. Among the positive attributes associated with younger academics were:

- an active and energetic orientation (Case C, P4)
- an inclination towards new thinking in the department (Case B, P5)
- high enthusiasm (Case C, P3)
- adaptability and openness to change (Case A, P3)
- openness to suggestions (Case C, P4)
- a willingness to take up challenges and learn from others (Case C, P2)
- an innovation orientation and technological literacy (Case B, P4), and
- relatively better relations with students (Case A, P2).

The positive attributes associated with older academics included that they were:

- more target-oriented and likelier to meet deadlines than the younger generations (Case C, P3; Case A, P4)
- compliant with the institutional rules (Case A, P3; Case C, P2)
- professional in their conduct (Case B, P2; Case B, P7)
- committed to their work and responsibilities (Case B, P1)
- hard workers with a good work ethic (Case B, P4; Case B, P2)
- characterised by better institutional memory
- willing to support others and more caring and understanding (Case C, P3; Case A, P1), and
- receptive to suggestions (Case C, P3; Case B, P4; Case B, P2).

The code co-occurrence function in ATLAS.ti was used to interpret the reported challenges of managing multigenerational academic staff members. The codes were used to develop code co-occurrence for the different sub-themes, which shows the normalised code count for each sub-theme. The normalised count "corrects" the bias

caused by an unequal number of respondents per case and thus computes and shows what the counts would have been had the groups been equal in size (i.e., had the smaller groups been the same size as the largest group). In addition, co-occurrence frequencies help qualitative researchers uncover relationships within the data by showing which codes occur together and their frequency, thus demonstrating the importance of the combination (Friese, 2014; Guest et al., 2012).

Table 6.3

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 1: Positive associations with generations

Attitudes and values	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Positive associations about generations	10	12	9	30
Totals	**10**	**12**	**9**	**30**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded, "positive associations about generations", the majority (12) of the quotations were made by participants from Case B, followed by participants from Case A (10) and lastly, participants from Case C (9). The code co-occurrence table shows that participants from all the cases made positive associations with the different generations they had encountered while managing multigenerational academic staff members. However, there was a slight difference in the number of participants that had observed the positive intergenerational differences.

The finding of the current study that younger academics are active and energetic confirms the findings by Gilbert (2011), PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2011) and Alba (2019) that optimism and energy are hallmarks of young workers. In addition, previous studies have shown that young employees bring new thinking and energy to organisations (Xiao, 2018), are pragmatic (Niemiec, 2002) and creative (Ashraf, 2018), think differently (Racolţa-paina & Irini, 2021), are quick to analyse problems and come up with solutions (Berkup, 2014) and are innovative thinkers (Appel-Meulenbroek et

al., 2019). The current study confirmed these findings. Indeed, HEI leaders perceived younger academics as bringing new energy and thinking to academic departments.

The current study found that young academics were seen to have a flexible attitude to change and are adaptable compared to older generations, similar to the findings by Haynes (2011), Jenkins (2007), Racolţa-Paina and Irini (2021) and Zemke et al. (2000). In addition, research has shown that younger generations are open to suggestions and are willing to take up challenges and learn from others (Berkup, 2014; Bova & Kroth, 2001; Gilbert, 2011). The current study arrived at a similar conclusion. Furthermore, it found that younger generations are more technologically literate than their older counterparts, confirming past research that has found that younger generations are more technologically savvy than previous generations (Becton et al., 2014; Bencsik et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2012; Smeak, 2020; Urick et al., 2017).

Regarding older generations of academics, the current study found that they are more likely to meet deadlines than the younger generations and are targets-oriented, corroborating other studies that found older generations of staff to be dedicated and committed to their work (Becton et al., 2014). Furthermore, they are more conformist, thorough, loyal, self-sacrificing, detail-orientated, and hard-working (Steelcase, 2009), self-reliant and centred more on work than younger generations (Meriac et al., 2010). Finally, they are confident task completers (Zopiatis et al., 2012), have a solid work ethic and are task-focused (Tolbize, 2008).

Similar to the finding of the current study that older generations of staff operate within the institutional rules, a study by Yu and Miller (2005) discovered that older generations recognise the chain of command, while Chen and Choi (2008) found that they are loyal and committed to their companies. In the current study, respondents highlighted that the older generation had a good work ethic. This finding is consistent with research by the Families and Work Institute (2006), Cennamo and Gardner (2008) and Twenge and Campbell (2010). However, this finding contradicts Jobe (2014), who found that younger generations placed more emphasis on leisure activities and hard work than older generations.

This study found that the older generation has better institutional memory, confirming the assertion by Smith (2008) that organisations can benefit from the wisdom and expertise of older personnel who have accumulated these over a lifetime. Similarly, Rudolph and Toomey (2015) found that managers regard older employees as having more institutional knowledge and accumulated wisdom owing to longer tenure and work experience.

6.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Negative associations with generations

What I've noticed is the younger generation. They are a little bit more challenging to manage (**Case A, P2**).

So, they have this sense of entitlement, their values are not there, for them it's the money and as long as they're getting the money and as long as they're landing a job, that is all that matters. It's not about accomplishing the departmental goals, it's not accomplishing the university's goals as well, it's just about money for them (**Case A, P1**).

Yeah, you see the young people. They don't even turn in Mark on time. They don't do things as prescribed (**Case B, P1**).

The new generation, although passionate and happy to be working as an academic, some of them tend not to give everything of themselves. They tend to hold back a bit and just focus on what is necessary to be done and so forth **(Case B, P5).**

What I'm seeing now with the young generation for some reason, I get this feeling that they have some kind of sense of entitlement to the institution **(Case B, P3).**

Whereas the young ones see themselves as the same as students as well. What I mean by that is that they play with the student, they'll be a little bit casual, you know, coming to work, putting their pants below their bottom like a nigger and all those things. They don't care about, you know, the way they dress. I have to call them to order that no, you are not a student anymore, you are a lecturer (**Case B, P4**).

The younger ones do what pleases them in terms of what they enjoy …all the syllabus or curriculum they are teaching according to the way they perceive it (**Case C, P2**).

the younger guys are often of the opinion that rules can be slightly bent and all that to accommodate their agenda (**Case C, P3**).

In my honest, humble opinion, the older generation … they need to retire at 65 and some people opt to retire at 60, so they already have retirement in their minds and I have noticed that from the age of 55, they start getting itchy, itchy meaning like, how much of my work can I give away to the younger staff members, how can I start scaling down to have a more relaxed exit as some of them have referred to it **(Case B, P6).**

I do find that the older guys are very fixed in their ways and they are very domain protected in the sense of their roles and responsibilities. They are very steadfast and they want you to know that they are a professor, especially for a professor in their subject domain, so they make you aware of it. As somebody said the other day, the professors want statues; they want recognition **(Case C, P2).**

I'm saying there is a large portion of the older generation which is largely resistant to change even though the management has changed. They are also finding it difficult to change when the strategy of the institution changes. Also, they tend to be reluctant to take instructions from a younger manager (**Case B, P1**).

So, I feel like my older workers, those between the ages of 55 to 65, they have almost timed out, or checked out. I make use of the word depersonalised, which is almost like a burnout terminology because they really don't have the energy anymore to keep up with the demands of where higher education is going. And to give you another example of why I say so, now that COVID-19 has hit us all, they were very resistant to online learning. They hated blackboard, I couldn't get enough complaints about why blackboard and this and that (**Case B, P6**).

In this sub-theme, the participants highlighted negative perceptions of both the younger and older academics they managed. The negatives about the younger academics included that they often do what pleases them and are concerned with their own needs (Case A, P5; Case C, P2); they are more challenging to manage (Case A, P2; Case A, P4); have poor time management, are not committed and do not meet deadlines and do not do things as prescribed (Case B, P1; Case C, P1; Case C, P4);

they often prefer to bend the rules (Case C, P3; Case C, P4); have an inappropriate dress sense for the workplace (Case B, P4; Case C, P2); they display a sense of entitlement (Case A, P4; Case B, P3); and they are motivated by monetary benefits (Case A, P1; Case C, P4);

With regard to the negative perceptions of older academics, the issues raised included perceptions that they are:

- strict
- inflexible/unadaptable and therefore resistant to change (Case B, P1; Case C, P2)
- not receptive to new ideas
- reluctant to take instructions (Case A, P3; Case B, P6)
- resistant to digitisation and technologically challenged (Case B, P6; Case C, P1)
- less open to extra work
- operate in "retirement" mode (Case A, P4; Case B, P6), and
- rank- and position-conscious and hungry for recognition (Case B; Case C, P2).

Table 6.4

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 2: Negative associations with generations

Attitudes and values	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Negative associations with generations	14	12	15	41
Totals	**14**	**12**	**15**	**41**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "negative associations with generations", the majority (15) of the quotations were made by participants from Case C, followed by participants from Case A (14), and lastly, participants from Case B (12). The code co-occurrence table shows that participants from all the cases made negative associations with generations they had observed

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while managing multigenerational academic staff members. There was no significant difference between the participants from all the cases.

Another finding of this study was that young academics do what pleases them and are self-interested. Similarly, Löffler and Giebe (2021) found that young employees look after their own interests and Zemke et al. (2013) argued that workplace perceptions regard the younger generation as individualistic and self-centred. Accordingly, and as highlighted by participants in the current study, younger generations are harder to manage (Evangelu, 2014; Karasek & Hysa, 2020; Roestenburg, 2020;).

The participants in the current study mentioned that younger academics lacked commitment, failed to follow instructions, and missed deadlines, confirming Jones et al.'s (2019) finding that older generation supervisors believed that younger generation workers did not appear to plan their time throughout the day. Their seniors criticised them for being less devoted and conscientious since they did not appear to plan or utilise to-do lists and were continuously distracted by their smartwatches and phones. In addition, some study participants highlighted young academics' inappropriate dress code, echoing Carlson and Deloitte & Touche (2015), Löffler and Giebe (2021), Sengwe (2022) and Umoh (2017) who found that younger employees mainly wear comfortable clothing rather than work-appropriate gear. Similarly, a study by the SHRM (2011, p. 9) reported that 55% of the respondents raised complaints or concerns about the inappropriate dress sense of young workers.

Another finding from the current research was that young academics are motivated by money, which supports Robyn and Du Preez's (2013) findings that remuneration is essential for younger academics, who will make concessions to accrue a good salary. Similarly, Jones et al. (2019) found that money is the chief motivator for young employees. By contrast, however, Carlson and Deloitte & Touche (2015) and Spiro (2006) found that young generations are not motivated by money but by recognition and good working conditions.

Regarding the drawbacks of older academics, this study found that they are strict, inflexible, unadaptable, and therefore resist change and are not receptive to new ideas. These findings are consistent with Gursoy et al. (2013), who found that older

generations are reluctant to change and have trouble learning new skills, thus further confirming the age stereotype that older workers are resistant to change, harder to develop and less flexible (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Nevertheless, some scholars (Kunze et al., 2013) have argued that all workers, regardless of age, resist change.

Another finding of this study was that older generations of academics are resistant to digitisation and are technological novices, corroborating Volkom et al. (2014), who found that older generations are often anxious about embracing new technologies, adopting them slowly and using fewer technologies. Yu and Miller (2004) state that older generations are neither technologically savvy (lacking computer skills) nor like change. Woods (2019) found that younger employees were frustrated with older generations' occasional resistance to new technology.

This study found that heads of academic departments viewed older academics as lethargic, operating in "retirement" mode. This finding is in line with one of the common stereotypes about older workers as poorer performers than their younger colleagues (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). A further finding from the current study was that rank and position matter to older generations of academic staff members and they are eager to be recognised for their achievements. This finding supports Yu and Miller (2015) and Zopiatis et al. (2012), who state that older generations desire reward systems that will result in praise. However, this finding of the current study differs from that of Busch et al. (2008), where Baby Boomers did not seek formal recognition through awards.

6.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges of managing multigenerational academic staff members

The responses to the following question gave rise to Theme 2: Challenges of managing multigenerational academic staff members.

> What challenges do the differences between various generations of academic staff members pose to you as a line manager of a multigenerational department?

6.3.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Career progression expectations

The issues that confront head of departments are today multigenerational. It is reconciling the aspirations of those up-and-coming academics and the fact that the academic life is not a kind of rewarding life … They are therefore reconciling the aspiration of a young up-and-coming academic with a future that they would love to have for themselves is the greatest challenge of them all **(Case A, P1).**

Right now, my sister, people don't want to work in higher education. The salary is very minimal if you do benchmarking, an industry where they can earn more than at a university, an industry where some of them really do work 9 to 5 there's no extra work, not only do they do that, and they have more of those family work–life balance compared to higher education **(Case A, P2).**

However, when it comes to the younger ones, they are mostly concerned with their own things. You know, they just want to do what is required of them and move on with their, maybe advancing their career or something without getting involved in so much with what's happening around here **(Case B, P4).**

Some of the lecturers that are going on retirement hold back on skills transfer. They're not very open to share the skills and knowledge to the upcoming Millennials for some reason. I don't know whether it's a withdrawal because of retirement and they do not want to let go, but yes, they don't want to share, and skills transfer to other employees because they're of the thought that they can come back and part-time lecturer in the department, but they fail to realise that they're over 65 and they need to leave room for improvement for the younger generations **(Case C, P3).**

The participants in this study raised the challenge of the different career progression expectations of staff members from various generations. These included reconciling the aspirations of the younger academics (Case A, P1; Case A, P2; Case B, P4), reluctance by older academics to share skills and knowledge (Case A, P4; Case C, P3) and managing the salary expectations of young academics (Case A, P2; Case B, P7).

Table 6. 5

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 1: Career progression expectations

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Career progression expectations	7	3	1	11
Totals	**7**	**3**	**1**	**11**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "career progression expectations", the majority (7) of the quotations were made by participants from Case A, followed by participants from Case B (3), and lastly, participants from Case C (1). Furthermore, the code co-occurrence table shows that career progression expectations were primarily a challenge for participants from traditional universities, followed by participants from universities of technology and then participants from comprehensive universities.

The studies by Berk (2013), Hannay and Fretwell (2011) and Mofokeng (2017) found that the existing academic career progression model may not be in line with Generation X's and Generation Y's preference for talent and contribution recognition rather than tenure. These generations favour rewards and promotions that happen quickly. Managers face the challenge of balancing younger academics' demands, goals and expectations, particularly their financial expectations. This finding supports the assertion by Joshi et al. (2010) that in higher education institutions, which are mechanistic organisations, age is linked to job level, tenure and seniority. Consequently, age-based generational differences are prominent. Additionally, the weak normative context that pertains in mechanistic organisations (e.g., the higher education sector) means that individuals may be more inclined to lean on the work values they developed in their formative years than on organisational socialisation experiences. This inclination might explain why different generations would have different expectations regarding their career progression.

6.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Conflict management

As a manager, I can't please everyone right. We almost have to find a balance of doing what's right and what's just for the department for the betterment of the department. So, obviously there is always that, some (not clear) line where some people are not gonna be happy about your decisions, and there is gonna be those issues around whether you are siding with certain people or you have, you know, preferential treatment for certain people in the team … I think a major issue in terms of finding that balance **(Case A, P1).**

They (younger academics) have got different views and perspectives, which also must align to the broader vision and culture of the entire department. Those are just some of the main challenges **(Case A, P2).**

When something wrong happens, you would find that staff would approach it in the defensive way because they think I favour them less or they think the previous HOD said to me when you come into this position deal with these ones **(Case B, P3).**

The younger guys are often of the opinion that rules can be slightly bent and all that to accommodate their agenda, whereas the older guys are very strict and rigid, and they operate within the agenda. And so that's where sometimes conflicts come **(Case C, P2).**

Sometimes there is a conflict. So, for example, there are some from the older generation who say no we have done things, we do things a certain way that younger generation don't agree with – **(Case C, P4)**

The participants voiced the challenges of managing conflict between the multiple generations of employees they managed. The conflict related to finding a balance in intergenerational perspectives, disagreements on approaches to working (Case C, P2; Case C, P4), finding a balance between pleasing both groups and managing different and contradicting needs (Case A, P1; Case A, P2; Case B, P3).

Table 6.6

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 2: Conflict management

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Conflict management	4	2	2	8
Totals	**4**	**2**	**2**	**8**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "conflict management", the majority (4) of the quotations were made by participants from Case A, followed equally by participant quotations from Case B (2) and Case C (2). Furthermore, the table shows that the challenge of conflict management was slightly more of a concern for participants from traditional universities, followed equally by universities of technology and comprehensive universities.

The varying attitudes and values of the different generations can be linked to this conflict management conclusion. The challenge with handling generational conflict includes, but is not limited to, establishing a balance between intergenerational perspectives and conflicts over working methods. This supports Fraone et al.'s (2008) and Harris's (2015) findings that the coexistence of different generations in the workplace brings about conflict.

Moreover, this finding supports the suggestion by Joshi et al. (2010) that in mechanistic organisations such as the higher education sector, resistive intergenerational interactions such as conflict are more likely to occur.

6.3.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Teamwork

> *I have a staff complement that still believes they must stay on their lanes. So, if X sees that Y is doing something wrong, and instead of challenging them, they would rather keep quiet. It's like if the HOD does not see the problem, others are most likely going to keep quiet and talk about it on the corridors* **(Case A, P3).**

There are some tasks that require colleagues to take part in…sometimes it is a challenge where you find that certain groups don't even want to volunteer to take part in whatever is happening **(Case B, P4).**

It is the fact that people have the sense of feeling that they are correct always, and not being tolerant of others' input and perceptions and so forth. So, it is not an easy thing to handle, but as a manager, you need to allow the opportunity of all to contribute towards something … We cannot have a sense of bullying or a sense of controlling or wanting what you feel is right. It may not be right for another or the rest **(Case C, P5).**

This sub-theme relates to collaboration-related challenges between the different generations of academics that the respondents managed. The teamwork challenges expressed by the participants related to the lack of tolerance of others' input (Case C, P5), employees staying in their "own lanes" (Case B, P4), and a general lack of teamwork (Case A, P3).

Table 6.7

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 3: Teamwork

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Teamwork	0	1	1	2
Totals	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations that coded "teamwork", one each emanated from Case B and Case C participants. The code co-occurrence table shows that teamwork was of a concern for participants from universities of technology and comprehensive universities equally but not for participants from traditional universities. This challenge of intergenerational teamwork is often associated with conflict management, an area of difficulty for participants, as discussed in sub-theme 2. This finding validates various research studies (Choi et al., 2022; Dokadia et al., 2015; Eberz, 2020) that indicate that different generations have

different teamwork preferences and teamwork behaviours which pose challenges in the workplace.

This finding supports the suggestion by Joshi et al. (2010) that in mechanistic organisations such as the high education sector, resistive intergenerational interactions such as competition and lack of skills and knowledge sharing are more likely to occur. Teamwork is vital in organisations because it increases both productivity and employee satisfaction.

6.3.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Planning and strategy implementation

> *It takes a bit more time to implement changes, especially if there is a bit of resistance … it's not just the old generation, also younger generation sometimes who are resistant to do things a certain way … you know in a university there is a lot of predetermined processes that sometimes people don't agree with or will take too long* **(Case A, P4)**
>
> *Largely, they (different generations) pose a risk to my attainment of my strategic goals as a manager. That's the greatest risk they pose. Secondly, change takes forever in the department, so I will take longer to get the department to operate in a manner that would make me happy as a new manager. Therefore, by the time they are now ready to change I have lost half of probably a year, or I have lost one year in my term to achieve the objectives that are set. So that is the greatest risk they pose. Also, the unity within the staff complement also takes time to achieve because of the risk stands from older cohort of staff* **(Case B, P3).**
>
> *And because they are also not willing to accept change immediately, they are most likely to present suggestions that they will be resigning in the next few years, so, it brings in that instability as well to say, I'm taking over this cohort, but they are already indicating that they are not gonna stay. So, some of the resources you should be spending on them, one asks themselves is it worth spending on a cohort that is going to leave* **(Case C, P1).**

This sub-theme relates to the challenges with planning and strategy implementation experienced by the participants. These challenges with planning and strategy implementation are related to the risk to strategic goals attainment (Case B, P3; Case

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A, P1), challenges in allocating resources (Case B, P3; Case B, P5; Case C, P1) and slow change management (Case A, P4; Case B P3).

Table 6.8

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 4: Planning and strategy implementation

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Planning and strategy implementation	1	1	0	2
Totals	**1**	**1**	**0**	**2**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "planning and strategy implementation", one each was from participants from Case B and Case C. The table shows that planning and strategy implementation was only a challenge for participants from traditional universities and universities of technology, and not for participants from Case C.

This challenge can be contributed to the conflict and lack of teamwork discussed in sub-themes 2 and 3. According to Maier et al. (2015) and Mencl and Lester (2014), multigenerational workforces necessitate effective and prompt conflict resolution as well as the promotion of teamwork. Leaders must adapt their leadership style to counteract low morale, decreased productivity, job dissatisfaction and increased employee turnover (Salahuddin, 2010). Additionally, this finding adds to the claim made by Joshi et al. (2010) that in mechanistic organisations (such as HEIs), resistive intergenerational interactions are evident between people from different generations. This highlights that in addition to the conflict and competitiveness between generations, resistive intergenerational interactions create difficulties for managers when attempting to implement their departmental plans.

6.3.2.5 Sub-theme 5: Differences in skills and experience

One of the main issues with the older generation is when it comes to adapting to changes, especially things to do with technology. It is a bit of a challenge as opposed to the younger generation **(Case A, P4).**

I think its aspects to do with technology, us being in the 4IR era also being within the pandemic space. My finding is that the older cohort is battling to use technology effectively **(Case B, P7).**

I think the older generation battled a bit. I had to employ special people, knowledgeable people in order to assist the older people into getting to work on the blackboard platform and things like that **(Case C, P2).**

In this sub-theme, the participants conveyed challenges relating to the skills and experiences of the different generations of academics. These challenges related to the low technological literacy of older academics (Case A, P4; Case B, P7; Case C, P2).

Table 6.9

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 5: Differences in skills and experience

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Skills and experience	2	1	1	4
Totals	**2**	**1**	**1**	**4**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "planning and strategy implementation", more (2) quotations were from participants from Case A, followed closely by an equal number of quotations from Case B and Case C participants. The table shows that planning and strategy implementation was a challenge in managing multigenerational academic staff members, in particular for participants from traditional universities, but less for participants from both the universities of technology and comprehensive universities.

This confirms the findings by Berk (2013), Hannay and Fretwell (2011) and Poblete and Nieto (2020) that there are differences among the generations in academia in the familiarity and use of the latest gadgets, technological equipment and software or apps. Older generations are less technologically savvy than the younger generations, many of whom were born into technology.

Additionally, this finding supports the assertion by Joshi et al. (2010) that age is linked to job level, tenure and seniority in mechanistic organisations such as the higher education sector. As a result, age-based generational differences become evident relative to incumbent-based and cohort-based generational identities.

6.3.2.6 Sub-theme 6: Succession planning

> *We identify bright students and entice them into an academic career, and we fix them contracts, what do you call, associated lecturers. We allow them to register for a PhD and hoping they would come and join the academy once they are done … And the success rate is so low, either they stick around for a year or two and leave because it's not something they liked, or they're simply not able to finish because there is a thing called workload as well which is very difficult to allocate and the young up and coming academic would like to be exposed to opportunities where they can do research* (**Case A P1**).
>
> *What happens is that when that prof retires we do not replace that person at a professorial level because it's a supernumerary post then we will have a young academic with probably a PhD, they may or may not be ready for promotion, but they will come in obviously as a lecturer but hoping that in the sort of the next year or two year you will end up with a senior lecturer in the department and the person will obviously focus on developing their academic profile, etc. But if you look at the time that it takes to get someone to the prof level, you've got to be careful that you don't have too many of those in gaps in one place when you suddenly end up with an academic department that doesn't have enough professors and associate professors* (**Case A, P4**).

This sub-theme on succession planning challenges relates to retaining younger academics (Case A, P1; Case B, P3) and ensuring the department has enough professors (Case A, P3; Case A, P4).

Table 6.10

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 6: Succession planning

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Succession planning	1	3	0	4
Totals	**1**	**3**	**0**	**4**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "succession planning", more (3) quotations were from participants from Case B, followed by one quotation from participants from Case A and none from Case C. The table shows that succession planning was more of a concern for participants from universities of technology, less so for participants from universities of technology and not at all a concern for participants from comprehensive universities.

Considering the career progression expectations challenge raised by the participants in the current study and discussed in theme 2, sub-theme 1 (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.1), it was not surprising that respondents also highlighted succession planning as a challenge when managing a multigenerational workforce. Succession planning focuses on planning, clarifying future needs and identifying future leaders. Thus, if institutions do not meet younger academics' needs, expectations and aspirations, they are likely to leave or lose interest of the organisation, resulting in a small talent pool for more senior positions like professors.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2014) and Urick (2022) also highlighted the issue of succession planning as a challenge when managing multiple generations. Moreover, the current study confirms previous studies (Chaacha & Botha, 2021; Robyn & du Preez, 2013) that found that many young academics intend to leave higher education.

6.3.2.7 Sub-theme 7: Differences in work–life balance

You also need to find how to manage workloads, which is an important thing in academia. Scholars are drowning in teaching, because teaching is

important, but the PhD is more important for them (younger academics), so how do we ensure that we are supporting them where the teaching is very structured so it doesn't overwork them or overload them with work, which then sacrifices the PhD agenda and the goal for the department (**Case A, P2**).

I have a thing, a policy that I don't communicate with my team on weekends, so that they're not expected to be sending me emails even during the week after 5 and, so that we understand, we create boundaries around how we're going to separate the work and the personal life, so that also we can have personal lives and also connect without own families (**Case B, P4**).

I give the schedule upfront, it helps them to plan their work–life balance, when to fetch the kids etc., so for me, communication is vital, as detailed as possible and planning and organising the department, because if you can do that, you don't have to control so much. because you don't want to be a micromanager (**Case C, P5**).

This sub-theme related to the challenges created by differences in work–life balance expectations between the different generations of academics. These included managing the workloads of young academics who are still completing their studies (Case A, P2; Case C, P4), providing work schedules upfront so that staff members can better manage their work and personal/family responsibilities (Case C, P5; Case B, P1) and allowing employees to separate work life from their private life (Case A, P3; Case B, P4; Case C, P1).

Table 6.11

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 7: Differences in work–life balance

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Difference in Work–life balance	3	2	0	5
Totals	**3**	**2**	**0**	**5**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "differences in work–life balance," more (3) quotations were from participants from Case A, followed by two quotations from participants from Case B and none from Case C. The table shows that with regard to managing multigenerational academic staff members, the differences in work–life balance expectations were more of a challenge for participants from traditional universes, closely followed by participants from universities of technology. Participants from comprehensive universities were not concerned about this issue.

According to literature (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Gursoy et al., 2013), different generations have different goals for their jobs and personal lives. According to a recent poll on employee priorities, employees ranked working remotely with flexible working hours as the second most essential element after regular wage hikes. This indicates that all employees, regardless of the generational cohort, have high work–life balance expectations. The need for better work–life balance was the most frequently cited motivation for working remotely since the COVID-19 pandemic (OysterHR, 2022). Additionally, some studies have shown that academics experience stress due to multiple role demands, the difficulty of juggling teaching and research priorities, workload increase, longer working hours, inadequate separation between themselves and work, and guilt if they do not work seven days a week (Bates & Kaye, 2014; Marten, 2009; Mukamusoni, 2006; Shaw & Ward, 2014).

The third theme identified, which relates to the benefits of managing multigenerational academic staff members, is now presented.

6.3.3 Theme 3: Benefits of managing multigenerational academic staff members

Theme 3: Benefits of managing multigenerational academic staff members arose from the responses to the following question:

What are the opportunities/benefits of managing your department's different generations of academic staff members?

How have you exploited these opportunities/benefits within your department?

6.3.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Team diversity

I think for me the most important thing is that multi-generational also comes with different perspectives and different views. So, I find that there is no right or wrong answer to anything **(Case A, P2).**

The opportunities or the benefits that I've experienced from having different generations, well, I would say firstly, it's nice to have a combination of sort of more mature and younger blood in the department. So I do find that with the younger employees, they are … they thinking is a little bit more out of the box and creative, innovative. But with regards to implementation, that is where they sometimes fall flat. So then it's the older ones come in strong **(Case B, P3).**

OK, it's actually quite exciting because it (multigenerational workplace) brings in new contributions and new ideas, new ideology. A lot of technology that the older generation never really used before comes from the young staff members. So that mix of old and young really makes a huge difference. I think if you manage it well enough, it's accepted well enough. It brings in the new ideas, the exposure, etcetera and the old with their experience makes a huge difference. So if you balance and you merge these, it's actually positive for the department **(Case B, P7).**

I think it brings diversity. It brings diversity in views and diversity in opinions. I also quite value from the older generation sort of the institutional memory because a lot of them have been through different ways of working, different qualifications, etcetera … I do find, as a manager, I do benefit from getting that diversity and views and experience, how things have changed and why they have changed **(Case C, P4).**

This sub-theme related to the benefits of diversity in perspectives among multigenerational employees as perceived by the study participants (Case A, P2; Case B, P3; Case C, P4).

Table 6.12

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 1: Team diversity

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Team diversity	9	2	6	17
Totals	**9**	**2**	**6**	**17**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "team diversity", the majority (9) of the quotations came from participants from Case A, followed by six from Case C and two from Case B. Furthermore, the table shows that the team diversity that came with having multigenerational academic staff members was considered more of a benefit by participants from traditional universities than by participants from comprehensive universities and, to a lesser degree, participants from universities of technology.

This finding is similar to the findings of previous research (Kearney et al., 2009; Kunze et al., 2013; Komal, 2021) which show that using an age-diverse team with diverse organisational, work or life experiences allows problem-solving perspectives and capabilities to be more varied among team members. As a result, managers and employees approach workplace issues creatively and innovatively (Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2013). In a study by the CIPD (2015), age diversity surfaced different perspectives in the workplace, tying in with knowledge-sharing in many cases. Additionally, the results of a study by Savanevičienėa and Jakimuk (2016) showed that to gain a competitive advantage and increase effectiveness, it is critical for organisations to actively consider generational diversity.

6.3.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Student relations

I think the benefit is not on me, according to the line manager, but to the entire value chain, you know. From the student perspective, I mean they (students) would identify easily with a young academic because they tend to understand where they are coming from, where they are at, what are their needs. They can associate with those needs easily than a person who is more senior in

experience and in age. So, the role model aspect of it is of benefit to students **(Case A, P1).**

I think first as lecturers, you know, the younger people, I can say with students, you know, they interact perhaps better. I mean, I think I'm a pretty good lecturer, and the students seem to enjoy me, but I do think that the younger staff have a better gelling with students, you know, than do the more senior staff **(Case B, P1)***.*

There is a bigger closeness between the younger generation and their students than they are to the older generation and their students **(Case C, P2).**

The participants stated that there were better relations between younger lecturers and students (Case A, P1; Case B, P1; Case C, P2) and younger academics provide role model benefits to students (Case A, P1).

Table 6.13

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 2: Student relations

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Student relations	1	0	2	3
Totals	**1**	**0**	**2**	**3**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "student relations", two were from participants from Case C and one was from participants from Case B. There were no references to this sub-theme by any participant in Case B. The table shows that participants from both Cases A and C considered having younger academics to be beneficial, since they could relate better to students. However, the participants from universities of technology did not consider this a benefit.

It makes sense that the younger academics are said to have better relations with students because the age gap is smaller, making it easier for students to approach younger rather than older academics. For example, the current generation, called Generation Alpha (born from 2010 to 2024) is the next cohort of university students

These students are growing up in unprecedented times of change and rapid technological innovation (Ziatdinov & Cilliers, 2021). Therefore, Generation Z, the new entrants to the academic workforce, will have a better understanding of Generation Alpha as they were more likely to grow up with technology than a Baby Boomer or Generation Xer.

6.3.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Mentoring for knowledge and skills transfer

They're (older employees) committed, they understand. Those are the ones who have been around a lot longer than I have been. So, they have institutional history, and I make them feel very important by inviting them to deliver counsel from time to time, you know, so they're always willing to support others willing to support the department **(Case A, P1).**

For example, the younger colleagues will give the more senior colleagues their research proposals to read, get advice on completing applications for promotion documents because we, as the older staff members, have been through the experience, so can give advice. The senior people are often also co-supervisors just to guide the younger colleagues in their start as a supervisor, you know **(Case B, P7).**

So, the opportunities, I think it's like mentorship programs and all of that and, for example, co-supervision of postgraduate students. So, there is that, the transfer of skills and the transfer of knowledge is definitely there. So, that definitely is an opportunity, that's definitely a benefit that has definitely worked in my department where I have paired inexperienced people with experienced people in order just to broaden the capacity within the department **(Case C, P4).**

And so, the benefit of having a Generation Z is, one, he's patient, he's patient with the older, the radio babies, or the Baby Boomers and the Xs, because he came to the house, he helped them set up the laptop and the dongle, or the fibre or whatever, so we really benefited from him in a technology point of view. Because from the university, they couldn't send people out, you had to kind of make your own arrangements, so we had that support. And how to load things on, even now this year, my first-year lecturing on Blackboard, he was the one who took me step by step on how to do this, how to do that, and he also gives you a different perspective (**Case B, P6).**

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Participants mentioned that having staff members from different generations allowed for sharing knowledge and experience through mentorship from older to younger employees (Case A, P1; Case C, P4), reverse mentorship (Case A, P2; Case B, P6; Case C, P5) and older generations sharing their institutional memory in their departments (Case A, P1; Case B, P7).

Table 6.14

Co-occurrence for Sub-theme 3: Mentoring for knowledge and skills transfer

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Mentoring for knowledge and skills transfer	0	5	2	7
Totals	**0**	**5**	**2**	**7**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "mentoring for knowledge sharing and skills transfer", more (5) quotations were received from participants from Case B, followed by two from participants from Case C and none from Case A participants. The table shows that the participants from universities of technology found mentoring for knowledge sharing and skills transfer more beneficial for managing multigenerational academic staff members than the participants from comprehensive universities. Participants from traditional universities did not raise this as a benefit.

According to a study by the CIPD (2015), an age-diverse workplace provides many benefits, including knowledge sharing. Employees of different ages demonstrated an appreciation for the different skills and knowledge sets their colleagues possessed, both for themselves and the organisation. The findings of the current study show how institutions use traditional and reverse mentoring, which is useful in transferring knowledge and skills between generations, to develop younger and older employees. Thus, all organisations afford all employees training and development opportunities. Literature (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Von Preußen & Beimborn, 2019) shows that organisations benefit from traditional mentorship, where older, more experienced

employees mentor younger, less experienced employees but also benefit from reverse/cross-generational mentoring.

According to previous studies (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Tomlinson, 2020) employing reverse mentorship, organisations can pass organisational knowledge between generations. Research (Cismaru & Iunius, 2019; Stevens, 2010; Sumbal et al., 2017; Tomlinson, 2020; Woods, 2016) shows that organisational knowledge is transferred between generations using reverse mentoring and is the best way of retaining knowledge from experts. In addition, Solaja and Ogunola (2016) have suggested developing a formal forum for knowledge transfer between generations in Nigerian public organisations. Such a forum may result in more opportunities for transferring crucial institutional information between generations and for Millennials to demonstrate to their older counterparts how to operate differently by utilising technology and cooperation at every opportunity. Similarly, a study by Pruett (2020) indicates that reverse mentoring mitigates negative stereotypes, builds stronger social networks, increases tacit and explicit knowledge for mentors and mentees, increases technological adaptability and contributes to the transfer of knowledge through the creation of collaborative relationships.

This finding is also in line with Joshi et al.'s (2011) claim that intergenerational interaction is important for transmitting values, skills, and resources across generations.

6.3.3.4 Sub-theme 4: Tapping into the wisdom of the older generation

The way we work, our programmes and processes and what does help sometimes is to mediate between the two parties to let, for example, the older, somebody who is from the older generation explain to you know why is it that we are doing it this way because sometimes providing that background you know makes a bit more sense **(Case A, P4).**

The only way it's been sort of beneficial has been when there has been, so sometimes it does happen that there is a substantial conflict between different people, not necessarily from different generations, and I would get somebody who is from an older generation in to mediate and sort of somebody who is a

bit more established and mature to mediate the conflict and sort of talk through it. It has happened a few times (**Case B, P5).**

Well, the main benefit is that one can short-circuit the challenges that one has to go through because the older cohort has seen some of the challenges before. So, certain strategies would lead to those challenges being met or confronted. They (older staff members) can easily advise what are the best ways of doing things. So, the greatest value is to short-circuit the stumbling blocks within attainment of various goals. Two, they become a cushion for younger or newer staff members into the department, even for me as a manager. So, because of the institutional memory, that tends to be an advantage **(Case C, P5).**

The participants conveyed how they facilitated conflict management between generations by relying on the older generation's wisdom and experience in mediating conflict situations (Case A, P4; Case B, P5; Case C, P5).

Table 6.15

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 4: Tapping into the wisdom of the older generation

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Tap into the wisdom of the older generation	0	0	2	2
Totals	**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "tapping into the wisdom of the older generation", two quotations were from participants from Case C, and none from participants from Case A and Case C. The table shows that tapping into the wisdom of older generations was only viewed as a benefit of managing multigenerational academic staff members by participants from comprehensive universities. Neither participants from traditional universities nor those at universities of technology saw a benefit in using older generations' knowledge and insights.

Only participants from comprehensive universities identified this opportunity, as illustrated in Table 6.10, corroborating previous studies (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Heisler & Bandow, 2018) highlighting that older workers want to feel useful in the workplace and that they do meaningful work. By tapping into their "wisdom well", the participants in this study can make them feel valued. As such, Vasconcelos (2018) argues that organisations might perceive such older workers' expertise as wisdom capital. The current study points to the head of department's appreciation of and reliance on older employees' emotional intelligence. According to Fadhil (2022), communication, empathetic connection, overcoming challenges, resolving conflicts, and reducing stress are ways employees deploy their emotional intelligence.

6.3.3.5 Sub-theme 5: Capitalising on the vibrancy of younger generations

The fact that there are new opportunities in terms of new thinking from young people that can be infused into the discipline may be an advantage for the line manager **(Case A, P1).**

They (younger generation) are bringing new energy and new thinking around the department **(Case A, P3).**

The younger generation would normally bring in the innovation, bring in the sophistication, bring in the agility and a flexibility that would normally be lacking from the older cohorts **(Case B, P4).**

What I could say is, with the younger generation, they're more informed about what is happening around. That is one thing, and they are more informed. And, of course, not all of them. But we do have very good, good guys, they're really informed of what is happening around and especially the current issues and related to what we do **(Case B, P3).**

I do have a Gen Z that I employed. He was my student. When COVID hit, he was the one who went to everyone's house to help them to set up Blackboard. And so, the benefit of having a generation Z. He's patient with the older, the radio babies, or the Baby Boomers and the Xs, because he came to the house, he helped them set up the laptop and the dongle, or the fibre or whatever, so we really benefited from him in a technology point of view **(Case B, P7).**

One of the opportunities with the young generation is the articulation into the new area of specialisation. Remember, their brain is dynamic, very unlike the

elderly one which the brain is a little bit stiff and linked to what they have been trained and coached to. Whereas the young ones still want to find out what is going on in that field. They enjoy what they are doing by exploring. Remember, they're within the age bracket where they can take risks and enjoy it, whereas when you are elderly, your risk-taking become, you know, very minimal because, at that point, you don't want to make mistake and just want to stick to what you know **(Case C, P4).**

In this sub-theme, the organisational development opportunities identified by the participants related to younger employees' new contributions and ideas, innovative thinking (Case A, P1; Case A, P3; Case B, P4), greater risk-taking (Case C, P4; Case C, P5), bringing new areas of specialisation to the departments (Case C, P4, Case A, P4), agility and flexibility (Case B, P4; Case C, P2), greater awareness of current issues (Case B, P3; Case A, P1), and greater technological literacy (Case B, P7; Case C, P3).

Table 6.16

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 5: Capitalising on the vibrancy of younger generations

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Capitalise on the vibrancy of younger generations	7	9	0	16
Totals	**7**	**9**	**0**	**16**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "Capitalising on the vibrancy of younger generations," there were slightly more quotations (9) from participants from Case B than Case A (7) and none from participants from Case C. The table shows that capitalising on the vibrancy of younger generations was considered a benefit of managing multigenerational academic staff members by participants from traditional universities and universities of technology only. Participants from comprehensive universities did not see younger academics' vibrance as beneficial.

More participants from universities of technology highlighted this opportunity compared to participants from traditional universities, a generational feature not raised by participants from comprehensive universities, as displayed in Table 6.16. This finding confirms that the perspectives and ways of thinking that young employees can bring to businesses can make a refreshing change. Younger workers have a strong desire to learn, gain experience and apply their skills in the workplace. Employee morale, productivity and team building are all enhanced by this enthusiasm. In addition to understanding how to connect and communicate with the youth, younger employees can also bring a fresh perspective to businesses (CIPD, 2012, 2015; Kappel, 2016; Mohamad & Anuar, 2021).

The following section presents the fourth theme, effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members.

6.3.4 Theme 4: Effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members

Theme 4: Effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members arose from the responses to the following question:

> Which management strategies do you use to ensure that you can manage different generations' expectations effectively?

6.3.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Adhering to policies and planning

> *For us, it is always important that there is some form of succession planning. What that entail is that we don't necessarily have to wait until someone retires* **(Case A, P2).**
>
> *I emphasise the importance of following protocol of the university and the policies are top management when it came to the requirements for a department and staff were all old staff in that particular department at the time* **(Case B, P5)***.*
>
> *When we do the strategic planning, we come together and say, but how do what you do fit into the strategic planning, so for me, managing by objectives is vital* **(Case C, P6)**.

This sub-theme is related to strategic planning (Case A, P1; Case C, P6), succession planning (Case A, P2; Case B, P1) and adherence to policies (Case B, P5; Case C, P4).

Table 6.17

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 1: Adhering to policies and planning

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Policy and planning	3	4	5	12
Totals	**3**	**4**	**5**	**12**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "adhering to policies and planning," the majority (5) of the quotations came from participants from Case C, followed by four from Case B, and lastly, three from Case A. The table shows that adherence to organisational policies and planning departmental activities was regarded as an effective strategy for managing multigenerational staff members by participants from all the cases but more so by participants from comprehensive universities.

It is suggested that by taking proactive steps to plan can assist in addressing the challenges raised in theme 2 (challenges), namely the issues related to planning and strategy implementation (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.4) and succession planning (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.6). This finding is comparable to that of Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010), who found that managers needed to understand the age profile of their workforce to establish and implement succession planning and staff retention policies. In addition, previous studies (Gonaim, 2016; Stark et al., 2002; Trocchia & Andrus, 2003) have also found that having a clear vision for direction/strategies was crucial for a department head.

According to Hamlin (2004), effective organisation and planning/proactive management are behaviours displayed by effective managers. Additionally, the Moroccan study by Lekchiri et al. (2018) and the French study by Hamlin and Patel

(2017) identified effective planning and organising, proactive execution and control as effective managerial behaviour in HEIs. By contrast, Eversole et al. (2016) did not arrive at the same conclusion for the Hungarian context.

6.3.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Communication

> *I would say communication skills … Those from the younger generation tend to contact me more on via WhatsApp, and those in the older generation tend to sometimes send more emails or want a phone call rather than just go WhatsApp message* (**Case C, P4**).

> *I've noticed that when it comes to the different generations, your vision, whatever you do, you need to point them back to the vision of what you want to do. You cannot just go and do something out of the extraordinary or just come and say we need to do this task. Very importantly, we need to plan* (**Case C, P3**)*.*

> *I use that in communication, and like I said to you, to be open and honest with the staff members in how I communicate, and to be as detailed as possible because when it is an older person compared to a younger person, they still require the detail* (**Case B, P6**).

> *They meet with people rigorously, and they have what I call critical and courageous conversations. But if you want to develop people, and empower people and grow people, for me, those are good leaders and bring out the best in them. You must have those courageous conversations with people* (**Case A, P4**).

The participants expressed issues linked to providing comprehensive communication (Case B, P6; Case C, P4), sharing the department's vision (Case A, P2; Case C, P3), holding critical conversations with employees (case A, P4; Case B, P6) and having open conversations with employees (Case A, P3; Case B, P6).

Table 6.18

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 2: Communication

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Communication	3	1	5	9
Totals	**3**	**1**	**5**	**9**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "communication", the majority (5) of the quotations came from participants from Case C, followed by three from Case A and, lastly, one from Case B. The table shows that communication among staff members and between managers and subordinates was regarded as an effective strategy for managing multigenerational staff members by participants from all the cases but especially so by participants from comprehensive universities.

As an effective strategy, this finding suggests that using communication aids in addressing the challenges of the conflict that the participants experience (Chapter 6, section 6.3.1.2). The finding of the current study concurs with those of Goins (2021), Greystone (2019) and Lowe et al. (2020), who found that communication is essential for managing multigenerational workforces. Additionally, Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) argue that managers need to spend more time communicating with employees in a multigenerational workplace and that by using good communication techniques, managers can minimise resistance to change, multigenerational stereotypes and conflicts. Biro (2014) advises managers to learn how to communicate with each cohort without alienating any group in order to gain employees' trust and make them feel included in all work-related activities. According to Goins (2021) and Sibarani et al. (2015), using various communication techniques that suit the preferences of the various generations is an efficient form of communication.

The findings of the current study support Hamlin's (2004) observation that good managers keep their personnel updated through frequent and effective communication. Furthermore, several scholars found that positive behavioural criteria were essential for managers' success within HEIs in Morocco, France, and Hungary

(Lekchiri et al., 2018; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Eversole at al., 2016). Furthermore, Gonaim (2016) identified effective communication skills as critical for effective heads of departments.

6.3.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Consultative management in decision-making and problem-solving

> *The participatory style works quite well for both generations. And similarly, the sort of commanding authoritative style also doesn't work with the young generation. Before I decide, there's always a consultative process. So, we have a department leadership team that is made up of heads of different qualifications or programs, and most of them come from different generations (Case C, P4)*
>
> *I run a tight ship. At the same time, I have an open-door policy. And now what that means is that I allow everyone to exercise initiative…I do a lot of consultation. So, I think consultative management, you know, that I am the Head of department doesn't make me the master of all. I consult quite a lot – University of technology (Case B, P1)*
>
> *I do come with a plan, and then I allow them to, sometimes we must vote, because if we're in a deadlock, but I do allow them to participate – University of technology (Case B, P6)*

In this sub-theme, the participants indicated that consultative management with a multigenerational workforce was an effective management strategy, which included using a participatory leadership style (Case A, P3; Case C, P4), consulting employees (Case B, P1; Case B, P6).

Table 6.19

Co-occurrence for Sub-theme 3: Consultative management in decision-making and problem-solving

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Consultative management in decision-making and problem solving	9	6	15	30
Totals	**9**	**6**	**15**	**30**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "consultative management in decision-making and problem solving," the majority (15) of the quotations came from participants from Case C, followed by nine from Case A and six from Case B. Furthermore, the table shows that consulting with employees when making decisions and solving problems was viewed as an effective strategy for managing multigenerational staff members by participants from all the cases but particularly by participants from comprehensive universities.

This finding suggests that by being consultative, the participants would effectively address the challenges related to conflict and a lack of teamwork they raised (Chapter 6, sections 6.3.1.2 and 6.3.1.3, respectively). According to Stanley (2010), managers should create a space for open communication with all staff members who wish to voice their opinions, particularly those from younger generations. Managers should actively encourage vocal engagement from people of all generations to guarantee that everyone in the organisation has a feeling of belonging. Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) and Nnambooze and Parumasur (2016) found that decision-making through empowerment was key in managing a multigenerational workplace.

Moreover, this finding is also consistent with Hamlin's (2004) model, which claims that managers need to involve their staff in decision-making, listen to their suggestions, and poll their opinions. This finding confirms the discoveries in Hungarian, Moroccan and French HEIs by Lekchiri et al. (2018), Hamlin and Patel (2017) and Eversole at

al. (2016). Similarly, Weißmüller (2021) contends that one of the aspects of effective managers in the higher education sector is that they involve employees in decision-making.

6.3.4.4 Sub-theme 4: Workload management and work–life balance

I give the schedule upfront, it helps them to plan their work–life balance, when to fetch the kids etc., so for me, communication is vital, as detailed as possible and planning and organising the department, because if you can do that, you don't have to control so much. because you don't want to be a micromanager **(Case B, P6).**

I think setting staff goals was a problem for me because when I look at a task, I would say by this time, this task should be done. But when that time comes, I would find out that my staff member is booked into hospital because they couldn't cope with the number of tasks, so it then said to me what is possible to me is not possible with the next person, so I'm most likely better to allow them to set their own goals and try and manage my own deliverable in light of the goals that they set **(Case B, P 3).**

Not everything has to be done by myself. I'm always relying on those competencies and skills in terms of how do you rely on others and how to build a support structure for yourself as a leader, to tap on other people who will then help you in terms of certain matters **(Case A, P 2).**

So, with the older generations, I would not be as strict and chase them … But the younger generations, it would be: this is what I need, and this is when I need it by, and then I'll have to follow up with them before the deadline to see how far they are **(Case A, P3).**

In this sub-theme, the participants raised issues about managing their own and their employees' workloads. They spoke of delegation (Case A, P2; Case B, P1; Case B, P3), following up on deliverables (Case A, P3; Case C, P1) and ensuring work–life balance and flexible work schedules (Case B, P6; Case C, P4).

Table 6.20

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 4: Workload management and work–life balance

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Workload management and work–life balance	2	3	7	**12**
Totals	**2**	**3**	**7**	**12**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "consultative management in decision-making and problem-solving, the majority (15) of the quotations came from participants from Case C, followed by nine from Case A and six from Case B. Furthermore, the table shows that consulting with employees when making decisions and solving problems was viewed as an effective strategy for managing multigenerational staff members by participants from all the cases but especially by participants from comprehensive universities.

Participants from comprehensive universities highlighted managing employee workloads and devising work–life balance strategies to effectively manage the different generations of employees, followed by participants from universities of technology and participants from traditional universities, as seen in Table 6.20. The participants applied workload management and work–life balance strategies such as flexible working to manage the challenge of different generations' different work–life balance expectations (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.7).

This finding supports the conclusion from Beasley's (2017) survey that the participants viewed the need for work–life balance as a critical retention strategy to increase productivity in a multigenerational workforce. Therefore, according to a study by Dwyer and Azevedo (2016), managers must promote and support flexible work options. Furthermore, according to Hamlin (2004), effective managers should empower employees by encouraging them to solve their own problems, giving them the freedom and discretion to make their own decisions or participate in decision-making, and correctly delegating tasks.

Similarly, Bryman (2007) found that effective departmental managers in the higher education sector supplied resources and modified workloads to encourage academic work. In this way, managers would delegate work and empower employees by allowing them to choose how and when they did the work, thus fostering work–life balance and flexible work schedules. In addition, according to studies conducted in France, Morocco and Hungary on effective managerial behaviour in HEIs, effective managers give staff members the resources and assistance they need to perform well, such as adjusting academic workloads to encourage scholarly research (Eversole et al., 2016; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Lekchiri et al., 2018).

6.3.4.5 Sub-theme 5: Interpersonal skills, principles, and values

Your emotional intelligence must be very high, and your empathy is also having to be very high. These are things that you have to carry on with. Don't bench everything on books, bench things on feeling for people that **(Case B, P2).**

So, you just need soft skills to know how to deal with a particular group. I don't just use one blanket approach. You must be patient and just listen. I listen a lot. Yeah, I listen to people, and I think that is one of the ways that made me survive without having a lot of opposition. I listen, and I speak to people in an acceptable manner **(Case B, P4).**

I have a very individualistic approach; I don't think that you can nowadays have a blanket approach on managing. So, although I manage a staff component of twenty-four people and those are academics and support staff and secretaries and all of that. I have a very individualistic customised approach **(Case C, P2).**

This sub-theme related to issues such as developing personal relationships with staff (Case C, P2; Case B, P4), listening (Case B, P4; Case B, P5) and empathy (Case A, P1; Case B, P2).

Table 6.21

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 5: Interpersonal skills, principles, and values

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Interpersonal skills, principles, and values	6	11	0	17
Totals	6	11	0	17

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "interpersonal skills, principles, and values", the most (11) quotations came from participants from Case B, followed by six from Case A and none from Case C. The table shows that participants from the universities of technology and traditional universities regarded interpersonal skills, principles, and values as an effective strategy for managing multigenerational staff members. However, participants from comprehensive universities did not view this interpersonal capacity as an effective strategy for addressing workplace conflict.

According to Goins (2021), managers must be aware of generational preconceptions and assumptions when managing across generations. Choi et al. (2022) found that managers understood the value of soft skills in overseeing team collaboration and communication when managing a multigenerational workforce. According to Crowe (2016), maintaining employee engagement among all generations at work requires applying interpersonal skills to get to know workers personally, earn their trust and make them feel at ease around management. A study by Schultz (2010) found that trust was a vital issue across its multigenerational study participants. According to the study, trust took many forms, but it was ultimately based on the leader's trust in the employees' skills, knowledge, and talents to achieve their objectives. Similarly, Savino (2017) suggests that to manage a multigenerational workplace effectively, employees must feel secure in sharing their ideas. Finally, Žydžiūnaitė (2018) argues that building a high-performance culture requires leadership and evaluation based on values.

Hamlin (2004) and Hamlin et al. (2012) state that effective managers have an open, personal, and trusting management approach, in which they develop trust, listen, are

open to staff and adopt a personal approach. Additionally, this finding of the current study confirms Bryman's (2007) and Weißmüller's (2021) assertion that teams in higher education are more likely to accept leaders that can serve as role models by upholding and articulating a defined set of principles. Consequently, these leaders will enjoy genuine followership within their departments.

Similarly, in the French (Hamlin & Patel, 2017) and Moroccan (Lekchiri et al., 2018) studies, an open, personal and trusting management approach was also identified as an effective behaviour of managers in the higher education sector. However, this was not the case in the study on the Hungarian higher education sector (Eversole et al., 2016).

6.3.4.6 *Sub-theme 6: Performance management*

> *It's very simple, we all have targets, key performance areas that we must fulfil and next to that key performance area there is a target, and you get performance managed on those targets at the end of the year, and you as HOD, the buck stops with you on where your department has moved forward and all that* **(Case C, P3).**

> *I want to say managing by objectives, because, as an HR practitioner, I focus on performance, although our performance management system is not punitive, it's not linked to a thirteenth check or anything like that. But I really do focus on what must we do, what is your job description, what must you do and what are your key performance areas, what are your targets and what are your targets, how are you going to, and that's where my planning comes in* **(Case B, P6).**

> *I'm a huge believer in feedback. And when I talk about feedback, I think there is good feedback and there's bad feedback. Good feedback focuses on behaviours or the work, not the individual necessarily. And it is underpinned by strong patterns of evidence and a pattern of a particular behaviour or a particular style of work and it's evidentiary* **(Case A, P4).**

> *I think setting staff goals was a problem for me because when I look at a task, I would say by this time, this task should be done. But when that time comes, I would find out that my staff member is booked into hospital because they couldn't cope with the number of tasks, so it then said to me what is possible*

to me is not possible with the next person, so I'm most likely better to allow them to set their own goals and try and manage my own deliverable in light of the goals that they set – **(Case B, P3).**

This sub-theme related to issues such as management by objectives (Case B, P6; Case C, P3), having clear job descriptions for employees (Case B, P6; Case C, P1; Case C, P4), consultative goal setting with employees (Case A, P4; Case B, P3) and positive reinforcement and providing feedback (Case A, P4; Case C, P2).

Table 6.22

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 6: Performance management

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Performance management	2	2	0	4
Totals	**2**	**2**	**0**	**4**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "performance management", more (11) quotations came from participants from Case B than for Case A (6) and none from Case C. The table shows that participants from universities or technology and traditional universities regarded interpersonal skills, principles, and values as an effective strategy for managing multigenerational staff members. However, respondents from comprehensive universities did not share this view.

This finding is in line with Lasten's (2016) study, which identified performance management as a strategy for managing an age-diverse workplace. Likewise, Crowe (2016) found that it was critical to set expectations together with employees in order to create and maintain engagement. Hamlin (2004), however, does not indicate performance management as an effective managerial behaviour. On the other hand, the studies by Lekchiri et al. (2018), Eversole et al. (2016) and Hamlin and Patel (2017) recognised that effective managers in HEIs were those who thanked and rewarded employees' good work and praised the team, similar to the finding in the current study.

According to Weißmüller (2021), effective managers in the higher education sector clarify goals and objectives and monitor operations and performance.

6.3.4.7 Sub-theme 7: Adaptability

> *The most effective thing is having a personality that is not rigid and fixed about generation issues –* **(Case B, P5)**
>
> *Well, I must be honest. I mean, it's not like I have a set management strategy that I do use and I haven't studied management. So I have to be flexible* **(Case A, P3).**
>
> *I think that great leaders are like that they don't have a monopoly on great ideas. And I think I'm one of those people who always say I will continue to learn from others* **(Case A, P4).**
>
> *I realised that it's very difficult when people are set in their ways about things when they are adamant about the fact that it's their world and no one else is so… I became a better person. I began to understand and I often reflect on why people behave the way they do and it's on myself, predominantly* **(Case B, P7).**
>
> *I think that it's made me a better person, has made me stronger. I have learned to be a little more accommodating and understanding of things, but also to be very firm about practices that are proper protocol* **(Case C, P3).**

In this sub-theme, participants expressed how they adapted to different situations and individuals (Case B, P5; Case B, P7; Case C, P3). The issues they raised also related to a situational, non-rigid management style (Case A, P3; Case B, P7; Case C, P3), embracing innovation, embracing feedback, and learning from subordinates (Case A, P4; Case C, P2).

Table 6.23

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 7: Adaptability

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Adaptability	3	3	0	6
Totals	**3**	**3**	**0**	**6**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "adaptability", there was an equal number (3) of quotations from participants from both Case A and Case B. The table shows that adapting to different situations and individuals was regarded as an effective strategy for managing multigenerational staff members by participants from both the universities of technology and traditional universities. However, this was not the case for participants from comprehensive universities.

This finding suggests that being adaptable is an effective strategy because it assisted the participants in addressing the challenge of conflict and lack of teamwork (Chapter 6, sections 6.3.2.2 and 6.3.2.3, respectively). According to literature (Nelson et al., 2010; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010), the ability to change behaviour as circumstances change is one of the characteristics of flexible and adaptive leadership. As organisations undergo rapid change, flexible and adaptive leadership becomes increasingly important. Changing technological and cultural conditions and a more diverse workforce are some factors that require leaders to adapt and be flexible.

McNally (2017) states that one of the critical characteristics of effective leadership is adaptability – targeting and tailoring communications for different learning styles and behavioural differences in a multigenerational team. Similarly, Bondoc (2021) found that managers' flexibility and adaptability significantly positively affected employee productivity in a multigenerational workplace. For instance, when leaders use a variety of communication methods such as face-to-face meetings, text messages and social media, they are more likely to reach members of all generations. Furthermore, as a result of this adaptability, leaders and team members have more respect for one another. Moreover, a study by Choi et al. (2022) discovered that being adaptable and

flexible to changes resulting from rapid technological advancements helped them manage different generations in their department. Hamlin's (2004) Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness does not include adaptability as an effective management behaviour.

6.3.4.8 Sub-theme 8: Human capital development

I like to work from a Michael Porter strategy of competitive advantage. So, whatever I do tends to look at how to maximise the skills I have in the department to achieve a competitive edge on each sphere and module in my unit **(Case B, P3).**

We're building from the bottom, but we're also using those older colleagues who are about to retire as call them mentors or coaches, who also facilitate that gap, so when the person leaves, there's also people coming up, so that also when we hire, we don't hire down right, because if you hire down, then we lose the professional talent up there, also equally, we're stressing the importance of also, as they retire, people are also rising which is an important thing when closing that gap **(Case B, P2).**

There is also a Senior Management Development programme. I found it quite useful. I think the most useful portion of it was around active listening rather than just listening sort of being present at the moment **(Case C, P4).**

In this sub-theme, participants stated issues related to growing skills in the department (Case A, P2; Case A, P4; Case B, P3), mentoring and coaching others (Case B, P2; Case B, P3; Case C, P1) and developing their management and leadership skills (Case B, P7; Case C, P4; Case C, P1).

Table 6.24

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 8: Human capital development

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Human capital development	2	1	0	3
Totals	**2**	**1**	**0**	**3**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "human capital development", slightly more (2) quotations came from participants from both Case A, followed by one from Case B and none from Case C. Furthermore, the table shows that more participants from traditional universities compared to participants from universities of technology found the use of human capital development initiatives to be an effective strategy for managing different generations of academic staff in their departments, but this was not the case for participants from Case C. This finding suggests that adaptability is an effective strategy because it is beneficial in tackling the challenge of different career progression expectations and succession planning (Chapter 6, sections 6.3.2.1 and 6.3.2.6, respectively).

This finding confirms the finding by Cushing (2019) that learning new competencies and training on managing across generations was important. Lasten (2016) found that implementing an employee development plan improved a multigenerational workforce's productivity. According to Dwyer and Azevedo's (2016) study, coaching, mentorship, and knowledge transfer are necessary to give different generations a variety of experiences. Similar to the current study finding, the participants in a study by Choi et al., (2022) also articulated their role in developing their multigenerational staff's potential by offering training and development opportunities.

According to Hamlin (2004), effective managers actively address and attend to their staff's learning and development needs by initiating, promoting, and supporting employees' personal and career development and providing good one-on-one learning support and supervision. Similarly, for Eversole et al. (2016) and Lekchiri et

al. (2018), an effective manager in Hungarian and Moroccan HEIs supported academics' training and development. However, this was not the case with Hamlin and Patel's (2017) French study.

6.3.5 Theme 5: Ineffective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members

Theme 5: Ineffective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members arose from the responses to the following question:

> Which management strategies do you/have you used that have been least effective in managing a multigenerational faculty?

6.3.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Authoritative management style

> *I think being an autocrat is not for higher education and I think the radio babies and the Baby Boomers are the autocrats, they are stifling creativity, they are stifling research, teaching and learning, they are so outdated, my sister, they are the dinosaurs that are retiring immediately, and I am honest about that* **(Case B, P6).**
>
> *I think an authoritative management style doesn't work, let's say a very commanding style, that doesn't work … it works even less or it's less effective for the older generation because they have that wealth of experience* **(Case B, P4).**
>
> *The authoritarian leadership style won't work, so I think maybe transactional, they must look more on the transactional side of how they're going to lead the department as such* **(Case C, P3).**
>
> *The participatory style works quite well for both generations. And similarly, the sort of commanding authoritative style also doesn't work with the young generation* **(Case C, P4).**

In this sub-theme, participants stated issues related to an authoritative management style as the least effective strategy for managing multigenerational academic staff members (Case B, P4; Case B, P6; Case C, P3; Case C, P4). There were limited comments for this sub-theme, presumably because, having identified effective strategies, participants may have assumed that, by extension, they had addressed ineffective strategies.

Table 6.25

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 1: Authoritative management style

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Authoritative management style	0	8	4	12
Totals	0	8	4	12

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "authoritative management style", there were more (8) quotations from participants from both Case B followed by four from Case C and none from Case A. The table shows that more participants from universities of technology and comprehensive universities found an authoritative management style ineffective in managing multigenerational academic staff members. However, this was not the case for participants from Case A.

According to the literature (Al Rahbi et al., 2017; Iqbal et al., 2021; Veale, 2010; Zhang et al., 2012), a leader with an authoritative management style demands that his or her subordinates follow commands, and the leader does not solicit suggestions or recommendations from subordinates. However, the current study found that an authoritative management style was ineffective in managing multigenerational academic staff members. This finding is similar to that of Perilus (2020), who found that a leadership approach that enables the four generations to synchronise their communication preferences and work value differences should replace authoritative leadership. Accordingly, this will reduce multigenerational conflicts over work values. This finding, however, differs from Al-Asfour and Lettau's (2014) and Cates et al.'s (2013) assertions that different leadership styles are needed to lead multigenerational organisations.

6.3.6 Theme 6: Management skills managers need to develop for managing multigenerational academic staff members

Theme 6: Management skills managers need to develop for managing multigenerational academic staff members arose from the responses to the following question:

> What new skills or competencies (if any) have you had to develop due to managing a multigenerational faculty?

6.3.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Interpersonal skills

> *I've learnt through trial and error, to be as detailed in my communication and I make it step by step, step one, step two, step three, bullet one, bullet two, bullet three, I colour coordinate my emails and that is how I get the attention to get the work done. So for me, communication and also understanding the emotional part of it* **(Case B, P6).**
>
> *When I went into this position, what I had was the normal skills of communication and helping to. Well, it was basic communication between the different lecturers from different campuses, but here now when it comes to the position that I am in, it's like I must have all the skills, I must gain all the skills when it comes to problem-solving because daily, we're there trying to solve problems* **(Case C, P3).**
>
> *Not everybody will like what you are doing, so I needed to toughen up and be assertive because I cannot please everybody. I needed to toughen up, to learn that skill* **(Case C, P4).**
>
> *So it was not just having the hard skills of being a manager, it was also the soft skills of patience* **(Case C, P1).**

In this sub-theme, the participants mentioned the need to develop communication (Case B, P5; Case B, P6), problem-solving skills (Case A, P4; Case C, P3), being assertive (Case C, P2; Case C, P4) and being patient (Case B, P1; Case B, P2, Case C, P1).

Table 6.26

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 1: Interpersonal skills

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Interpersonal skills	4	5	4	13
Totals	4	5	4	13

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "interpersonal skills", slightly more, i.e., five, quotations were received from participants from Case B, compared to four from both Case C and Case A. The code co-occurrence table shows some level of consensus on people management skills that heads of department had to develop because they were managing multigenerational academic staff members. The current study identified communication as an essential people management skill when managing multigenerational academic staff members. This finding was not surprising since the participants had identified communication as necessary and effective for managing multigenerational academic staff. Iden (2016) similarly found that leadership communication was one of the required multigenerational management skills.

The current study found that participants needed to develop problem-solving skills in order to manage multigenerational academic staff members. Furthermore, the literature indicates that recognising problems and taking necessary steps to address them is one of the identified competencies contributing to effective people management among HODs (Bryman, 2007; Croucamp, 2013; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Ruiz et al., 2014; Taylor, 2002).

Another finding of this study is that assertiveness was one of the skills that heads of departments had to develop as a result of managing multigenerational academic staff members. This finding is not surprising as the participants indicated that using their interpersonal skills was an effective strategy for managing such staff members (Chapter 6, section 6.3.4.5). According to Wehabe et al. (2018), an assertive person

strives to be confident, communicate clearly and honestly, respect other people's rights and take responsibility for what they do. Similar to the current study, most managers and executives who participated in Pešková's (2011) study emphasised the importance of assertiveness in a business environment. As Ames (2009) argued, assertiveness is frequently regarded as an important characteristic that is lacking in failed leaders. Furthermore, effective leadership may require assertiveness and lack of assertiveness may be a common – if not the most notable – cause of leadership failure (Ames, 2009).

Additionally, the current study found that being patient was another skill that heads of department had to develop because they were managing multigenerational academic staff members. According to Grisham (2006), leaders must be patient, honest and sufficiently humble to master communication skills. Therefore, this finding is not surprising as participants indicated that communication was an effective strategy for managing multigenerational academic staff members (Chapter 6, section 6.3.4.2). Furthermore, a study by Haque et al. (2017) revealed that leaders who are patient in their decision-making process value participatory decision-making, which can lead to greater trust between the leader and the followers, strengthen their relationships, give the followers more power and produce better decision-making. This explains why the current study participants found that consultative management in decision-making and problem-solving was an effective strategy for managing multigenerational academic staff members (Chapter 6, section 6.3.4.3).

The data collection for this study was undertaken during the COVID pandemic but after the end of South Africa's hard lockdown. During the height of the pandemic, the heads of departments still had to lead effectively, therefore, requiring patience. According to Sluss (2020), patient leaders contribute considerably to their subordinates' creativity, teamwork, and productivity. In the current study, being patient would assist heads of departments in maximising the benefits of having multigenerational academic staff members.

6.3.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Good understanding of HR policies

> *I find that people management is quite an important thing that you constantly have to understand that you, neither did I necessarily know everything and I*

could never know everything, so it comes with understanding, what does that mean in terms of how I manage people right, because in some instances you may find that if there are some performance management issues, right and you're having those conversations with people, on paper and on policy, it's almost like the responsibility of the person to engage with the line manager to discussing issues, but you also find its important in how people understand leadership right and how to manage your system **(Case A, P2).**

I think my biggest competency is that you always have to understand policies, because, as I mentioned, people are managing performance, that comes with understanding HR policies very well, because you always need to know, if staff members are not performing, what is the disciplinary process, you know **(Case B, P2).**

In this sub-theme, participants explained the need for a good understanding of HR policies (Case A, P2; Case B, P2; Case C, P4).

Table 6.27

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 2: Good understanding of HR policies

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Good understanding of HR policies	7	5	7	19
Totals	**7**	**5**	**7**	**19**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "good understanding of HR policies", there were seven quotations each from participants from both Case A and Case C, followed by five from Case B. The table shows some level of consensus about having a good understanding of HR policies as a skill that heads of departments had to develop because they were managing multigenerational academic staff members.

The current study found the need for heads of academic departments to understand human resource management policies well. These policies guide company standards, operating protocols, and standards of conduct. According to Cloutier et al. (2015), policies offer management and operational communication methods in addition to reducing unethical behaviour. According to Barron et al. (2014), to implement suitable management practices and introduce human resources policies leaders should have a better grasp of different generations' traits. Additionally, Barron et al. (2014) found that managers may benefit from increased productivity and job commitment if they support various policies and practices suited to the employees' individual needs. The current study supports the finding by Beasley (2017), who found that administrative leaders managed employees in a modern workforce by adhering to standardised policies and practices. A study by Jones (2017) also found that managers adopted and employed a formal approach using policies to retain a multigenerational workplace.

6.3.6.3 Sub-theme 3: Developing digital skills

And then also technological skills I would say, you know, keeping track of or trying to find out how to use all the different platforms, Tik Tok, Snapchat, yeah. Yeah, so also technological skills **(Case C, P1).**

Well, for sure it is about learning about all these online tools currently because everything, you know, I feel a little bit technologically challenged sometimes, you know, where the younger generations are more into tweeting and, you know, showcasing their work on Facebook and tweeting, etcetera, etcetera. I would really say technology is something that is important to develop currently. You know we are teaching again face to face, but you still need these technologies online, you know, to be able to fulfil all your tasks **(Case C, P4).**

Right now, the university is implementing a new system of teaching and learning and in order for you to be able to manage the department and the staff members who are having to utilise the new system as a chair (head) of a department. You need to also learn the skills of how the system works so that you are able to manage and check, you know what is happening in this system and so forth. So you have to always learn new computer skills that are needed. The younger generation is more adoptive to new technologies such as social

media. You will find them on platforms such as your WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok and, you know, as a manager who wants to be upfront with technology, you have to learn how to utilise all these platforms. And that's where you will find more of the younger generation are also used utilising those platforms to teach **(Case C, P5).**

In this sub-theme, participants explained the need to develop digital skills related to social media, teaching and learning and human resource management (Case C, P3; Case C, P4; Case C, P5).

Table 6.28

Co-occurrence for sub-theme 3: Developing digital skills

Sub-themes	Traditional universities (Case A)	Universities of technology (Case B)	Comprehensive universities (Case C)	Totals
Developing digital skills	0	0	5	5
Totals	**0**	**0**	**5**	**5**

Source: Own compilation from ATLAS.ti

The code co-occurrence table shows that of the quotations coded "developing digital skills", only five quotations came from participants from Case C, while neither Case A of Case B mentioned this. The table shows that developing digital skills was only relevant to participants from comprehensive universities.

A finding in the current study was that heads of departments had to develop digital skills for academic purposes, managing staff and to keep up with younger academics who prefer using digital platforms for communicating and teaching. This finding supports Antonopoulou et al.'s (2021) finding that the digital skills managers take advantage of and consider most necessary for a leader include social media, web development and tools and mobile apps. Among the six traits of effective digital leaders, according to Promsri (2019), are digital knowledge and literacy. The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected higher education (Jameson et al., 2022; Küsel et al., 2020; Purcell & Lumbreras, 2021). The data for the current study were collected during

the COVID pandemic after the lockdown ended in South Africa. Therefore, this finding was unsurprising because educational leaders had a more pressing requirement to acquire digital capabilities.

6.4   KEY FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

This section evaluates the findings of this study in relation to the empirical research aims set out in Chapter 1 to establish whether or not the study achieved these research aims.

6.4.1   Findings related to empirical Research Aim 1

Empirical Research Aim 1 sought to explore the human resource management challenges faced by heads of department in managing the different generations of academic staff members employed in the South African higher education sector.

The study found that heads of departments in the institutions that participated in the study faced several challenges in managing the different generations of academic staff members. The identified challenges included differences in career progression expectations and skills and experience among different generations, managing conflict that comes with different generations working together, as well as difficulties with planning and strategy implementation, succession planning and teamwork. Based on these findings this research aim was achieved.

6.4.2   Findings related to empirical research aim 2

Empirical research aim 2 set out to investigate the human resource management benefits experienced by heads of department in managing the different generations of academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.

The study findings highlighted five benefits that heads of academic departments identified and leveraged for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in their departments, namely,

- team diversity
- younger academics have better relations with students than older academics and are role models for students

- the use of mentoring for knowledge and skills transfer occurs mainly from the older academics to the younger academics

- tapping into the wisdom of older academics because of their experience and institutional knowledge and capitalising on the vibrancy of young academics, which brings new ideas, and

- innovative thinking, as well as technological know-how and taking risks.

Based on these findings this research aim was achieved.

6.4.3 Findings related to empirical research aim 3

Empirical research aim 3 sought to explain how heads of departments in the South African higher education sector could manage the diverse expectations of different generations of academic staff members.

The study findings highlighted eight effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. These include adherence to policies and planning, communication, consultative management in decision-making and problem-solving, workload management and work–life balance, interpersonal skills, principles and values, performance management, adaptability, and human capital development. Furthermore, study findings highlighted an authoritarian leadership style as an ineffective strategy for managing multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. Based on these findings this research aim was achieved.

6.4.4 Findings related to empirical research aim 4

Empirical research aim 4 sought to determine the key elements that comprise an integrated framework for effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.

The study findings highlighted five key elements that comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector; these are

- generational perceptions,

- challenges related to having multigenerational academic staff members in a department,

- benefits of having multigenerational academic staff members,

- effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members in a department, and

- Ineffective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members in a department.

Based on the empirical data collected and analysed, this study developed an integrated framework for managing multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.

Figure 6.1 depicts five key elements that comprise an empirical integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. The discussion on the key elements follows below:

6.4.4.1 Generational perceptions
The first element included in the framework is generational perceptions. The heads of department indicated both positive and negative associations with younger and older academic staff members.

6.4.4.2 Challenges of managing multigenerational academic staff
The perceptions of the different generations come with several challenges. Leaders must overcome these challenges to cultivate a healthy, inclusive and productive work environment for all generations of academic staff members.

6.4.4.3 Effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff
Displaying effective behaviours assists heads of departments in enhancing the benefits of having a multigenerational workplace while minimising the challenges. Therefore, institutions should foster effective behaviours since such help to facilitate the management of multigenerational academic staff members.

6.4.4.4 Benefits of managing multigenerational academic staff

Organisations benefit from having a range of generations working together. In this way, the wisdom gleaned from the experience of older staff members to increase productivity complements the innovative new ideas of younger staff members.

6.4.4.5 Ineffective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff

The display of ineffective behaviours exacerbates the challenges heads of departments experience when dealing with multigenerational academic staff members. Accordingly, institutions should avoid ineffective behaviours since these are ineffective for managing multigenerational academic cohorts. Based on these findings this research aim was achieved.

Figure 6.1

Integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the SA higher education sector
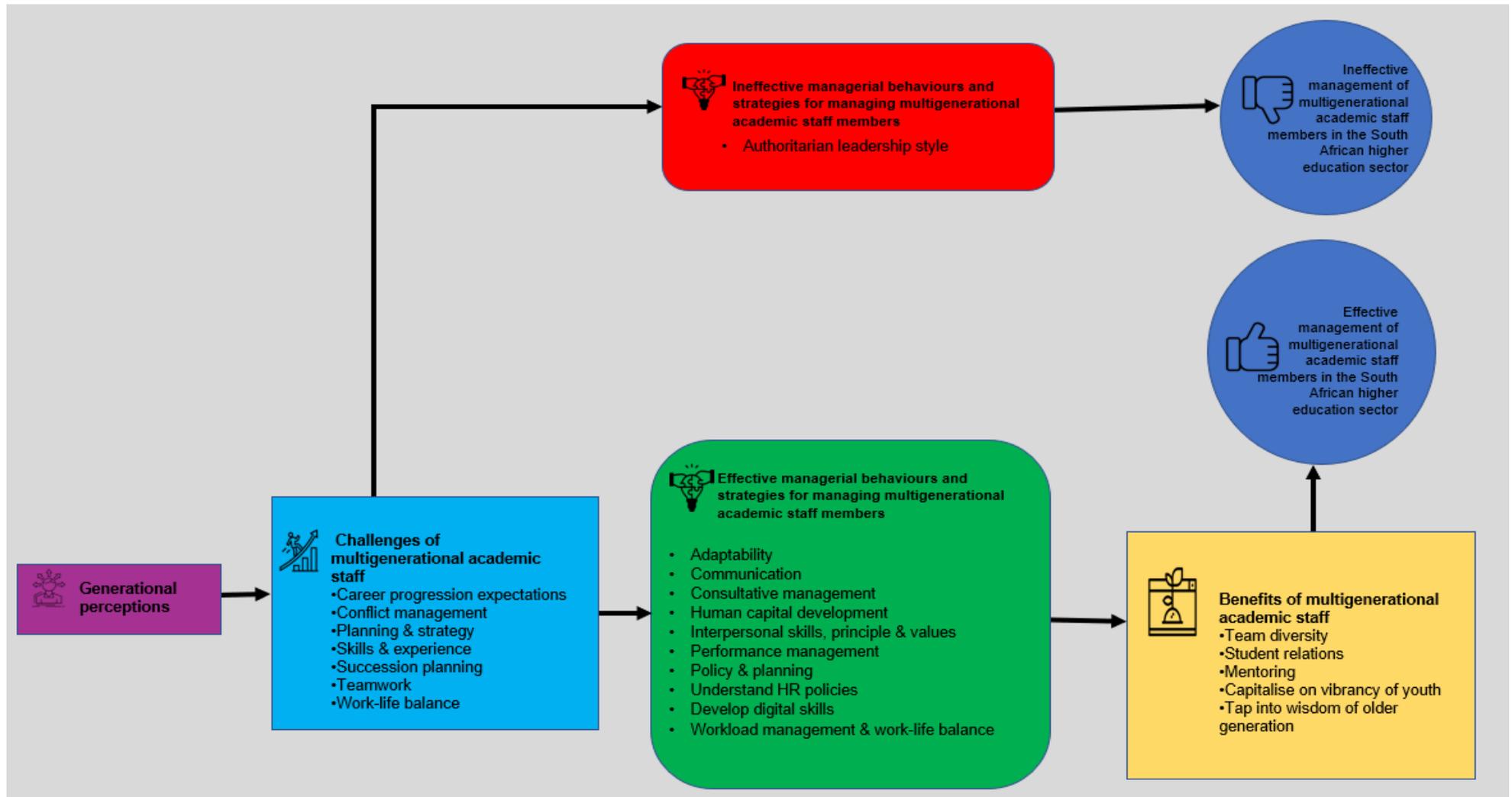
Source: Own compilation; icons sourced from www.freeicon.io

Table 6.29 indicates whether the study has achieved each of the four empirical research aims.

Table 6.29

Alignment of empirical research aims to research findings

Research aims	Status
Empirical research aim 1: To explore heads of departments' human resource management challenges in managing the different generations of academic staff employed in the South African higher education sector.	Achieved
Empirical research aim 2: To investigate the human resource management benefits experienced by heads of departments in managing the different generations of academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.	Achieved
Empirical research aim 3: To explain how heads of departments in the South African higher education sector could manage the diverse expectations of different generations of academic staff members.	Achieved
Empirical research aim 4: To determine the key elements that comprise an integrated framework for effectively managing multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector.	Achieved

Therefore, this study achieved its four empirical research aims. A summary of the chapter is presented below.

6.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the profile of the study participants, who included the heads of academic departments from South African public universities. The data transcribed from interviews were also presented. Furthermore, the data were analysed and interpreted to formulate findings. The chapter also presented the key findings of the study in line with the empirical research aims and it ended with a summary.

The next and final chapter (Chapter 7) presents the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This, the last chapter of the thesis, presents the conclusions of the study in relation to the research questions formulated in Chapter 1. In addition, the chapter presents the limitations of the study, recommendations for practice and recommendations for further research. A personal reflection of the researcher's journey is presented, and the chapter ends with the conclusion of the thesis.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY BASED ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section presents the conclusions relating to the research questions as derived from the key findings of the study.

7.2.1 Research questions regarding the empirical study

The following research questions were formulated to guide the empirical part of this study:

7.2.1.1 *Conclusions relating to empirical research question 1*

Empirical research question 1: What are the human resource management challenges faced by heads of departments in managing the different generations of academic staff members employed in the South African higher education sector?

The conclusion regarding research question 1 is that managing the different generations of academic staff members in the South African higher education sector presents several challenges for heads of departments. A variety of challenges were identified, including differences in career progression expectations, skills and experience among generations, conflict management that arises from working with different generations, difficulty implementing plans and strategies, succession planning and teamwork among different generations. Therefore, research question 1 has been answered.

7.2.1.2 Conclusions relating to empirical research question 2

Empirical research question 2: What are the human resource management benefits experienced by heads of departments in managing the different generations of academic staff members in the South African higher education sector?

The conclusion drawn for research question 2 is that heads of departments identified and leveraged five benefits of managing multigenerational academic staff. The benefits included diversity in the team, the fact that younger academics have better relationships with students are better role models for them, the mentoring by older academics which transfers knowledge and skills primarily from them to the younger academics, tapping into the wisdom of older academics because they have experience and institutional knowledge, and capitalising on the vibrancy of young academics who bring in new ideas, innovative thinking, technological expertise and risk-taking. Thus, research question 2 has been answered.

7.2.1.3 Conclusions relating to empirical research question 3

Empirical research question 3: How could the diverse expectations of different generations of academic staff members be managed by heads of departments in the South African higher education sector?

The conclusion regarding research question 3 is that eight effective strategies were identified for managing multigenerational academic staff in South African higher education. In addition to following policies and planning, communicating, consulting in decision-making, balancing work–life and family, managing workloads and maintaining work–life balance, interpersonal skills, principles and values, maximising performance, adaptability and developing human capital are also important. Furthermore, heads of departments should not adopt an authoritarian leadership style as it is an ineffective strategy for managing multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. Accordingly, research question 3 has been answered.

7.2.1.4 Conclusions relating to empirical research question 4

Empirical research question 4: What are the key elements that comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector?

The conclusion regarding research question 4 is that five key elements that comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector were identified. These components include generational perceptions, challenges related to having multigenerational academic staff members in a department, benefits of having multigenerational academic staff members, effective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members in a department, and ineffective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members in a department. Accordingly, research question 4 has been answered.

7.2.2 Central research questions

The central research question of this study was: What elements should comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector?

An empirical integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector has been developed and is presented in Chapter 6 (Figure 6.1) and all its elements and their linkages are fully described. As shown in the diagram below for illustrative purposes. As a result, the central research question has been answered.
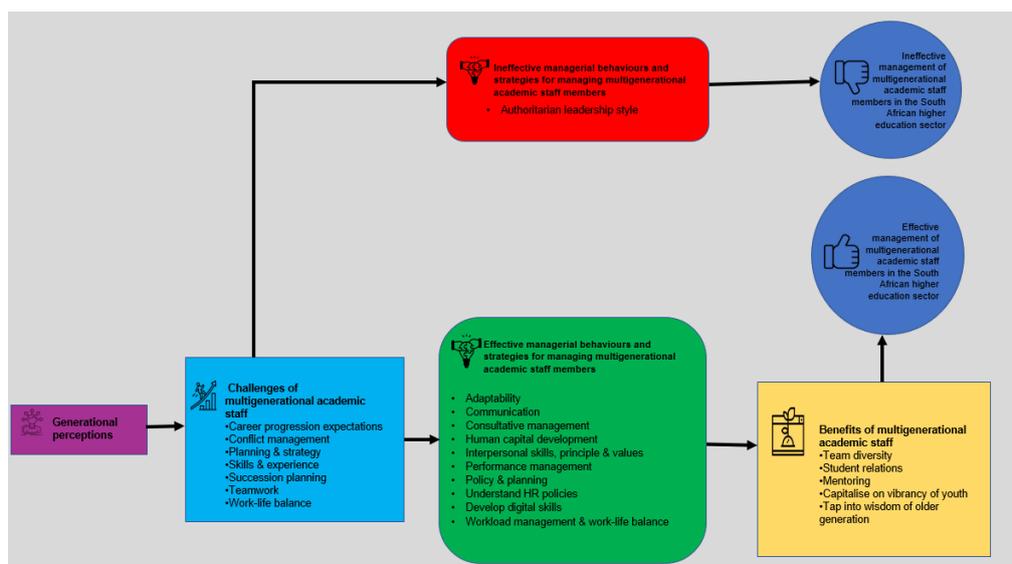
7.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE THESIS

The contributions of this study are fourfold. Firstly, this study contributed to the body of knowledge of human resource management by developing an empirical framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector. Secondly, the theoretical contribution includes an enhanced understanding of the challenges faced by heads of departments, the benefits they exploit and the strategies they employ to effectively manage multigenerational academic staff members. Thirdly, the study findings extend Hamlin's (2004) Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness by including adaptability as a positive (effective) behaviour when managing a multigenerational workforce. Lastly, the findings confirm Joshi et al.'s (2010) assertion that in a mechanistic structured organisation with a weak normative context, like universities, where older employees are senior (at universities older academics tend to be professors rather than younger academics), resistive intergenerational interactions exist (e.g., conflict) and an age-based identity is prevalent.

7.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are based on the experiences of the heads of academic departments with regards to their experiences with management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African public higher education sector. Therefore, the findings are limited to the faculties of the institutions included in this study.

Additionally, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face interviews had to be replaced by virtual interviews to ensure participants and researcher's safety. Thus, the observance of participants' body language cues, behaviour and eye contact was limited and/or practically impossible as the video functionality on MS Teams was not used due to bandwidth challenges. Furthermore, unforeseen interruptions in participants' homes could not be avoided by the researcher. Therefore, the interview process could not be guaranteed to be totally private and interruption-free, thus the responses of participants may have been influenced by these conditions.

Furthermore, there were institutions that were contacted for participation in the study, and they did not accept the invitation. Some accepted but participants from those institutions chose not to participate. Others did not process the ethics clearance

applications send. These events affected the researcher's plans and perhaps also limited the quality of the data collected.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

From the foregoing conclusions of the study, the following recommendations have been formulated for possible implementation by heads of academic departments in the South African public higher education institutions:

- To better understand and respond to the needs and expectations of different generations, heads of departments should get to know the values, motivations and communication styles of these generations. Additionally, heads of departments need to combat generational stereotypes by avoiding generalisations themselves and start seeing the strengths that each generation can bring to the department. The goal is not to make everyone fit into one mould, but to manage the generational differences in a way that promotes creativity and innovation and facilitates knowledge and skills transfer.

- Knowledge transfer should be encouraged by including mentorship as a key performance indicator for academic staff five years before retirement. The retention policies of HR departments at institutions should include the stipulation that five years before retirement, it is mandatory for older academic staff members to mentor young academics in their departments. This would include, for example, research supervision of students, assisting young academics with sourcing and applying for research grants, co-publishing and mentoring younger academics in journal article writing. Conversely, young academics should be included in curriculum development so that they can infuse their creativity and the use of digital technology into courses. By doing this, heads of departments would be drawing on the benefits that come with the different generations.

- Human resources departments should foster an intergenerational work environment by providing generational training and facilitating open conversations about how department heads can unlock the hidden potential of each generation.

- Heads of departments should adopt a flexible and adaptable management style. For example, they could use a variety of communication methods to be able to reach members from different generations and to help employees work in a way that is best for them. Different modes of working may be promoted, for example working from home to accommodate younger generations and working in the office for older generations.

- To foster employee engagement, heads of departments should encourage employee engagement by involving staff members in decision-making and offering opportunities for input and feedback, taking into account the different communication styles of the different generations.

- When conceptualising and developing management development programmes for heads of departments, the HR department should ensure that the development of digital skills, interpersonal skills and a good understanding of HR policies are included, as these skills were found to be key in the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members.

- HRM departments in higher education institutions must adapt their policies and strategies to accommodate the needs and preferences of different generations as the HEI become increasingly diverse and multigenerational.

7.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was limited to public higher education institutions in South Africa. Future research could conduct a similar study with private higher education institutions in South Africa or elsewhere. Furthermore, a comparative study could be conducted on the similarities and differences of elements that comprise an integrated framework for

the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members in the South African private and public higher education institutions. Similar studies could be conducted in other sectors as well.

As a result of this research and the proposed integrated framework for the effective management of multigenerational academic staff members, a quantitative study is needed to develop the measurement scale and test the framework empirically. The key elements of the framework would thus be validated through a confirmatory factor analysis. The findings of a quantitative study could also be generalised to other universities and contexts owing to the larger sample size.

Similar studies to the current study could be conducted using a sample of multigenerational academic staff members to investigate their perceptions and experiences of how effectively managers manage multiple generations of academic staff members.

7.7 PERSONAL EXPERIENCES DURING THE STUDY

In this section, the researcher reflects on her personal journey. There were several personal and research process challenges that I encountered along the way. I was on track with my research project plan until COVID hit and my beautiful plans had to change, owing to the great impact this had on the higher education sector which had to change abruptly in order to continue with the academic project. This meant that for the whole of 2020 I was not able to collect data as it was business unusual, and my targeted participants were too occupied with other things.

The process of obtaining ethical clearance from the initial target cases was long and tedious. Information on how to apply for ethical clearance from some institutions was difficult to find and when I found it, the process included the completion of two or more forms with information from my approved proposal together with the approved proposal signed my supervisor. In some institutions the approval process had to be done by two separate departments. Once I had cleared the ethical clearance hurdle, I was faced with the challenge of obtaining enough participants to reach data saturation point. At three institutions where I had received ethical clearance, I did not get even one participant. Added to these challenges I was facing a personal challenge that

impacted physical and mental health and needed me to pay attention to it. At this point I had to tell my supervisor. I lost count of the number of times I called, cried and vented to my PhD siblings Ronny and Nonceba and my supervisor. They shared articles, gave me ideas to think about, encouraged and supported me but also shared laughs.

Once I had secured interviews with the participants, I moved from feeling excited (after the struggle of securing participants) to feeling anxious about whether I would conduct the interviews well enough. I tapped into my HR recruitment interviewing experience and after explaining the purpose of the study I enjoyed the interview and was also encouraged by my participants on my journey and the majority asked for access to the final research report.

The research identified several effective and ineffective strategies for managing multigenerational academic staff members, as well as the management skills heads of departments should develop in order to manage multigenerational academic staff members. These may be adopted either by the HEIs or by any other employer. Therefore, my hope is that with this study I have opened the door for future researchers to build on this research and make further contributions that will address the effective management of people who are the life blood of organisations and thus ensure organisational sustainability.

7.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the thesis. Chapter 1 discussed the background and the motivation for the study, the problem statement, the research questions and the aims of the study. Additionally, the delimitations of the study, a statement of significance and the clarification of the key concepts were also discussed. Furthermore, the research assumptions and an overview of the theoretical framework underpinning the study were tabled. Lastly, the research methodology, trustworthiness and ethical considerations and outline of the study were presented.

Chapter 2 discussed the literature relating to the conceptualisation of generations. Firstly, a brief historical background of the term generation was provided. This was followed by the definitions of the term "generation" and the conceptualisation of this

term. Generational cohorts were explained in terms of the key historical events that shaped each generation across different countries.

In Chapter 3, the challenges and benefits of, and effective strategies for, managing a multigenerational workforce in the higher education sector were discussed. The chapter began with a discussion of the benefits of a multigenerational workforce, followed by the challenges associated with a multigenerational workforce in the higher education sector. Lastly, effective strategies for managing a multigenerational workforce were presented.

In Chapter 4, the framework and theory guiding this study were discussed in relation to an overview, the key theoretical concepts and how previous studies used the framework and theory. The rationale for using the framework and theory and their applicability to the current study were also discussed. The theoretical framework for the effective management of a multigenerational academic staff members in the South African higher education sector, which was developed from the Framework for Understanding Generational Identities in Organisations by Joshi et al. (2010), the Generic Model of Managerial and Leadership Effectiveness by Hamlin (2004), the discussions on the conceptualisation of generations (Chapter 2) and contemporary issues in managing generations (Chapter 3), was presented and discussed.

Chapter 5 described the methodological framework used in this study. This included discussions on the research paradigms, research approaches, research designs and research methods used by the researcher. Additionally, a rationale for the decisions made in this regard was proffered. Furthermore, the steps taken to ensure the credibility of this study, as well as the ethical principles used, were discussed.

The data and findings of the study were presented in Chapter 6. The profile of participants was described, followed by the presentation and analysis of the data gleaned from the interviews. Subsequently, the research findings were presented, and the research aims evaluated in light of the key findings of the study to determine whether they had been achieved.

The final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 7, presented the study findings in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the limitations of the study, recommendations for practice and future research. The chapter concluded with a personal reflection on the researcher's journey.

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Annexure A: Ethical clearance for the study

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

12 October 2020

Dear Mrs Zamandlovu Sizile Makola

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2020 to 2025

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
ERC Reference # : 2020_CRERC_021 (FA)
Name : Mrs Zamandlovu Sizile Makola
Student/Staff No#:35009829

Researcher(s): Mrs Zamandlovu Sizile Makola, makolzs@unisa.ac.za, 083 786 2489
Department of Human Resource Management
College of Economic and Management Sciences
University of South Africa

"Developing an integrated framework for effective Management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector."

Qualification: Postgraduate

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 5 years (**12 October 2020 until 11 October 2025**).

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the College of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee on **October 2020** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the
3.

College of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee.

4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**11 October 2025**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.
9. Permission is to be obtained from the university from which the participants are to be drawn (the Unisa Senate Research, Innovation and Higher Degrees Committee) to ensure that the relevant authorities are aware of the scope of the research, and all conditions and procedures regarding access to staff/students for research purposes that may be required by the institution must be met.
10. If further counselling is required in some cases, the participants will be referred to appropriate support services.

Note:

*The reference number **2020_CRERC_021 (FA)** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

signature

_____

Prof AT Mutezo
Chairperson, CRERC
E-mail: muteza@unisa.ac.za
Tel: 012 429 4595

URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

Prof RT Mpofu, Deputy
Executive Dean (on behalf of)

signature

_____

Prof MT Mogale
Executive Dean: CEMS
E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za
Tel: 012 429 4805

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Annexure B: Gatekeeper permission letters

Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor:
Research, Technology Innovation
& Partnerships
Bellville
Campus P O
Box 1906
Bellville 7535
Tel: 021-959 6242

18 November 2021

Mrs Zamandlovu Sizile Makola (UNISA student no: 35009829)
DPhil: Human Resource Management
Department of Human Resource Management
College of Economic and Management Sciences
University of South Africa

Dear Mrs Makola

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT CPUT

The Institutional Ethics Committee received your application entitled: *"Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector"* together with the dossier of supporting documents.

Faculty Ethics Committee Approval Date: 16 November 2021

Faculty Ethics Committee Approval Reference No: 2021_FBMSREC 079

Permission is herewith granted for you to do research at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Wishing you the best in your study.

Sincerely

Dr D Phaho
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: RTIP
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

MRS ZAMANDLOVU SIZILE MAKOLA

PERMISSION FOR MRS ZAMANDLOVU SIZILE MAKOLA TO CONDUCT HER PHD STUDY AT CUT ENTITLED "DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR"

Dear Mrs. Zamandlovu Sizile Makola

This is to confirm that you have been granted permission to conduct a study at the Central University of Technology for your PhD study entitled "developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector"

The conditions of the conditional permission are:

- The study will not interrupt any of the official activities at The Central University of Technology;
- You will supply us with the copy of your report;
- The cost of all related activities will be covered by yourself;
- Recruitment of participants is the sole responsibility of yourself;
- Voluntary nature of the potential participants decision to consent to participate should be strictly observed;
- You should not disclose a potential participant's decision to participate or otherwise to any other party;
- Permission does not compel, in any sense, participation of staff members or students in your study.

Senior Director: Institutional Planning and Quality Enhancement

Mr. I.Mokhele

23/08/2021

20th September 2021
Mrs Sizile Makola
c/o Department of Human Resource Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
University of South Africa

Dear Mrs Makola

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DUT

Your email correspondence in respect of the above refers. I am pleased to inform you that the Institutional Research and Innovation Committee (IRIC) has granted **Full Permission** for you to conduct your research "Developing an integrated framework for effective Management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector" at the Durban University of Technology.

The DUT may impose any other condition it deems appropriate in the circumstances having regard to nature and extent of access to and use of information requested.

We would be grateful if a summary of your key research findings would be submitted to the IRIC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards.
Yours sincerely

DR LINDA ZIKHONA LINGANISO
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT DIRECTORATE

Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee
PO Box 94, Makhanda, 6149 South Africa
Email: ethics-committee@ru.ac.za

www.ru.ac.za/research/research/ethics
NHREC Registration No. REC-241114-045

20th September 2021

Mrs. Sizile Makola
Department of Human Resource Management
University of South Africa
Pretoria

Dear Mrs. Z.S.Makola

UNISA Ethics Approval Reference: 2020-CERC-021 (FA)

Re: "Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational work force in the South African higher education sector."

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Kindly send this letter to Ms. Zim Dyibishe Z.Dyibishe@ru.ac.za from Human Resources Director to get access to staff members at Rhodes university.

Please ensure that the RUHREC is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process.

Sincerely,

Prof Arthur Webb
Chair: Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee

Research Ethics Committee

May 4, 2021

REC Ref #: REC2020-12-018
Name: Makola S
Student #: UNISA
Faculty Ref#: UNISA

Makola, S
C/o Prof MC Mulaudzi
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Mr Makola,

Decision: Gatekeeper Permission - Final Approval

Name: Makola, S

Project title: *Developing an integrated framework for effective Management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector*

Qualification: PhD in Management Studies

Supervisor: Prof MC Mulaudzi

Thank you for submitting the revised project documents for review by the Research Ethics Committee (REC), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). In reviewing the documents, the comments and notes below are tabled for your consideration, attention and/or notification:

- **Review Comments**

  > **Qualitative Case Study.** The REC took note that the current study is qualitative in its nature and design, and therefore is not seeking to generalize its findings to the target population. Thus, the relevance, quality and richness of participant's responses is the main focus, not the population representativity of the sample.

We empower people

> **Qualitative Data Analysis**. The REC took note that the study will use thematic analysis and document analysis. These analysis strategies are described in the proposal and memo of revisions.
> **HR Policies**. The REC took note of the permission granted by Dr D Naidoo, TUT Chief Information Officer and Executive Director: Institutional Effectiveness and Technology [Letter dated January 13, 2021] to access TUT Policies for inclusion in a research study.

The chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee, Tshwane University of Technology, reviewed the revised project documents at its meeting on 4 May 2021. **Final Approval** is granted to the project.

The proposed research project may now continue with the proviso that:

1) The researcher/s will conduct the study according to the procedures and methods indicated in the **approved proposal**, particularly in terms of any undertakings and/or assurances made regarding the confidentiality of the collected data.
2) The proposal will be submitted to the Committee for prospective ethical clearance if there are any substantial **deviations** and/or changes from the approved proposal.
3) The researcher/s will act within the parameters of any applicable **national legislation, professional codes of conduct**, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Strict adherence to the following South African legislation, where applicable, is especially important: Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013), Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005) and the National Health Act (Act 61 of 2003).
4) The researcher will inform the REC as soon as possible of any **adverse events** involving research participants that may have occurred during the course of the study. It includes the actions and/or processes that were implemented to mitigate and/or prevent any further injuries and/or adverse outcomes.
5) The researcher will inform the REC of any **new or unexpected ethical issues** that may have emerged during the course of the study, as well as how these ethical issues were addressed. The researcher must consult with the REC for advice and/or guidance in any such event.
6) The current ethics approval expiry date for this project is **May 3, 2023**. No research activities may continue after the ethics approval expiry date. An application for the extension of ethics approval must be submitted for projects that need to continue beyond the expiry date.

Note:

The reference number [top right corner of this communiqué] should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants.

We empower people

Tel. 0861 102 422, Tel. (012) 382-5911, Fax (012) 382-5114, www.tut.ac.za · The Registrar, Private Bag X680, Pretoria 0001

Yours sincerely,

TS Ramukumba (Prof)
Deputy Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee
[TUTRef#2020=12=018=MakolaS]

18 08 2021

Sizile Makola

University of South Africa

REF: REC 2021/08/014

Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid until 31-Dec-2022 .

Your clearance may be renewed upon application.

Please be aware that you need to notify the Ethics Committee immediately should any aspect of your study regarding the engagement with participants as approved in this application, change. This may include aspects such as changes to the research design, questionnaires, or choice of participants.

The ongoing ethical conduct throughout the duration of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

We wish you well for your research.

2021.08.18
16:06:25 +02'00'

Jacques Rousseau
Commerce Research Ethics Chair
University of Cape Town
Commerce Faculty Office
Room 2.26 | Leslie Commerce Building

Office Telephone: +27 (0)21 650 2695 / 4375
Office Fax: +27 (0)21 650 4369
E-mail: jacques.rousseau@uct.ac.za
Website: http://www.commerce.uct.ac.za/com/Ethics-in-Research

14 October 2021

Mrs Zamandlovu S Makola (Student # 35009829)
College of Economic and Management Science
University of South Africa

Dear Mrs Makola

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

The request for the project titled *Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector* refers. Institutional permission is granted to conduct this study at the University of Johannesburg. Please forward an electronic copy of your final thesis to researchproposal@uj.ac.za.

Sincerely

Dr Carol Nonkwelo
Executive Director: Research and Innovation
Email: cnonkwelo@uj.ac.za

UNISA | university of south africa

RESEARCH PERMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE (RPSC) OF THE SENATE
RESEARCH, INNOVATION, POSTGRADUATE DEGREES AND
COMMERCIALISATION COMMITTEE (SRIPCC)

25 March 2022

<div style="border:1px solid">
Decision: Permission approval 25
March 2022 to 24 March 2023
</div>

<div style="border:1px solid">
Ref #: 2022_RPC_019
Mrs Zamandlovu Sizile
Student #:
Employee #: 90225309
</div>

Principal Investigator:

Mrs Zamandlovu Sizile
Department of Human Resources Management
School of Management Sciences
College of Economic and Management Sciences
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Supervisor: Prof Maelekanyo Mulaudzi; tshilmc@unisa.ac.za; 021 429 3724

Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector

Your application regarding permission to involve Unisa staff, students and data in respect of the above study has been received and was considered by the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC) of the UNISA Senate, Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee (SRIPCC) on 25 March 2022.

You may invite five to eight COD's from Unisa and one Human Resources Directorate participant to conduct individual, electronic interviews.

You may obtain the following secondary data from the Human Resources Directorate:
- Talent management policy
- Work-life balance
- Training and Development

- Leadership Development
- Succession Planning
- Recruitment, Selection and On-boarding
- Employment equity
- Benefits and rewards

Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle 7 referring to Social awareness, must be promoted: " Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible."

The personal information made available to the researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) will only be used for the advancement of this research project as indicated and for the purpose as described in this permission letter. The researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) must take all appropriate precautionary measures to protect the personal information given to him/her/them in good faith and it must not be passed on to third parties. The dissemination of research instruments through the use of electronic mail should strictly be through blind copying, so as to protect the participants' right of privacy. The researcher hereby indemnifies UNISA from any claim or action arising from or due to the researcher's breach of his/her information protection obligations.

You are requested to submit a report of the study to the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC@unisa.ac.za) within 3 months of completion of the study.

Note: The reference number 2022_RPC_019 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants and the Research Permission Subcommittee.

Kind regards,

[signature]

Dr Retha Visagie – Deputy Chairperson
Email: visagrg@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-2478

_____

Prof Lessing Labuschagne – Chairperson
Email: llabus@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-6368

23 August 2021

Sizile Makola
PhD Candidate
UNISA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"Developing an integrated framework for effective Management of a
multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector"

This letter serves to confirm that the above project has received permission to be
conducted on University premises, and/or involving staff and/or students of the University
as research participants. In undertaking this research, you agree to abide by all University
regulations for conducting research on campus and to respect participants' rights to
withdraw from participation at any time.

If you are conducting research on certain student cohorts, year groups or courses within
specific Schools and within the teaching term, permission must be sought from Heads of
School or individual academics.

Ethical clearance has been obtained. Protocol number: (**2020_CRERC_021**)

Research Commencement: (As per consent obtained from Dr Kgomotso Kasonkola)

Nicoleen Potgieter
University Deputy Registrar

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050, South Africa | T +27 11 717 1204/8 | E nicoleen.potgieter@wits.ac.za | www.wits.ac.za
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Annexure C: Call for participants flyer

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INVITATION

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Sizile Makola and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof. Mulaudzi, from the Department of Human Resource Management, towards a Doctor of Philosophy in Management Studies at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in my study entitled "Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector".

You are invited to participate in this study becaue you are a Head/Chair of an academic department at your institution. The study involves participating in a semi-structured interview via MS Teams or equivalent voice over internet protocol. The interview is expected to last about 45-60 minutes. Participating is voluntary. Information conveyed and the identity of the participants will be kept confidential.

The study has received ethical clearance from the University of South Africa and the Tshwane University of Technology.

Should you be interested in participating in this study, please see the attached participant information sheet for more detailed information and/or contact me on sizilemakola@outlook.com or 067 196 9019.

Many thanks,

Sizile Makola

Ethics clearance ref numbers:
UNISA:2020_CRERC_021 (FA)

Title: Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Sizile Makola and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof. C. Mulaudzi, from the Department of Human Resource Management, towards a Doctor of Philosophy in Management Studies at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "**Developing an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector**".

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?
This purpose of this study is to develop an integrated framework for effective management of a multigenerational workforce in the South African higher education sector.

WHY AM I INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?
You are invited to participate in this study because; (1) you are a head of department; (2) you have 3 or more years of management experience in an academic department; (3) you are currently serving as a head of department; (4) you are a permanent employee; (5) you are aged 30 – 65; (6) you are managing a department with a multigenerational staff complement. These criteria mean you have experience with managing a faculty from multiple generations and will be able to provide valuable information relevant to the study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?
The study involves audio and/or video-taped semi-structured interviews via MS Teams or equivalent voice over internet protocol. The interview is expected to last for 45 – 60 minutes.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You can ask questions about the proposed study before signing consent.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that will in determining the key elements that should comprise an integrated framework for the effective management of a multigenerational faculty in the South African higher education sector. The framework will be useful for the higher education sector line managers, university management and the government. These stakeholders will gain insights on how to effectively manage a multigeneration workforce. Additionally, the government and university management will obtain important information on the challenges faced by the sector in managing a multigenerational workforce and be able to evaluate existing programmes, human resources policies, practices and procedures and/or develop new programmes to address the challenges.

ARE THEIR ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There are no foreseeable high risks linked to your participation in this study. The only foreseeable risk is the potential for minor inconvenience, regarding the time spent in the above-mentioned interview.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorder anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. This measure is to ensure your confidentiality. Your name will not be included in the final report, instead a pseudonym will be used in any publications or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings

so that no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. This measure is to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your transcribed answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Electronic copies may be permanently deleted from electronic devices after 5 years.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There is no payment or incentive available for participating in this study. Your participation is voluntary.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Human Resource Management Research Ethics Review Committee at UNISA as well as from the Faculty of Humanities at UP. The copies of the approval letters are attached.

Ethical clearance certificate 2020_CRE

UP_ETH_APPR1[230 5843009221211852].

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact me on sizilemakola@outlook.com.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

To participate in this study, please complete the informed consent form below and email it to the researcher on sizilemakola@outlook.com.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact the research supervisor Prof MC Mulaudzi on tel: 012-429-3724/ Tshilmc@unisa.ac.za, else the chairperson of the Ethics Review Committee of the

Department of Human Resource Management, UNISA: Dr Rudolph at 012 429 2586/ rudolec@unisa.ac.za. Alternatively, they are advised that they can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll-Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours sincerely,

Sizile Makola

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I, _____ (Full
name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has
told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience
of participation.

I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have
had enough opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any
time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously
processed into a research report, journal publications, book chapters and/or
conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the interview and the anonymously processing of the data
collected into a research report, journal publications, book chapters and/or conference
proceedings.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE

BASIC INFORMATION

Checklist before the interview:

• Is the consent form completed and signed by participant? If not get verbal consent.

• Is the MS Teams application working properly and both interviewer and participant hear each other?

• Notebook, pens and interview guide

• Is audio recorder working fine? Remember to press record once permission granted by the participant.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Sizile Makola and thank you for participating in this study. This is doctoral research which aims to develop an integrated framework for the effective management of a multigenerational academic staff in the South African higher education sector.

Please feel free and be open to answer all the questions to your best knowledge. If you need me to clarify any question, do not hesitate to say so. As indicated on the participant information sheet, all ethics regulations will be adhered to; and that your details will be kept confidential and will not be divulged to any third party. You can also withdraw from this interview session any time. I will jot down notes as we interact, and this interview will be recorded so that it can be easy to transcribe later. Please indicate if you are comfortable with this. (PRESS RECORD ONCE PERMISSION GRANTED)

PARTICIPANT'S BACKGROUND

Please can you confirm your job title and how long you have been in this role.

Research question 1: What are the <u>challenges</u> of managing the different generations of faculty employed in the South African higher education sector?

- What are the main differences that you have experienced with regards to the attitudes, perceptions and values between the generations that you manage?

- What challenges do these differences pose to you as the manager of a multigenerational department of academics?

Research question 2: What are the <u>opportunities</u> of managing the different generations of faculty in the South African higher education sector?

- What are the main opportunities/benefits of having a multigenerational faculty that you have experienced?

- How have you exploited these opportunities/benefits within your department?

Research question 3: How could the diverse expectation of different generations of faculty be <u>managed</u> in the South African higher education sector?

- What critical skills do you use to effectively manage a multigenerational faculty?

- Which management strategies do you/have you used that have been most effective in managing a multigenerational faculty?

- Which management strategies do you/have you used that have been lease effective in managing a multigenerational faculty?

- What new competencies/skills have you had to develop as a result of managing a multigenerational faculty?

Research question 4: What <u>recommendations</u> can be made to line managers for the effective management of a multigenerational faculty in the South African higher education sector?

- What advise would you share with other line managers on how to effectively manage a multigenerational faculty?

Closure

What else would you like to add regarding the effective management of different generations of faculty within the South African higher education sector?

This brings us to the end of our session and thank you so much for your time, insight and for sharing your experience with me.