

**MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE AT A COMMERCIAL BANK  
IN THE CENTRAL REGION**

**By**

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Master

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Date: 01 November 2023

BLOEMFONTEIN

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the Field Study hereby submitted for the Masters in Business Administration at the UFS Business School, University of the Free State, is my own independent work and I have not previously submitted this work, either as a whole or in part, for a qualification at another university or at another faculty at this university.

I also hereby cede the copyright of this work to the University of the Free State.

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## Table of Abbreviations

AIHR	Academy to Innovate Human Resource
AVP	Corporate grades
FS	Free state
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
NC	Northern Cape
US	United State
VP & BA	Corporate grades

## Abstract

The multigenerational workforce presents a critical challenge for managers, and each generational has different expectations. This study aimed to explore ways to manage a multigenerational workforce at a commercial bank in the Central Region.

The literature review highlighted five focus areas facing multigenerational organisations. The focus areas were grouped into various, characteristics of each generation, namely, atmosphere, and management issues.

A quantitative research design was employed in the study conducted at a Commercial Retail Bank in the Central region, The sample size included 101 retail bank employees including junior employees working in the frontline, junior management, and senior management in this region, a structured questionnaire was used to collect data from.

The results indicated that for generational characteristics, millennials prefer monetary recognition while pre-millennials still get motivated with non-monetary recognition. For organisational atmosphere within generations, pre-millennials were dominant in their response indicating that they are more comfortable working within their generation, this indicates that there could be potential age discrimination challenges in the central commercial bank. Lastly for management issues, pre-millennials believe that ethics is one of the sources, where they perceive millennials as less ethical than them, and this at some point leads to conflict between the two generations, The next source of conflict they believe derives from values, again pre-millennials think that old generational values and new generations values are not inline, as results when they need to work as a team, they have a lot of clashes.

The following recommendations were recommended to assist the Central Commercial Retail Bank in managing its aged diverse workforce.

Generational motivators: As a bank, the suggestion will be to introduce quarterly incentives that will recognise sales performance.

Flexibility: Management will need to ensure that they allow some level of flexibility for task completion, as both generations indicated, this will ensure that both generations are productive.

Age discrimination: To bridge the gap of age discrimination, the commercial bank must encourage knowledge sharing, management must facilitate knowledge sharing between generations by creating platforms for cross-generational collaboration, such as intergenerational task forces. This will allow employees to learn from each other's expertise and experiences.

Strategies to assist management in managing a multigenerational workforce: The recommended strategy to overcome this will be for the commercial bank to design a training curriculum for their managers, which will upskill them with information on how to manage each generational and how to identify strengths and use them for the benefit of the team and the commercial bank.

Keywords: Generational cohorts, Corporate Job grades, Motivators

## Chapter 1: Background

A multigenerational workforce is one in which the employees span different generations. There are now five generations in the workforce simultaneously (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Baby Boomers, and some members of the Silent Generational still working in their late 70s and early 80s) – a first in modern history (Lareina, 2022).

### 1.1 Background

According to Lareina (2022: 32), “Over the next decade, no matter which generation, all organizations will experience a massive change in work, namely, the need for remote working, flexible hours, virtual teams, etc.”. All organizations will be required to learn new skills and to find professions that did not exist before.” Research on the multigenerational workforce identified that most organisations across the world have a mix of generations represented, which comes with some challenges, impacts, and benefits.

The next section will focus on the international perspective on managing the multigenerational workforce.

### 1.2 International Perspective

Five generations of workers are working side by side for the first time in the modern economy. Fifty-six million Millennials, who account for three-quarters of the US workforce by 2025, will rule this new world of labour. Meanwhile, Baby Boomers are delaying retirement. The Bureau of Labour Statistics predicts that by 2026, approximately two-thirds of persons aged 55 to 64 and 30% of people aged 65 to 74 will be employed full- or part-time. Generation X is situated between these two groups. Generation X is the majority that is still employed, and Gen Z, who are digital natives and are just entering labour, are at the opposite ends of the age spectrum (Toptal, 2022). The work environment has evolved; leaders find themselves at the crossroads where they have at least four different generations within their organisation, and they are expected to manage, coach, lead, motivate, and ensure that they are performing, but the main challenges are that these three different generations have their ways or preferences on how they feel they must be managed. Leaders need to find ways to get the best out of all

the different generations. People managers find themselves wondering how to get the best results out of all five generations without compromising the standard procedures and policies. They also find themselves using a blanket approach that does not yield the required results. As an increasing number of people delay retirement, whether out of choice or necessity, organisations today have a workforce made up of a variety of generations that must get along despite having vastly different life experiences, attitudes, behaviours, and expectations (Kasing, Piemonte, Goman & Mitchell, 2019). People managers must manage multigenerational teams that include Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z (also known as Millennials), which is a circumstance that is bound to lead to conflict. (Kasing, Piemonte, Goman & Mitschell, 2019). An international perspective has now been discussed, and the next section will focus on the South African perspective.

### 1.3 South African Perspective

According to a recent Deloitte study, while 70% of the firms asked indicated that managing multigenerational workforces will be crucial or extremely crucial to their performance in the coming year, only 6% stated that their team leaders were capable of doing so (Deloitte,2022). Even though any effective leader in a South African business is expected to be attentive and responsive to issues relating to gender and racial diversity, it is said that putting concerns relating to multigenerational diversity on the backburner might prove to be a costly mistake (Kasing, Piemonte, Goman & Mitchell, 2019). The current South African workforce is made up of Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y, commonly known as the Millennials and Generation Z, and all these different generations have distinct expectations about what is valued in the workplace (Lester, 2019).

Because of the disparities in the values, priorities, motivations, and working styles of the team members, managing multigenerational teams is the biggest management challenge. Younger generations are prone to shift employment every few years to obtain the variety, breadth of scope, and ability to attempt new things that they value highly. This is reflected in very simple things such as work tenure (Kasing, Piemonte, Goman & Mitchell, 2019). Older generations have different value systems and judge a potential

candidate's appropriateness for a position based on their own beliefs. They view a short tenure and frequent changes as signs of a lack of dedication, loyalty, and staying power (Lester, 2019). This also has an impact on organisational performance, culture, talent management, and succession planning, but it also has benefits if people managers have the skills to manage the organisation (Deloitte, 2020). Based on these theories it will be worth in investigating this topic to the South African perspective as well as to the level of the commercial bank in the central region, to assess if South Africa is aligned with the rest of the world and to ensure how people managers are equipped to survive in this new world of work where different generations are working together towards the same goal while they are diverse in so many ways.

#### 1.4 Commercial Bank's Central Region Perspective

Currently, at the commercial bank branch level, people managers are being challenged on how to manage diverse generations. As the banking sector evolves, people managers now have four different generations to manage.

People managers and most of the experienced employees in the central region are baby boomers and Generation X, and the subordinate majority are Generation Y and Z. This multigenerational workforce comes with different expectations and challenges.

Currently, the commercial bank in the central region has approximately 20 employee relations cases, which people managers deal with. Findings from the cases investigated indicated that the main contributor was a misunderstanding of policies and procedures processes, mostly the ways these policies and procedures were interpreted by different individuals, and this was the result of multigenerational employees' misunderstanding and people managers' lack of effective ways of communication, as they used a blanket approach and assumed that all employees understood (Central Commercial bank, 2021).

The annual employee survey was recently conducted at Commercial Bank in Central to gauge employee satisfaction. The following three questions were asked, and colleagues' feedback shows that the organisation's approaches currently do not cater to all generations; the results were not favourable. This also has an impact on organisational

culture and performance. The business decided to survey to gauge why there are so many challenges in the organisation, and multigenerational issues were their main source (Central Commercial Bank, 2021).

The following themes were tested during the survey:

**Feedback and Recognition:** Each age group perceives feedback and recognition differently in terms of frequency and what they value as recognition. Only 47% of the respondents provided feedback on how they perceive the commercial bank when it comes to providing feedback about their performance as well as being recognised for their performance.

**Diversity and inclusion:** Each group perceived diversity and inclusion in different ways. Only 43% of staff were happy about diversity and inclusion which is below expectations (Central Commercial Bank, 2021).

**Team effectiveness:** The results received from all different generations represented at Central Commercial Bank were not positive, as only 42% felt that they were able to work together as a team despite their age difference. This percentage was also below expectations (Commercial Bank, 2021). Commercial banks in the central region also noted the following challenges because of having a multigenerational workforce:

**Poor results:** In quarter one, the Central region produced poor results due to misalignment, inconsistency in providing feedback, and team disengagement. The Central region was awarded a need improvement rating in quarter one, which is the minimum rating, meaning that the region is not achieving its set objectives (Central Commercial Bank, 2021).

**Miscommunication issues:** Miscommunication was another issue employees raised, as different generational preferences and communication styles differed. The organisation is currently using e-mails, phone, and video calls as well as instant messages as a standard communication medium. It was noted that each generational prefers some of these ways of communication and not all of them. Each generational relates to certain means of communication. It was recommended that the organisation choose the appropriate

method to ensure that the message is received and understood by all generations (Central Commercial Bank, 2021).

**Negative stereotypes:** The survey also highlighted the issue of negative stereotypes among different generations where older employees perceive younger employees as oversensitive and entitled. Younger employees also perceive older employees as naive, as they just accept instructions without asking questions. They are also perceived as inflexible and resistant to change and technology. This has led the organisation to have a toxic culture, ageism, and employee relations problems.

**Varying employee expectations:** The results show that each generational has different expectations from the organisation. This has created disengagement between people managers and subordinates. The survey also indicated that experienced staff feel intimidated by generations Y and Z, as these generations are educated but lack experience (Central Commercial Bank, 2021). The older generational withholds information and knowledge because they fear losing their jobs to the younger generational. On the same note Generation, Y and Z do not have experience. They need Generation X for on-the-job training. Additionally, the way the old generational prefers feedback, and the younger generational differ. Results show that the older generational is comfortable with once-a-month feedback. Younger generational appreciate being engaged every week and being kept in the loop regarding their progress (Central Commercial Bank, 2021).

It has been concluded that the multigenerational workforce at a commercial bank is one of the major sources of the challenges facing the bank. In addition, reasons for no performance in the bank. Additionally, most experienced employees leave the bank due to an imbalance in management. As people, managers use a blanket approach (Central Commercial Bank, 2021). The business is evolving, and the speed of change adaptation is very high, while managers do not have the skills and strategies to ensure that none of the employees are left behind. Some employees decide to be absent from work, as there is no harmony in the organisation (Deloitte, 2020). While this also impacts succession as new employees join, they cannot fit into the culture, as it was designed a long time ago.

This culture does not speak to them. Things such as operating hours, dealing with rude clients, working environment, and options of working from home are not made available (Central Commercial Bank, 2021).

### 1.5 Problem Statement

The problem is that people managers lack strategies to manage an age-diverse workforce in the commercial bank in the central region. The consequences of failing to resolve this will result in loss of production, high staff turnover (loss of talent, loss of experienced staff and no successor), increase in absenteeism, staff disengagement, labour disputes, and brand reputational risk, which will result in financial loss and bottom-line decrease (Central Commercial Bank, 2021).

### 1.6 Research Questions

This research aims to provide an answer to the following questions about managing a multigenerational workforce.

- What are the characteristics of each generational represented in the multigenerational workforce?
- What are the challenges currently facing managers of a multigenerational workforce in the commercial retail bank in the central region?
- What strategies can be formulated to assist managers in effectively managing a multigenerational workforce in the commercial retail bank in the central region?

### 1.7 Research Objectives

Below are the objectives this study will focus on, which include one primary and three secondary objectives.

### 1.7.1 Primary Objective

To determine how to manage a multigenerational workforce in the commercial bank in the central region.

### 1.7.2 Secondary Objectives

- ✓ To identify the characteristics of each generational in the multigenerational workforce.
- ✓ To investigate challenges facing managers in managing a multigenerational workforce in the commercial retail bank in the central region.
- ✓ To develop strategies to assist managers in managing a multigenerational workforce at the commercial retail bank in the central region.

## 1.8 Research Methodology

### 1.8.1 Research Paradigm/Philosophy

For this study a positivistic research paradigm was used. It is an epistemological approach that advocates applying natural science methods to study and understand social reality objectively. Positivists believe that there is a single reality that is possible to measure and understand. Because of this, researchers are most likely to use quantitative methods. (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

### 1.8.2 Research Design

A quantitative research design was used in this study. A quantitative design emphasises testing theories using a deductive approach, it also employs measurements and incorporates the practices and norms of positivism and the natural sciences. (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

## 1.9 Sampling

A probability sampling method was used, specifically Stratified Random Sampling.

The Commercial central bank, have a total population of 1016 and the sample that will be used will be 101 which is 10% of the total population size.

The researcher will select one branch per region (5 branches in total with a total of 20 employees and 10 people managers) for this study, total sample size will be 101.

### 1.9.2 Population of the Commercial Bank in the Central Region

The central region has five regions (Kalahari Diamonds in NC, Roses and Golden fields in FS, Gold, and Platinum in NW).

- 1 Kalahari Diamonds in NC
- 2 Roses in FS
- 3 Golden fields in FS
- 4 Gold in NW
- 5 Platinum in NW

The research will select one branch for each region, which will tally up to five branches. In each branch, the researcher will select two BA2s, two BA3s, one AVP, and two VPs in four regions as well as 1 VP in the support area and 1 P level. BAs, AVP, and VP, these are job grades used by the central bank to classify its employees' level of seniority, BA2' and 3's, these are junior employees who are in the frontline and not in a managerial positions, while AVP and VP, being employees that are in managerial roles such as branch managers which are at AVP level and Regional managers at VP level. This is to identify our feedback in terms of which level does it come from to link it with correct generation.

1.9.3 Breakdown of Respondents Who Will Participate in This Study.

The focus will be on 10 BA2s, which is the entry-level for the bank, and 10 BA3s, which is more at the senior employee level. The 3<sup>rd</sup> focus will be on 5 AVs, which is the management level. This includes branch managers and premium acquisition bankers. Then, the last group will be VPs, where three of them will also be respondents, and this will give the researcher a total overview of the entire central region’s employees.

In total, 101 employees will participate in this research, which will provide a total overview of the central region, and they will be a mix of all generations that the business has to ensure that they are all represented.

Table 1. 1: Corporate grade levels and sample sizes

<b>Corporate Grades</b>	<b>Generations</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Total</b>
BA2	Gen Y & Z	Gen Y (25) and Gen Z (5)	30
BA3	Baby Boomers & Gen Y	Baby Boomers (20) and (10) Gen Y	30
AVP	Traditionalists, Baby boomers & Gen Y	Traditionalists (15) Baby Boomers (10) & Gen Y (10)	35
VP	traditionalists, Baby Boomers & Gen Y	Traditionalists (2), Baby Boomers (2) & Gen Y (2)	6

1.10 Data Collection Method

Data will be collected using a survey. SurveyMonkey will be used to collect the data. the questions will make use of a four-point Likert scale.

The process to be followed for this survey will be self-completion questionnaires, which will be close-ended questions and will be completed using online platforms. Questionnaires will be distributed by e-mail via HR.

## 1.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations will be followed by the researcher in ensuring that respondents are aware that their participation is voluntary, their responses will be kept confidential, anonymous, and they will be required to complete the consent form before participation on this research. And the researcher will follow all ethical guidelines to ensure that this research does not cause any harm to the respondents. Ethical clearance received clearance number UFS-HSD2023/0575.

### 1.11.1 Permission

This is where a researcher needs to request and obtain approval or authorization in writing to conduct their research. For this research, permission to conduct was requested from the Regional Executive of the commercial bank in the Central region formally as per the university's requirements for ethical clearance as well as the commercial bank's requirements.

### 1.11.2 Informed Consent

Respondents must be fully informed about the research process, according to the principle (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). Informed consent was ensured in this study by providing prospective research respondents with as much information as they required to make an informed decision about whether to participate.

### 1.11.3 Voluntary Participation

Respondents must be made aware that they are not forced to participate in the research. Additionally, it is advisable that the person who conducts the research, if their team is selected to participate, should be a third party to facilitate. Otherwise, it may be perceived by the respondent that they do not have any choice but to participate because their manager is asking them to do so. (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). In this case the researcher is the line manager, Human resource business partner will be the third party who facilitate the participation and sending out research link to participants.

#### 1.11.4 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Respondent should be allowed to respond anonymously to protect their privacy and their feedback to be kept confidential. (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

To ensure that respondent information is confidential and anonymous, the researcher ensured that no information would make it possible to link back feedback to individuals, by not asking irrelevant questions that will not be required to obtain feedback about the study.

#### 1.11.5 No Harm

This relates to the possibility of harm to the researchers, which can be physical or emotional. (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

The researcher ensured that the research did not pose any physical or emotional harm to respondents and would follow the data privacy policy and confidentiality.

#### 1.12 Demarcation and field of study

The study is about finding a solution for managing a multigenerational workforce, which will be done at the commercial retail bank in the central region.

This study will involve all commercial retail bank staff from the junior level (BA2 to executive P level), but a survey will be conducted with selected individuals who will represent all levels as well as all types of generations represented in the organisation using stratified sampling.

The field of study is human resource management.

#### 1.13 Chapter Layout

Chapter 2: Literature review.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations.

### 1.14 Conclusion

As indicated in this report, the world of work is evolving, and different generations are in the workplace. The challenges managers face regarding managing these age-diverse generations have been noted. As older generations retire, the new generational enters the job market. During this process, the mixed generational grows.

The aim is to find strategies that will assist people managers in effectively managing all these generations as optimally as possible, as well as understanding them by knowing how they are being characterised.

This will come with benefits such as having happy employees, which will result in good team engagement, increased productivity, and good returns for the organisation as well as return on investment for their shareholders.

This may also reduce employee turnover and assist organisations in resolving issues very quickly and effectively.

## Chapter 2: Managing a Multigenerational Workforce

### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter One indicated that current organisations have a multigenerational workforce. Some theories can be used to assist organisations in ensuring that they embrace this diversity to achieve excellent results and get the best out of each generational represented.

According to a recent Deloitte study, 70% of organisations indicated that managing multigenerational workforces will be crucial or extremely crucial to their performance in the coming year. Only 6% stated that their team leaders were capable of doing so. (Deloitte,2022). The aim of section one is to obtain a deeper understanding of how these generations behave.

A study performed by Snyder (2020) highlighted the motivators that different generations relate to. Snyder (2020), the founder of Vox Mobile, indicated that organisation's must motivate their employees with incentives that matter to them. Most of his sales team, approximately 85%, are just out of school and on their first or second job. His leadership team comprises people in their 30s and 40s. He stated that to appeal to these different age groups, he has developed different sets of employee perks. These perks are based mainly on where these groups are in their personal and professional lives. He notices that these groups have different motivators and surely, they will be motivated by different incentives. In his observation, Gen Y workers want to be found in their LinkedIn accounts. They enjoy things such as branded gear and the company sponsoring their happy hour. This generational does not go straight home after work. They are also more social. Gen X does not care about logo backpacks; instead, they prefer to have matching plans and healthcare provisions (Snyder, 2020).

Table 2.1: Description of five generations represented in the multigenerational workforce (Source, Virginia business systems, 2023).

<b>Generational Workplace</b>				
<b>Veterans</b>	<b>Baby Boomers</b>	<b>Generation X</b>	<b>Generation Y (Millennials)</b>	<b>Generation Z (Digital Natives)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 61 Years</li> <li>• Experiences</li> <li>• Loyal to company</li> <li>• Appreciate sacrifices.</li> <li>• Job for life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 to 60 years</li> <li>• Great dedication to work.</li> <li>• Ability to forge their career build on upward mobile.</li> <li>• Commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 to 45 years</li> <li>• Open minded</li> <li>• Appreciate diversity.</li> <li>• World citizens</li> <li>• Competitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 to 34</li> <li>• Career patch determined by switching roles frequently.</li> <li>• Keen on mobility</li> <li>• Social vocal and aware</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 24 years</li> <li>• Critical and selective</li> <li>• Career multitaskers</li> <li>• Technology is intuitive</li> </ul>

The next section focuses on the characteristics of each of the abovementioned generations.

## 2.2 Characteristics of Multigenerational Workforces

In the current workforce, there are five different generations (Urick, 2022). These generations are classified as Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. In the next section, all five abovementioned generations will be described using their characteristics, starting with the older generational called traditionalists.

### 2.2.1 Traditionalist

This generational was born between 1925 and 1955, is very loyal, follows instructions, and is responsible (Urick, 2020). Traditionalists, often known as the Silent Generation, experienced both great depression and World War II as children (Noe, 2019).

They typically prioritise thriftiness and are patriotic and obedient (Lyons & Kuron, 2019). They follow the law and are devoted to their employers, and they assume responsibility and make sacrifices for the benefit of the business (Noe, 2019).

In the workplace, there are only a few members of this generational present, as most members have retired, and those who are still employed are about to reach retirement age. Most of the traditionalists were regarded as hard workers during their time, and as a result, sufficient provision for retirement was made (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2019).

Looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, this generational appreciates self-actualisation as they have been long in the organisation (Maslow, 2021). Traditionalists have mostly achieved what they wanted, and their valuable motivator is to be recognised for their contributions (Maslow, 2021). Traditionalists are hard workers because they grew up during the apartheid regime time when jobs were not abundant in South Africa (Actual Society SA, 2021). This generational tends to disengage if they feel disrespected by younger employees (Delloite, 2020).

The background of the traditionalists' generational has been laid out through their characteristic discussion. The next generational to focus on will be the Baby Boomers.

### 2.2.2 Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are the second group in the multigenerational workforce, and they are characterised differently compared to the first group. This generational was born between 1946 and 1964 (Johnson & Johnson, 2019).

Within the South African context, the Baby Boomers were exposed to the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 (Shragay & Tziner, 2019), the rise of the black resistance movement from 1948 to 1960 (e.g., resistance to Bantu Education), the Soweto Uprising of 1976 (which was a protest against the apartheid government enforcing Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools), and the banning of the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress in 1960 (Shragay & Tziner, 2019). Sometimes they are referred to as the "Me" Generational (Drago, 2019). The Baby Boomers protested the "establishment" in favour of rights and the conclusion of the Vietnam War (Neo, 2019). They place a high

priority on independence and social responsibility. Research by the Gallup organisation indicates that many boomers work best when they know what is expected of them and that their ideas and opinions matter (Mulvie, 2021). This generational is motivated by self-actualisation because they have been long in the organisation (Maslow, 2021).

The next generational is Generation X, which was the third generational to join the workforce.

### 2.2.3 Generation X

Generation X was born between 1965 and 1980; they are identifiable by the history of the first personal computer developed during their era, the divorce rate doubled, and more women were working outside the home (Noe, 2019). They were frequently left alone after school and sought work-life balance, respect informality, and practicality (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2019). Throughout their entire lives, they have gone through a change in terms of parents, homes, and cities (Noe, 2019). This generational is top of deficiency needs and is motivated by a sense of belonging (Maslow, 2019). They also make their names in the organisation, and recognition is very important both monetary and nonmonetary (Roux, 2019).

Gen X was followed by Generation Y, which is the fourth in the multigenerational workforce, and the focus will also be on its characteristics. This generational is also referred to as Millennials.

### 2.2.4 Generation Y (millennials)

Generation Y was born between 1982 and 1995, and Millennials are often referred to as Generation Y or Echo Boomers (Tapscott, 2020). They were raised in a digital age with access to the Internet and computers at home and school (Schwartz, 2019).

The Baby Boomer parents coached, applauded, and encouraged involvement in achievement as they saw their children grow up in diverse classrooms (Seipert & Baghurst, 2019). Additionally, younger generations may dislike Baby Boomers and traditionalists who continue to work past retirement age and obstruct promotions and other job opportunities for younger workers (Noe, 2019). Millennials have high

expectations for their lives and opportunities. Having grown up at a time of economic stability and raised by boomers, they have been largely sheltered from concerns and issues (Mulvie, 2021). Generation Y represents approximately 40% of South Africans (Roux, 2019). They prefer to work in teams and enjoy being challenged (Roux, 2019). Generation Y also shows a preference for being employed in organisations that are highly technologically oriented (Codrington & Grant-Marshall,2019). This is a technology survey generation; they prefer digital platforms and traditional or manual ways of doing things. (Ros, Schwartz & Surkiss,2019).

After Generation Y, the new Generation Z entered the market, and the focus will be on understanding who they are in the form of their characteristics.

#### 2.2.5 Generation Z

Gen Z was born in 1996 and is now born free; it was born after South Africa received its democracy in 1994 (Tapscott, 2020). They desire to work individually and are flexible and mobile (Roux, 2019). Gen Z is motivated by stability, competition, and diversity (Urlick, 2022). They are digital pioneers, and they are comfortable with the use of technology (Salkind, 2019). Gen Z as consumers rely on social media and digital platforms to make informed decisions (Langley, 2019). Gen Z prefers online shopping, and they do not believe in the touch and feel of the product before deciding to buy (Salkind, 2019). At work, they become frustrated mostly by slow decision-making as well as poor digital resources (Field & Buitendach, 2019). They are also perceived as the generational that likes entitlement without truly working hard for it (Roux, 2019).

Characteristics of the five generations have been outlined. The next section focuses on the challenges that come with this different generation, whose characteristics and backgrounds are so different that they must now work in one workforce to achieve one common objective.

### 2.3 Challenges of Multigenerational Workforce

Managing a multigenerational workforce can be challenging, especially if the organisation does not equip its leaders well enough to effectively manage such dynamics (Salkind,

2019). Different studies have been done previously on this topic (Amarche, 2019) & (Delloite, 2020) just to name a few, where some of the challenges were identified. Amarche identified the four key challenges faced by the multigenerational workforce to date, namely, miscommunication, negative stereotypes, different perspectives, and age discrimination (Amarche, 2019)

The first challenge is miscommunication within the organisation.

### 2.3.1 Miscommunication

Most organisations face miscommunication issues due to the different preferences of each group (Andres, 2021). Most organisations are making use of e-mails, phone, and video calls as well as instant messages, while not all generations prefer all of them (Central Commercial Bank 2021). An organisation must choose the appropriate and effective method to ensure that messages are received and understood (Kyle, 2019). Miscommunications distort much information and can create havoc as employees interpret information differently (Amarche, 2019). Each organisation must select at least one or two methods to be used for communication (Arnold & Williams, 2019). They will also have to ensure that all generations are comfortable and competent in using the selected methods to ensure that there is no doubt concerning communicating with the entire workforce (Kyle, 2019).

The second challenge that is common in the most multigenerational workforce, as per research by Delloite (2020), is negative stereotypes among generations.

### 2.3.2 Negative Stereotype

Negative stereotypes can also create a very unproductive workforce if not managed accordingly (Delloite, 2020). Amarche (2019) indicates that older employees perceive younger employees as oversensitive and have a sense of entitlement. While younger employees also perceive older employees as naive, they accept instructions without asking questions, and they are inflexible and resistant to change and technology (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). According to Delloite, (2020). It is very easy to develop a stereotype based on the experience one has with a certain group (Delloite, 2020).

Organisations need to overcome this stereotype sooner, as it can create issues in the organisation. The next key challenge to be discussed is differences in expectations by the different age groups.

### 2.3.3 Different Expectations

Varying employee expectations create disengagement between people managers and subordinates (Inglehart & Baker, 2019). Experienced staff feel intimidated, as generations Y and Z are educated but inexperienced (Drago, 2019). They do not want to transfer knowledge, as they are scared that they will take up their jobs (Delloite, 2020). Generations Y and Z do not have experience, and they need Generation X for on-the-job training (Delloite, 2020). The frequency of feedback differs between each generation; for example, the older generational prefers once-off feedback, while younger generations prefer regular feedback (Amarche, 2019). In the context of rewards, it is also important to consider other forms of appreciation provided to employees. Again, studies have reported generational differences in this regard, which emphasises the importance of examining the generational dynamics involved. For instance, Gursoy et al. (2019) compared the work-related attitudes of Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y participants. They found that compared to the other groups, Millennials were found to view recognition as an important aspect of their work and sought the same (Delloite, 2020).

The fourth challenge to be discussed is age discrimination within the different generations.

### 2.3.4 Age Discrimination

Older employees within the workplace are sometimes left behind, often because of their inability to keep up with new technology and the pace of work (Amarche, 2019). With ways of work changing and technology taking over, it is critical that all employees are agile and flexible to change (Delloite, 2020). Some organisations struggle to keep older generations up to standard, as they feel like it takes a lot of time, and they also resist change (Tapscott, 2020). This is very dangerous, as old employees find themselves left behind and end up missing out on career progress opportunities (Amarche, 2019). Due to a lack of agility on the older Generation's side, generations X, Y, and Z end up obtaining

all opportunities, which creates issues and division within the generations in the organisation (Drago, 2019).

Everything has its pros and cons; as the challenges have now been discussed, let's also have a look at the benefits that come with having such a diverse organisation.

## 2.4 Benefits of a Multigenerational Workforce

There are five benefits of a multigenerational workforce which are as follows.

The first benefits that have been highlighted by most organisations are knowledge sharing and talent retention (Delloite, 2020).

### 2.4.1 Sharing of Knowledge and Talent Retention

The recruitment process is one of the most expensive processes in human resource management (Schwartz, 2019). Knowledge from a broad range of people can serve the organisation well, and it also assists in succession planning and talent retention (Drago, 2019). It also comes with different perspectives and enhances customer and employee experience.

Talent management and retention strategies are critical in all organisations (O'Bannon, 2019). Talent can be retained through support shown by the workplace without emphasising the age difference and can be measured by employee attrition by age (Amarche, 2019). Having traditionalists with such a wealth of knowledge and generations X to Z with different skill sets makes a solid key-performing team (Delloite,2020). Hence, it is a brilliant benefit for a multigenerational workforce to invest in all these groups (Shragay & Tziner, 2019).

The second benefit indicated by this kind of organisation with such a workforce is an increase in creativity and innovation.

### 2.4.2 Increase in Creativity and Innovation

Having different generations in the organisation brings different perspectives and experiences, as they tend to see things such as work processes, product development,

and customer services differently (Shragay & Tziner, 2019). It also leads to increased creativity and innovation, especially when they feel that they can share their ideas freely, and they are more likely to be creative and innovative (Amarche, 2019). Coming to problem-solving, having such a diverse team at the table makes it very simple to find the solution (Hernaus & Vokic, 2019). Multigenerational teams are mostly beneficial to creative teams such as marketing, art, and IT (Delloite, 2020). However, it needs to be managed well due to group dynamics (Hernaus & Vokic, 2019). Multigenerational workforces tend to have better problem-solving skills since they have a mix of ages, experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives that all assist in coming up with effective solutions (Shragay & Tziner, 2019). It can also make teams more versatile and better able to meet the challenges of the workplace (Amarche, 2019).

Different generations possess unique skills, talent, wisdom, and knowledge, which benefit the organisation and can assist in increasing productivity if managed well. Effective communication has also been identified as one of the benefits multigenerational workforces bring.

#### 2.4.3 Communication

Different generations have different communication styles, and the sooner the organisation respects and understands these differences, the better (Delloite, 2020).

Having five different generations working together brings great opportunities to learn from each other and improve cross-communication among all generations (Amarche, 2019). A study was done by a company an Indian IT company where employees indicated that today's generational makes use of technology such as social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Google) as part of communication, but most companies tend to block these communication platforms, which makes employees disengaged (Amarche, 2019).

Earlier studies have also identified generation-specific patterns of communication; for instance, Feiertag and Berg (2019) indicated that the younger generational lacks communication skills, mainly due to the lack of exposure to the business environment and the tendency to find shorter ways to communicate. Additionally, they observed that young workers often use slang and colloquial terms in business communication. Younger

generations depend on technology (Shragay & Tziner, 2019). Older generations have been found to prefer traditional methods of communication such as memos and hard copies of formally written letters (Shragay & Tziner, 2019). Saunderson (2020) suggests that keeping each generation's communication preferences in mind will help managers bridge the gap between team members who belong to different generations.

There is nothing as fulfilling as having a team that gels well together and there is a clear way of communication and understanding, as well as an environment where employees are free to communicate and share their ideas and how they feel, it all starts with trust between each generational represented, leadership and employees. Flexibility and adaptability are discussed next as the fourth benefit.

#### 2.4.4 Flexibility and Adaptability

A multigenerational workforce also comes with great flexibility and adaptability, as it benefits both organisations and employees (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Since different ages tend to have different skill sets, this can result in the workforce being flexible and adaptable (Delloite, 2020). For example, younger workers have technology skills that can assist older employees in adapting to change, and older employees have more experience and will be able to provide on-the-job training to younger employees (Amarche, 2019). This ends up being a win-win situation, and it also creates trust, bonds, and dependability among multiple generations; they see each other as a team that needs all of them to succeed and not as individuals (Noe, 2019).

Recently, COVID-19 took the world by storm, and organisations without multigenerational workforces struggled to adjust and adapt to new ways of work (Delloite, 2020). Traditionalists and Baby Boomers struggled with technology, and they had to learn fast during the hard lockdown, as all nonessential workers had to work from home, adapt to the new ways of work, and still be productive (Science Direct, 2021). The multigenerational workforce found it very easy, as with the new generation's, flexibility they were also able to support their old colleagues to adjust and adapt quickly (Delloite, 2020).

Multigenerational workforce has proven to have the benefit of being profitable and productive.

#### 2.4.5 Profitability and Productivity

Each business aims to make a profit, increase productivity, and gain market share. Amarche (2019) stated that a multigenerational workforce brings exactly that through its being a more dynamic workplace since there is potential for a greater exchange of ideas with employees of different ages and backgrounds. All these factors can lead to increased productivity and profitability of the organisation (Linden, 2019).

Without any doubt having happy employees and working for an organisation that understands their uniqueness. Employees know that they are not just a number but a group of multigenerational individuals who bring a different skill set, and they are accepted for who they are (Urlick, 2022). In addition, not being judged or forced to change to fit in makes them go the extra mile by being creative and competitive (Deloitte, 2020).

The next section focuses on strategies that can assist leaders/managers of the multigenerational workforce to better manage and obtain the desired results from this workforce.

### 2.5 Strategies to Manage a Multigenerational Workforce.

To assist managers and leaders in managing and getting the best out of each generational in the workforce, the following strategies have been identified and are to be discussed. The first strategy is leadership.

#### 2.5.1 Leadership

The first is effective leadership; leaders should focus less on generational stereotypes and more on the uniqueness of the individuals with whom they are working (Urlick, 2022). According to Haeger and Lingham (2019), there are fewer leaders older than four years in the workplace. Emerging leadership patterns need to redefine what will be required from managers to address the conflict of multigenerational employees in the future (Urlick, 2022). Managers are faced with the critical challenge of keeping people motivated,

creating meaning in work, retaining employees, and harnessing their full potential (Delloite, 2020). Thus, leadership behaviours and traits are an important part of organisational effectiveness (Raelin, 2019). Leadership behaviours are critical for successful conflict resolution (Haeger & Lingham, 2019). Organisations must invest in their leaders by equipping them to ensure that their leadership skills are prioritised (Branscum & Sciaraffa, 2019).

The second strategy to look at will be assisting employees to shift from focusing on self-interest to group interest.

### 2.5.2 Shift from Self-interest to Group-interest

According to Servant Leadership, the role of a leader in such a group is to remove obstacles to the team's success and allow each person to do their job (Burkus, 2019). The generation's identity can be a barrier to moving to group interests (Urick, 2022). Individuals who prioritise perceived generational differences over common organisational goals and interests will not move toward concern for the larger group (Delloite, 2020). Similarly, if they see goals or outcomes as being completely different between generations and potentially contradictory to their own, they will not embrace a more collective mindset (Urick, 2022). An organisation that will focus on this strategy and get it correct will reap many benefits (Kane, 2019). Employee engagement is also one of the critical strategies that will assist managers in managing the multigenerational workforce better.

### 2.5.3 Employee Engagement

The fully engaged employees figure out how to beat the competition, while disengaged employees always complain about being beaten by the competition (Simonton, 2019). Employees who are engaged feel motivated, have a sense of belonging, and are always willing to go the extra mile for their organisation (Rosenberg, 2019). It is critical that one of the multigenerational strategies is to create engagement practices within the workforce. Employee engagement can be accomplished by creating a flexible work schedule (Delloite, 2020). This can also reduce dissatisfaction in the work environment through new practices that can add value to organisational engagement. (Ferri-Reed, 2019).

Failure to motivate employees may lead to low employee management and morale (Ferri-Reed, 2019). Multigenerational organisations must encourage employees to voice their opinions (Delloite, 2020).

The last strategy to be discussed is training and mentoring.

#### 2.5.4 Mentoring and Training

Mentoring and training are both very critical in a multigenerational workforce, especially intergenerational mentoring, in ensuring that skills, knowledge, and expertise are shared among all employees (Beutell, 2019). Organisations must consider training programs and mentoring considering differences within these generations (Houck, 2022).

Dwarakanath (2019) reported that with an increasing Gen Y workforce, companies are modifying their training strategies to suit the learning styles of the younger generation. Ensuring that staff are aware of the benefits of working with people of different ages is a key component of managing a multigenerational workforce (Schullery, 2019). As teams realise their advantages, they begin to work together toward the same goal, which is to learn valuable lessons from older co-workers (Delloite, 2020).

The above strategies will help managers to effectively manage the multigenerational workforce if they are being implemented accordingly. Additionally, managers will have to revisit them as time goes by to ensure that they are still relevant to their organisation.

The next section looks at the leadership of the multigenerational workforce and the shift that they need to make to succeed in this kind of workforce; the focus will be on conflict management, work ethics, and review of policies and procedures.

#### 2.6 Leadership Shifts

With this leadership shift, the aim is to highlight the importance as well as the impact that it may have on the organisation.

The first shift is conflict management.

### 2.6.1 Conflict Management

A major cause of concern for managers is that these differences could lead to intragenerational conflicts in the workplace (Gursoy et al., 2019). This highlights the need to examine these differences closely to enable managers and employers to consider them during the planning and implementation of company policies (Creswell and Tashakkori 2019). It is critical that conflict management policies be reviewed as new generations enter the job market, as some of the policies are not talking about what organisations are currently facing (Delloite, 2020). Conflict avoidance does not resolve the conflict, but it pushes it to manifest itself elsewhere (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2019). It is critical for people managers not to avoid conflict but to address it (Zeeshan and Iram, 2021). The young generational is called the Y Generational because they always ask the why question, which can also be perceived as being difficult and can create much confusion and conflict for old-generational managers (Delloite, 2020). Therefore, people managers must be equipped with training and skills to assist them in dealing with conflict (Schwartz, 2019). Management needs to also understand that younger generations will challenge some of the decisions that were taken in the past as well as instructions that they feel make no sense to them (Schwartz, 2019). They do this only to get understanding and clarity for them to do their work better, but it can be perceived as being rude and asking too much (Delloite, 2020).

The second management shift that leaders need to focus on is work ethics.

### 2.6.2 Work Ethics

The approach to work and the tools that generations are using to get work done are different (Coulter & Faulkner, 2019). The older generational has a different work ethic. Therefore, for example, if their boss has said that a particular project must be done in a particular way, there is a lot less rebellion and there is a lot of toeing the line, there is a lot more detail orientation and desire to work in traditional ways (Claire Raines, 2019). However, the younger generational will find its method of completing the work (Delloite 2020). Managers need to understand or learn that the young generational is not loyal to the organisation and must understand that this practice is not unethical (Coulter &

Faulkner,2019). The young generational gets bored very easily if their job is not challenging them (Delloite 2020). Additionally, they are always on the lookout for what is new and trending, which will be able to finance their lifestyle (Claire Raines, 2019). The old generational believes that to be perceived as good employees and ethical, they must spend years working in one organisation (Coulter & Faulkner,2019). The older generational perceives younger employees as not loyal if they continue to change jobs (Delloite, 2020). This can become an issue if the older generational manager is managing the younger generation, and this shift has not yet been addressed (Claire Raines, 2019).

Workplace dynamics is very critical, and it is the third shift that leadership will need to make.

### 2.6.3 Workplace Dynamics

Scholars of organisational dynamics have linked diversity to workplace concerns and potential issues (Lindsay, Schachter, Porter, & Sorge, 2019). Joshi et al. (2019) indicated that generational dynamics have a significant impact on the outcomes of succession planning, skill transfer, and knowledge sharing. The recent age-based trend is also contributing to vigorous dialogue on what managers must do to properly handle the challenges (Delloite, 2020). Guinn (2019) added that the dynamics among employees lead to challenges for managers and raise a variety of questions. Otto, Wahl, Lefort, & Frei, (2020), added that managers must understand the variety of generational dynamics and the challenges ahead in the workplace. Communication and knowledge exchange must occur between both workers and managers (Delloite, 2020). The differences in dynamics created by workday concerns, along with relational problems, result in management stress (Unger, and Nagel, (2019). The objective of managers is to achieve a high level of productivity through subordinates at minimal cost (Otto, Wahl, Lefort, & Frei, 2020). The current challenge is to motivate employees to work in a new dynamic and multitasking environment (Maslow, 2021). The increased pressure places additional demands on hiring practices and training (Guinn, 2019). Complex and dynamic interactive processes occur through employee exchanges and the resulting interaction within the working environment (Govaerts & van der Vleuten 2019). The dynamic of performance in

work settings becomes stressed due to internal factors concerning the internal environment and can negatively affect top-performing workers. Guinn (2019) noted that dynamic variables are available to improve organisational success and enable managers to resolve the issues leading to potential productivity losses. The response to these changes is dynamically changing the workplace landscape (Cole et al., 2020). Discussions over overwork and leisure influence workplace culture (Hansen & Leuty, 2020). Failure to address these issues can lead to potential problems with employee dissatisfaction and morale (Cole et al., 2020).

The fourth shift leadership is expected to focus on the age group of each generation.

## 2. Age Group

By appreciating each age group's work style and cohort traits, a multigenerational workforce can be energised (Bell & McMinn, 2019). A distinct challenge for managing employees with diversity in age groups and providing balance in the workplace is taking shape (Deloitte, 2020). Managers must learn the intentions and specific traits of all ages and incorporate them into decision-making processes (Rajput et al., 2019). The benefit of age diversity is that a pool of competencies cannot quickly assimilate into the workplace other than through experience (Srinivasin, 2019). This combination of complementary talents can place a business in a positive position for the future (Swan, 2019).

Leaders are expected to ensure that their followers or employees are motivated for them to outperform the market and achieve their objectives.

### 2.6.5 Motivation

The lack of employee motivation results in turnover and lost company profits (Deloitte, 2020). Srinivasin (2019) indicated that managers must pay attention to motivational needs when responding to workplace characteristics and employee situations. Motivational differences exist between each generational cohort, and organisations must adopt new practices to close the gaps (Leavitt, Park & Gursoy, 2019). Businesses and industries must use incentive tactics that address other issues, such as the working environment, employment structure, and revamped benefit packages (Gursoy et al., 2020). Such

crucial components are seen as key to personal motivation by employees. According to Choi et al. (2019), having fun is crucial for increasing employee engagement and productivity while lowering stress (Delloite, 2020). Management initiatives now incorporate ideas such as motivational insights and inspirational tactics (Hopton, Barling, & Turner, 2021). Initiatives include developing a compelling future vision, delivering it to staff, and encouraging people to go above and beyond what is expected of them by the organisation (Walker, 2019). When leaders convey higher expectations and encourage staff to do better than expected levels of performance, inspirational motivation motivates workers (Holt et al., 2019).

The last shift is focusing on organisational values as well as people values.

#### 2.6.6 Values

Values are essential ideas that a person depends on to feel significant or genuine (Hansen & Leuty, 2020). Identification of what is right and wrong emerges from life experiences and created value systems (Normala & Dileep, 2020). At the core of values is the heart of every choice people make, as well as the core of what makes each person a human being (Dean, 2019). Dean (2019) went on to say that values offer a clearer foundation for decision-making than beliefs do. Human nature comprises interior values that have an impact on how someone feels pleased with work (Monahan, 2019). The Baby Boomer generational values hard work, monetary prosperity, and individuality (Bell & McMinn, 2019). Family time, flexible work schedules, and speedy promotion chances are important to Generation X (Bell & McMinn, 2019). Millennials place greater significance on their own personal liberties, social interactions, and job satisfaction (Hansen & Leuty, 2020). Understanding the variations in values is essential to controlling organisational attitudes, according to Sledge and Miles (2019). The focus is turning to taking into account the relationship between cultural views, workplace principles, and the relationship with age as a result of new knowledge about work values (Sledge & Miles, 2019). The millennial generational and Generation X do not view the world the same way or hold the same ideals as Baby Boomers do (Delloite, 2020). Baby Boomers were raised to make sacrifices and comply with authority (Corley, 2012), to expect predictability, and to view loyalty as unquestionable. Generation X values flexible work schedules and is

less trusting of authority (Ferri-Reed, 2019). The fact that Millennials value downtime as highly as actual work time is creating an uneasy environment (Ferri-Reed, 2019). The interaction of generational and age complicates the effects of generational disparities in labour ideals (Hansen & Leuty, 2020).

Maslow classified the five requirements as lower and higher-level needs. Lower-level requirements are physiological and safety, whereas higher level needs include social, esteem, and actualization (Gordon, 2020).

Maslow's need hierarchy theory is relevant for business's success. Its implication is positively impacting on organization culture, human resource management practices and employees. performance. Thus, to create good environment and to achieve excellence, application of theory in organizations is imperative (Jerome, 2021).

## 2.7 Conclusion

Chapter two covers the literature review on how to manage the multigenerational workforce. The characteristics of each different generational are discussed, followed by the challenges, benefits, and strategies that will assist managers in effectively managing the kind of workforce. The chapter also discussed in detail the shifts organisations, leaders, and employees need to work on to ensure that this concept works. Last, the chapter also covered workplace dynamics that research has reported on managing a multigenerational workforce. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is focused on the methodology that was used to collect and analyse data for this study. Research methodology is defined as the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic (Proofed, 2022). First, the researcher defined the research and then discussed the research design used for this study.

#### 3.1.1 Research Methodology

Several definitions of research have been proposed by different scholars and researchers working in different fields. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English (1986:720), research methodology is defined as a "systematic investigation undertaken to discover new facts and get additional information". Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019:29) define research methodology as "something that people undertake to determine new things systematically, thereby increasing their knowledge". From the definitions of research provided above, it follows that research is a planned activity aimed at establishing new facts and information about a particular phenomenon. The research methodology process involves the identification of a particular problem or area of interest, translating that problem into a research problem, collecting data, analysing the data, and reporting the findings of the research (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

### 3.2 Research Design

#### 3.2.1 Research Paradigm

Research paradigm/philosophy is a philosophical framework that research is based on; it offers a pattern of beliefs and understanding from which the theories and practices of the research project operate (Proofed, 2022). The research approach followed was the positivism approach. Positivism is an epistemological approach that advocates applying natural science methods to study and understand social reality objectively (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). Positivists believe that there is a single reality that can be measured

and understood (Weinreich, 2019). Therefore, researchers are most likely to use quantitative methods (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). Positivism depends on quantifiable observations that lead to statistical analyses. It has been a dominant form of research in business and management disciplines for decades. It has been noted that as a philosophy, positivism is by the empiricist view that knowledge stems from human experience (Crowther & Lancaster, 2019).

The reason why the quantitative design was selected was because the population that the researcher wanted to reach was large. The researcher wanted to reach each generational within the organisation. Therefore, quantitative design was the appropriate approach to be used to provide the view that the researcher wanted to see and the information the researcher wanted to obtain. The purpose of quantitative research is to predict, explain, and generalise the outcomes of the research, whereas the purpose of qualitative research is to contextualise, interpret, and understand the perspective of the actors (Creswell, 2019).

To obtain an understanding of what quantitative research is, the following information was gathered, including its definition and how it is being used. Quantitative research, according to van der Merwe (2019), is a research approach aimed at testing theories, determining facts, demonstrating relationships between variables, and predicting outcomes. Quantitative research uses methods from natural sciences that are designed to ensure objectivity, generalizability, and reliability (Weinreich, 2019).

The techniques used in quantitative research include the random selection of research participants from the study population in an unbiased manner (Haeger & Lingham, 2019). The standardised questionnaire or intervention received and statistical methods used to test predetermined hypotheses regarding the relationship between specific variables (Simon, 2019). The researcher in quantitative research, unlike in the qualitative paradigm where they are regarded as a great research instrument due to their active participation in the research process in quantitative research, is considered external to the actual research (Bell & McMinn, 2011). The results are expected to be replicable, regardless of who conducts the research.

The next section covers the kind of sampling used for this research.

### 3.3 Sampling

In this section, the researcher explains the type of sampling used. The researcher also provides reasons as to why this specific style was chosen, as well as the sample size of the population.

The researcher starts by defining the sampling style selected, which is probability sampling. Probability sampling involves deciding how to select people, organisations, or other participants in the research project (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

The researcher ensured that all generations were represented during this study, the human resources business partner used total employee file of (1016) for the central region and filtered in per age group to ensure that all generations were selected equally at 25% per generation (Traditionalist, Baby Boomers, Gen Y and Gen Z) to ensure fair distribution and comparison. As the total sample was 101 which was 10% of the central population.

#### 3.3.1 Sampling Method

Probability sampling was used, and the sample was selected using random selection so that each unit in the population had a known chance of being selected (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

According to Simon (2019:191), the implications and success of the design and related methodology have a bearing on the population and sample size. Therefore, stratified random sampling was used. Stratified random sampling ensures that the resulting sample will be distributed in the same way as the population in terms of the stratifying criterion (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

Population for the commercial retail bank in the central region

During the initial planning, the researcher intended to limit the sample to a central region. The super region consists of five regions, namely, Kalahari Diamonds based in the

Northern Cape, Roses, and Golden Fields based in the Free State, and Gold and Platinum based in the Northwest. The researcher selected one branch of each region, which tallied up to five branches. In each branch, the researcher selected two job grade level BA2s, two job grade level BA3s, one job grade level AVP, and two job grade level VPs in four regions, as well as one job grade level VP in the support area, and finally one job grade level P. All the job grades and generations were covered during this selection session. The commercial bank in the central region consisted of 1016 employees; therefore, 10% of that is 101 employees, meaning that the maximum number of employees participating was 101 staff.

### Sample Size

According to Simon (2019), the maximum % for sampling in quantitative research is 10% if it does not exceed 1000. Additionally, Weinreich, (2019), stated that 40% can be acceptable as a guideline. The commercial bank in the central region consists of 1016 employees; therefore, 10% of that is 101 employees, meaning that the maximum number of employees participating was 101 staff. The focus was first on 30 BA2s (6 per region), which were the entry level in the bank; second, 30 BA3s (6 per region), which was more at the senior employee level; third, 35 AVP, including seven branch managers per region; and last, 6 VPs, senior leadership (regional managers). This population gave the researcher a total overview of all central region employees. In total, 101 employees participated in this research, of which this population provided a total overview of the central region. The researcher ensured that all generations were involved as in the survey template each responded was mandatory to select which generation they belong to, this has insured that the researcher covered all generations required. Also, when survey was sent, human resource business partner ensured that all generations were represented on her distribution list.

### 3.4 Data Collection Method

The method used to collect data was a survey, which refers to research that uses a cross-sectional research design, such as a questionnaire or structured interviews, to collect quantitative data (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). For this study, twenty questions were asked with a Likert scale of one to four. This number of questions was sufficient, as the number of respondents was large. Questions were developed by the researcher with the guidance of previous studies. This was validated by the statistician from the university to ensure its validity and reliability.

The questionnaires were developed based on the primary objective of the study as well as the three secondary objectives as indicated in chapter one, to ensure that they give the researcher the insight of the study. The researcher also developed the questionnaires based on the literature review done in chapter two. Fifteen questions were developed to ensure that the four objectives were achieved. See Appendix A for the questionnaire.

This section discusses the method used for data collection. The process followed for this survey was self-completion questionnaires, which were closed-ended questions and were completed using online platforms. Questionnaires were distributed by e-mail (link) via Human Resources business partner. The reason for using HR was because the researcher is the line manager of one of the regions to avoid conflicts of interest or power. The respondents made use of their desktops at work to answer the questions by accessing the Survey Monkey link sent to them by an HR business partner. When respondents completed the survey, feedback was sent automatically to the researcher via the Survey Monkey report.

The next section will explain in detail the data analysis method used to analyse the data.

### 3.4.1 Reliability and Validity of the Data

#### 3.4.1.1 Reliability

Reliability reflects consistency and replicability over time. Furthermore, reliability is seen as the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors, since the more measurement errors occur the less reliable the test (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

#### 3.4.1.2 Validity

Validity refers to how well a research study measures what it promises to assess without being influenced by extraneous influences or bias (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

The reliability and validity of data was tested using the two statistic measures developed and vetted by the accredited statistician from the University of the Free state. The sample size discussed in 3.3.1 which was based on all levels in the organizations, from BA2 and BA3 front line employees, to middle management at AVP level and senior management at VP level. The researcher believes that the results or outcome from this strategy will provide data validity and reliability as the purpose of the study was assist management of the central commercial bank on how they can manage their multigenerational workforce.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data source was identified for this study: which was questionnaire.

According to Pierre & Jackson (2019), related challenges connecting quantitative data analysis with interpreting the information could take place. Data analysis involved the inductive exploration of recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then transferring them into clear and concise interpretations (Nassaji, 2019).

The inductive approach was used. When using this approach, a researcher or analyst with little insight into the outcome of the sample population collects the appropriate and

proper amount of data about a topic of interest. Then, they analyse the data to look for patterns (Maryville University, 2023). Data was analysed using two statistical analyses which were T Test and Anova.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration refers to a set of principles that guide research design and practices. These principles include voluntary participation, confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity, and potential for harm (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

Researchers need to be more than just technically proficient to understand. They must engage in whispered intimacies and expose themselves to the emotional worlds of their subjects, whether they find these worlds appealing. They must address the conflicted duality of their represented and experienced selves at the same time (Clough and Nutbrown, 2019).

In concert with Clough and Nutbrown's view above, it follows that in the planning of this research, the researcher had to take into consideration and protect the feelings, welfare, and rights of the participants.

In concert with the rules and regulations of the university regarding conducting research using human subjects, the following ethical considerations were considered while the research was discussed in detail: permission, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, and the harm of the study.

#### 3.6.1 Permission

The researcher ensured that permission was requested and granted before continuing with the process. Permission requests are where a researcher needs to request and obtain approval or authorisation in writing to conduct their research (Noe, 2019).

For this research, permission to conduct was formally requested and granted by the Regional Executive of the commercial bank in the central region as per university

principles as well as the commercial bank's requirements. The letter from the university authorising the researcher to request permission and stating that the researcher is indeed a registered student was provided when the researcher requested permission. The commercial bank authorised the researcher to conduct their research in their organisation if they did not mention the company name in their report. The research met the needed standards and requirements to proceed to research.

### 3.6.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent, the respondent was fully informed about the research process, according to the principle (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). Informed consent was ensured in this study by providing prospective research respondents with information required to make an informed decision about whether to participate or not.

### 3.6.3 Voluntary Participation

Respondents were made aware that they were not forced to participate in the research and that their participation was voluntary. Additionally, an independent facilitator was used, as the researcher was the manager of the team in ensuring that the participants were not intimidated by the researcher. The respondents should not perceive that they do not have any choice but to participate because their manager is asking them to do so. (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). The researcher made use of HR business partners to recruit respondents, which assisted since the researcher was the people manager for one of the teams. The HR business partner also specified that participation was voluntary, but the study will assist the organisation in improving the way it manages its employees.

### 3.6.4 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Confidentiality and anonymity refer to respondents being allowed to respond anonymously to protect their privacy and their feedback being kept confidential (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021).

In ensuring that respondent information was confidential and anonymous, the researcher ensured that no information made it possible to link back feedback to an individual by not asking irrelevant questions that were not required to obtain feedback about the study.

The researcher included the age, job grade, and tenure of respondents, as this was crucial for this study, and this information was used for this study only; it was not shared with anyone else or used for any other purposes.

#### 3.6.5 No Harm

The harm that might be caused by this study relates to the possibility of harm to researchers, which can be physical or emotional, and this study will cause no harm (Bryman, Bell & Hirschsohn, 2021). The researcher ensured that the research would not pose any physical or emotional harm to the respondent by following the privacy policy and confidentiality.

#### 3.6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the research design and methodology that underpin this study. Details about the method design, its origin, its relevance to this study, and its general characteristics were explored in this chapter. The following chapters build on the methodological propositions made in this chapter by employing the proposed data presentation and analysis approach to analyse the quantitative data. It has also entailed how data will be protected as well as the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation.**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher will analyse and interpret the results based on the survey feedback done at a commercial bank in the Central region. This chapter will consist of findings and interpretations based on the literature review identified in chapter two and link those findings with the findings found during the study, which was done at a commercial bank in the Central region.

The first part to focus on will be the response rate on the survey that was sent to employees within the commercial bank in the Central Region.

### **4.2 Response Rate**

This was a quantitative study, and the sample size included 101 retail bank employees, including junior employees working in the frontline, junior management, and senior management in this region. A validated structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 24 July 2023 to 27 July 2023. This was validated by a statistician using data analyses T Test and Anova.

The response rate was high. The sample size targeted was 101, and the actual response was 97, which gives an overall response rate of 96%. All the targeted job grades' responses were above 50%, except for AVPs, where the response rate was only 34%; this is a junior management population.

### **4.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Biographic Data**

The biographic data are generational cohorts, corporate grades, and ethnicity. This commercial bank is in the central region, which includes Free State, Northern Cape, and Northwest. The researcher will start by discussing the generational cohort in this region in the central commercial bank.

### 4.3.1 Generations

The focus was placed on the generations within this commercial bank, and participants were requested to state when they were born for the researcher to identify the generational to which each participant belonged.

The following generations participated in the survey, and the results were not surprising to the researcher, as this commercial bank has age diversity.

Figure 4-1 Illustrates responses per generation.

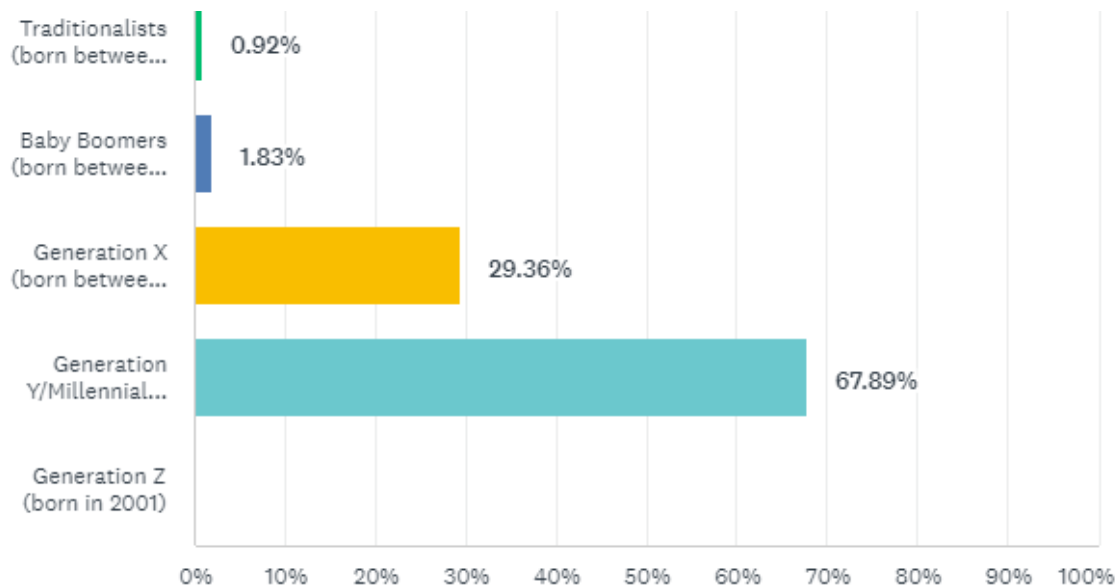


Figure 4- 1: Response rate per generation

Figure 4- 1 presents the response rate per generational in the central commercial bank. The responses per generational were as follows: traditionalists at 0.92%, baby boomers at 2%, Generation X at 30%, Generation Y at 68%, and Gen Z at 0%.

Due to low responses in different generations, as per Figure 4- 1 above, and from a statistical point of view, the researcher decided that instead of looking at each generation, generations will be grouped as Premillennial (Traditionalist, Baby Boomers, and Generation X) and then Millennials (Generations Y & Z).

Figure 4- 2 represents the grouping of generations as Millennials and Premillennials.

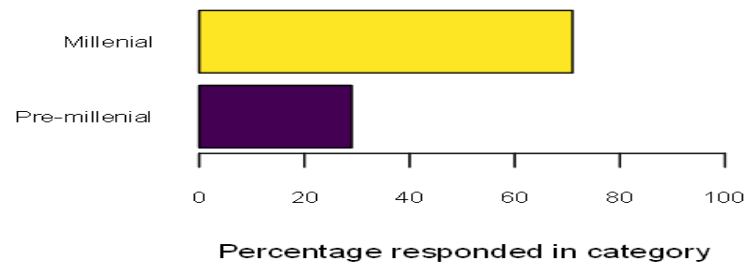


Figure 4- 2: Generational grouping response rate

Figure 4- 2 presents the response rate as per the grouped generations, premillennials, and millennials. The response rate shows that 76% of employees in this commercial bank are millennials, and 33% are premillennial.

It is noted from the results displayed in Figure 4-1 that millennials are dominant in this commercial bank. The reason millennials are compared to premillennials is because of the restructuring that happened in 2015, where the commercial bank looked at qualifications to ensure that it complied with the banking regulations. Most of the premillennial employees opted out and decided to take their packages.

Their leaving created vacancies, and the bank had to recruit suitable candidates with qualifications; most of these new joiners were Millennials. Another reason is that 50% of the front-line colleagues are still young; for some, this is their first job after university.

The second biographic identification used was job grades, which the researcher will discuss in the next section.

#### 4.3.2 Job Grades

The response rate per job grade is presented in the form of a graph in Figure 4-3 below to ensure that all job grades that were targeted participated.

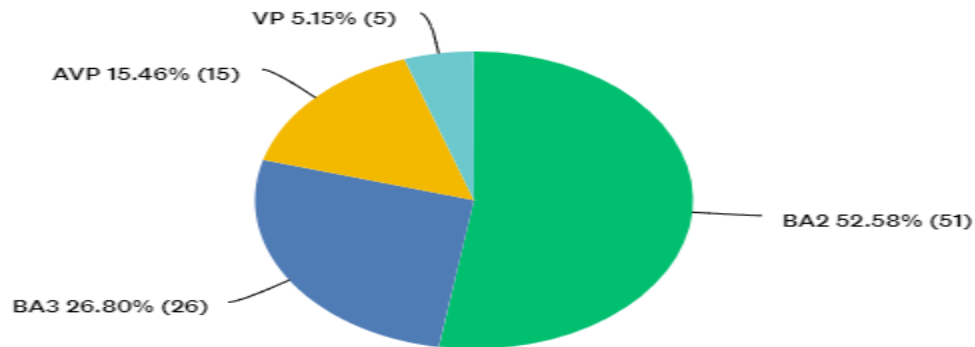


Figure 4- 3: Response rate as per corporate job grades

Figure 4- 3 shows that most of the participants were BA2 at 53%. This was the larger group in the central region, as it includes tellers, customer service clerks, and ATM custodians. They form 50% of the total population.

The second largest group is BA3s at 27%. This job grade includes sales consultants and operations consultants. This group forms 25% of the central population, and their percentage of participation is not surprising.

The third job grade is AVP at 15%. This group forms 15% of the central population and includes branch managers and premium acquisition bankers. It is a bit surprising and concerning but compared to the first two job grade this response rate is sufficient.

The last group is VPs at 5%. This group includes regional managers, who form 5% of the total population, and their participation was sufficient.

Overall participation represented all job grades that are found within the central region.

The researcher combined the job grades with the generational cohort to obtain an idea of the representation per job grade. The results are included in Table 4.1.

Table 4- 1: Corporate grade levels and sample sizes

<b>Job grades</b>	<b>Generation</b>	<b>Number per generational per job grade</b>	<b>% per generational and grade</b>	<b>Sub totals per job grade</b>	<b>% per subtotal per job grade</b>
BA2	Gen Y	25	24%	30	29%
	Gen Z	5	4%		
BA3	Baby boomers	20	19%	30	29%
	Gen Y	10	9%		
AVP	Traditionalists	15	14%	35	34%
	Baby boomers	10	9%		
	Gen Y	10	9%		
VP	Traditionalists	2	1%	6	5%
	Baby boomers	2	1%		
	Gen Y	2	1%		

Table 4.1 illustrates the targeted population in terms of corporate grades, generational cohort, and number per population.

Respondents were also requested to identify their ethnicity for the researcher to ensure balance within the different ethnicities that are represented in this commercial bank; in the next session, this will be discussed.

### 4.3.3 Ethnicity

Figure 4-4 represents the ethnicity within this commercial bank in the central region.

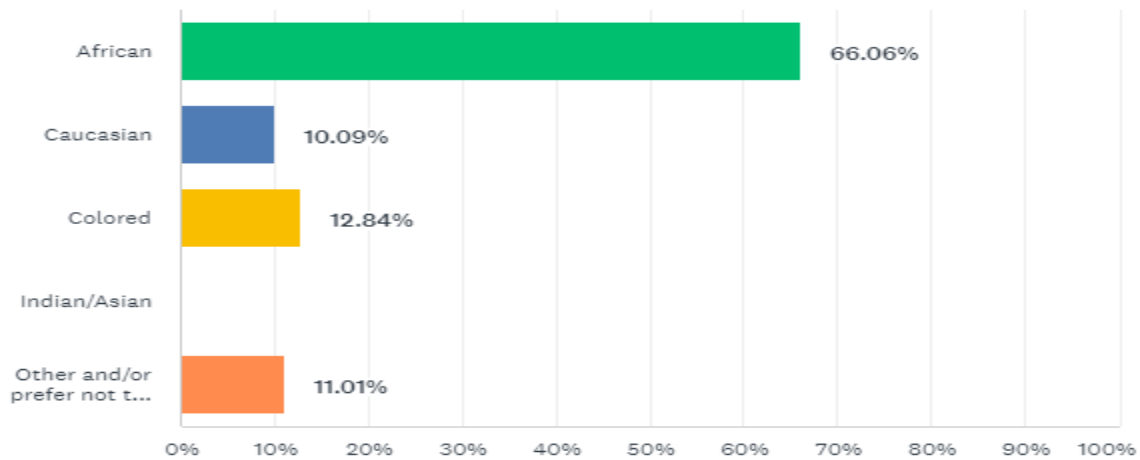


Figure 4- 4: Ethnicity

Figure 4- 4 above displays the ethnic breakdown of the population in the commercial central bank, with the African population at 66%, followed by Coloured at 13%, Caucasians at 10%, and 11% of employees choosing not to specify the ethnic group to which they belong.

The central region has more representation of Africans, followed by Caucasians, Coloured, and lastly Indians. Responses were also not a surprise, as the table below reflects exactly the main reason why there are more Africans.

In this feedback, Africans are the largest group because the bank is driving a transformation agenda in its recruitment policy that will ensure the employment of EE candidates. The three provinces within the central region (FS, NW, and NC) have a high population of EE citizens.

The participation percentage represents how this bank is represented in regard to ethnicity. Within these three provinces, their combined demographics are similar: Africans form 76%, followed by Coloureds at 13%, Caucasians at 10%, and Indians at 1%.

The next section will be the analysis and interpretation of data that were collected by the researcher from chapter 3.

#### 4.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

According to the literature review in chapter two, the following sections were identified, and questions were generated to test if the same literature review findings can be found at the central commercial bank.

The researcher followed the approach of grouping the questions in sections to ensure that the data made sense and covered all sections as per the literature review. The questions were grouped in the following sections: characteristics of each generation, atmosphere, and management issues. The statistical tool used were T test and Anova.

The first section to be discussed is the findings on generational characteristics in the commercial central bank.

##### 4.4.1 Generational Characteristics

The researcher wanted to examine whether the characteristics described in the theory would apply to the employees of the central commercial bank. Thus, the researcher aimed to analyse the findings by focusing on one generational at a time. However, the generational representation was small, the generational cohorts were grouped as premillennials and millennials, and the figure has been made to represent the results of the whole group.

There were 19 questions in which the respondents used Likert scales to demonstrate how they felt towards the arguments. The researcher decided to leave only the extreme ends: 4= strongly agree, 3= agree, 2= disagree and 1=strongly disagree.

In Figure 4- 5, the participants were asked questions that assisted in assessing the characteristics of each generational and to assess whether these characteristics are similar to those found in the literature review in Chapter 2.

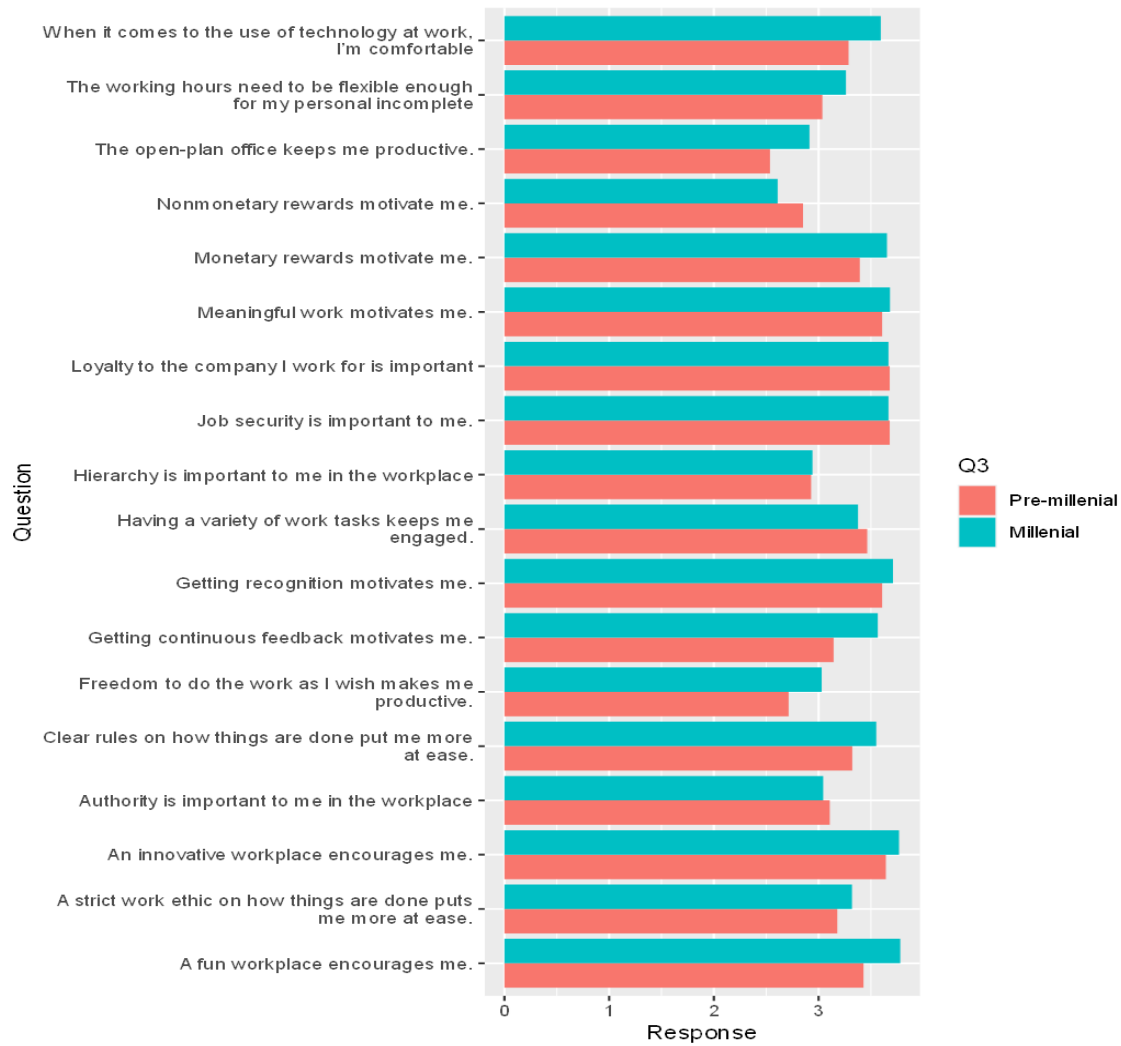


Figure 4- 5: Characteristic responses per generation

### Statistical analysis

The T test was applied to the generational breakdown to test the generational mean of the interval variables (in this case, premillennials and millennials) that differ from one another. This test is only used when there are two concepts to test, such as premillennials and millennials (Sekaran & Bougies, 2019).

Table 4.2 Illustrates the statistical significance level for generational characteristics analysis.

Table 4. 2: Characteristic significance level

<b>Description</b>	<b>P value</b>
Characteristics	0.034
Q26	0.043
Q27	0.061
Q28	0.053
Q29	0.059
Q30	0.026
Q31	0.073
Q32	0.071
Q33	0.059
Q34	0.106
Q35	0.015
Q36	0.065
Q37	0.062
Q38	0.092
Q39	0.035
Q40	0.057
Q41	0.045
Q42	0.002
Q43	0.078

The significance level to assess the characteristics responses in Table 4.2 was chosen as 0.05 to test whether the views on generational characteristics in the company differ between premillennial and millennials.

An analysis was performed for two generations, which were premillennial and millennial. The p value for the difference between generations was 0.034, which is less than 0.05. This means that there is at least one difference on average. Next, the focus is on these differences because these characteristics have a major effect on team dynamics.

In conjunction with Figure 4- 5 and Table 4.2, the researcher noted a few interesting practical differences between the generations discussed as follows:

The first is what motivates each generation. Respondents had to choose which recognition motivated them between monetary and nonmonetary recognition.

Table 4.2.1: Monetary and None monetary rewards motivation

Question	Does Monetary rewards motivate me?	
	Pre- millennial	Millennial
Strongly disagree	10%	0
Disagree	30%	3%
Agree	30%	50%
Strongly agree	30%	47%
Question	Does None monetary rewards motivate me?	
	Pre- millennial	Millennial
Strongly disagree	5%	10%
Disagree	10%	50%
Agree	50%	30%
Strongly agree	35%	10%

The response received, as indicated in Table 4.2.1 was that millennials prefer monetary recognition at 97%, while premillennial at 85% are motivated by nonmonetary recognition. Looking at the literature review, premillennial indicated that they get to do more if they get

recognised not necessarily by money but by what they value, while for millennials, money means the world to them.

The second factor was the frequency of feedback. According to the literature review in chapter 2, premillennial at 17% do not necessarily bother about receiving continuous feedback; they are happy to receive feedback once off (Snyder, 2020). Millennials at 97% want to be kept up to date on their progress. The feedback from the central commercial bank, as per Figure 4-5, was similar, where millennials indicated strongly that they prefer to receive continuous feedback, while premillennial indicated that for them, once-off feedback is sufficient.

The third one was following rules and routines, which came as a surprise. Millennials responded positively at 98% compared to premillennial at 92% in the question of whether each generational prefers clear rules when asked to execute tasks. The theory in chapter 2 stated that millennials tend to prefer flexibility and do not like following routines, but in the case of the central commercial bank, millennials more easily follow rules and are given clear instructions on how to execute tasks. However, following rules does not mean that they enjoy being micromanaged but rather to obtain instruction and freedom on how to do the task, and management must just manage the results.

Overall, the characteristics questions asked, and responses received were not much different from what the theory has suggested as characteristics of these generations in chapter 2.

#### 4.4.2 Atmosphere

In this second part, the respondents were given a chance to evaluate the atmosphere of the workplace. This part started with questions with Likert scales, six questions were asked, and the figure below indicates the responses.

Figure 4- 6 presents responses to the atmosphere feedback within the central bank.

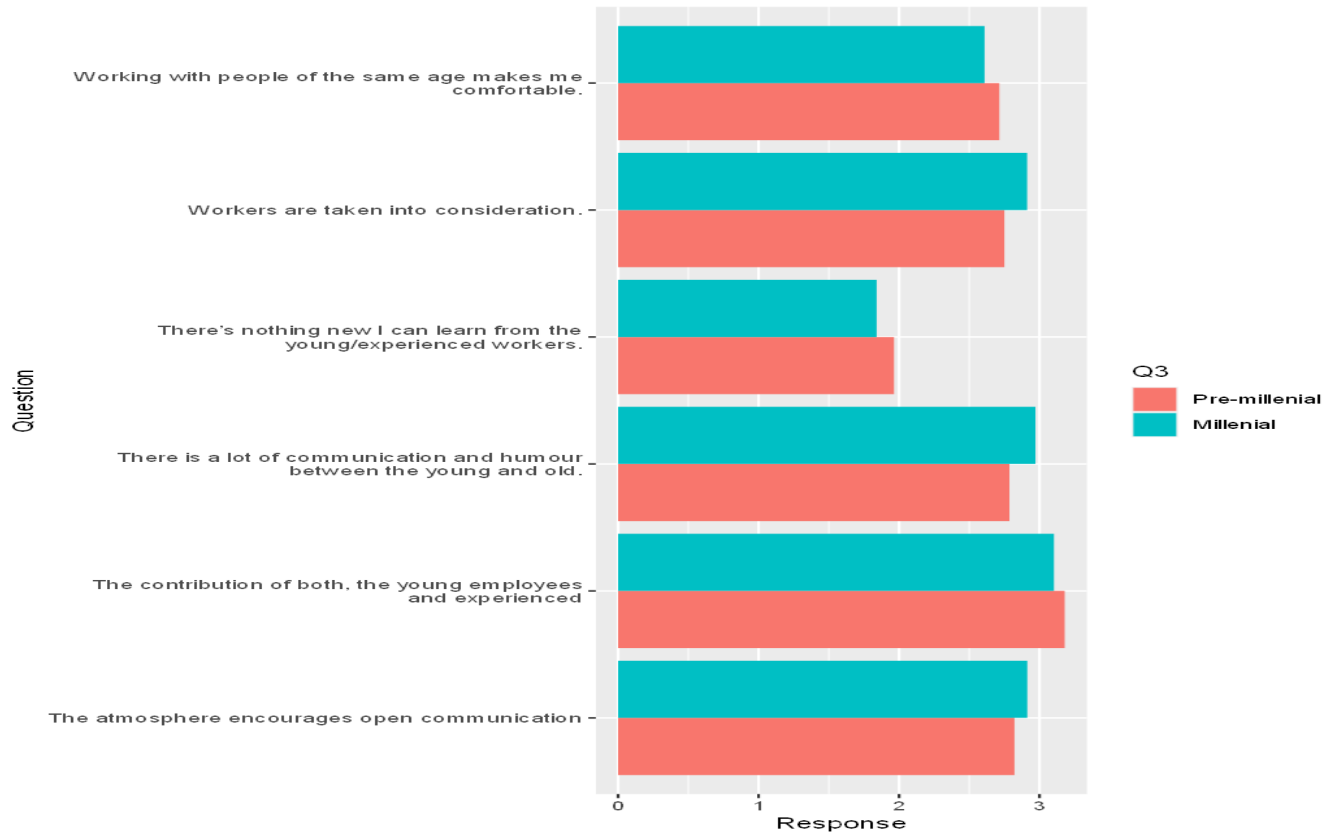


Figure 4- 6: Atmosphere within generations

Figure 4- 6 presents the atmosphere within generations in the commercial central bank. Six questions were grouped to form the atmosphere section, and this figure responds to those questions.

### Statistical Analysis

The T test was applied to the generational breakdown to test the organisational atmosphere mean of the interval variables (in this case, premillennial and millennials) that differ from one another. This test is only used when there are two concepts to test, such as premillennial and millennials (Sekaran & Bougies, 2019).

Table 4. 3: Atmosphere significance level

<b>Description</b>	<b>P value</b>
Atmosphere – Age gap	0.375
Q20	0.101
Q21	0.002
Q22	0.110
Q23	0.002
Q24	0.123
Q25	0.037

Table 4.3 illustrates significant levels of responses from respondents on the questions asked to analyse the atmosphere of the commercial central bank.

According to Table 4.3, the analysis performed between the two groups' atmospheres, the difference in responses between premillennial and millennials was not statistically significant ( $p=0.375$ ), as the p value was more than the 0.05 chosen significance. This means that their views regarding the atmosphere may be similar, and it is noted that both generations' feedback is above average to a similar extent.

In conjunction with Figure 4- 6 and Table 4.3, the following findings were identified:

The first question to assess the atmosphere within generations was how comfortable each generational was in terms of working with people of the same generation. Premillennial were dominant at 80% in their response, indicating that they are more comfortable working within their generation, which indicates that there could be potential age discrimination challenges in the central commercial bank.

In the second response, to the question of the organisation taking into consideration its workers, premillennial at 46% indicated that they feel they are not taken into consideration, while millennials at 72% indicated that they feel that they are considered by the organisation. For example, the organisation does consult with them before making decisions that will impact them as employees. The challenge of striking the balance

between generations' sense of belonging is one that the management of the central commercial bank must solve.

The third response was of great concern; 89% of premillennial believed that they could learn from millennials, while 11% of millennials felt there was nothing much, they could learn from premillennial. This can be perceived as an ego thing, and it indicates age discrimination again at the central commercial bank. This feedback also supports the theory in chapter 2, which indicates that generations feel threatened by each other. Some come with new skills that are required for the continuation of the business, while old employees bring experience and expertise in the field.

Management is faced with the challenge of creating a culture of interdependence and blending in all generations.

Fourth was communication, which was also used to gauge the atmosphere within the generations, where both generations were almost the same percentage at 50% in agreement that the environment does encourage the atmosphere to communicate with each other.

Finally, 92% of premillennial felt that they contributed slightly more than millennials in the organisation. This is based on their experience and knowledge and achievements that they have contributed in the past. Millennials also have the opinion that 84% of their contribution adds value to the business. Management is faced with the challenge of us vs. them.

The atmosphere at the commercial central bank is not far from what the literature states. It is mentioned that in a workplace where people of different generations work together, there is a high chance for conflict due to the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the different age groups and stereotypes where old employees may label younger employees as lazy and lack respect in authority (Amarche, 2019).

The atmosphere in the central bank is on an acceptable scale. However, there are still many challenges facing management in ensuring that employees move past the stage of grouping themselves as per generational and as a team with different experiences, skills, and expertise that are all required for the better benefit of the central commercial bank.

#### 4.4.3 Management Issues

The third part focused on management issues, and six questions with Likert scales to measure how the respondents felt toward the current situation were asked of the participants.

Figure 4- 7 showcases the responses per question asked in each generation.

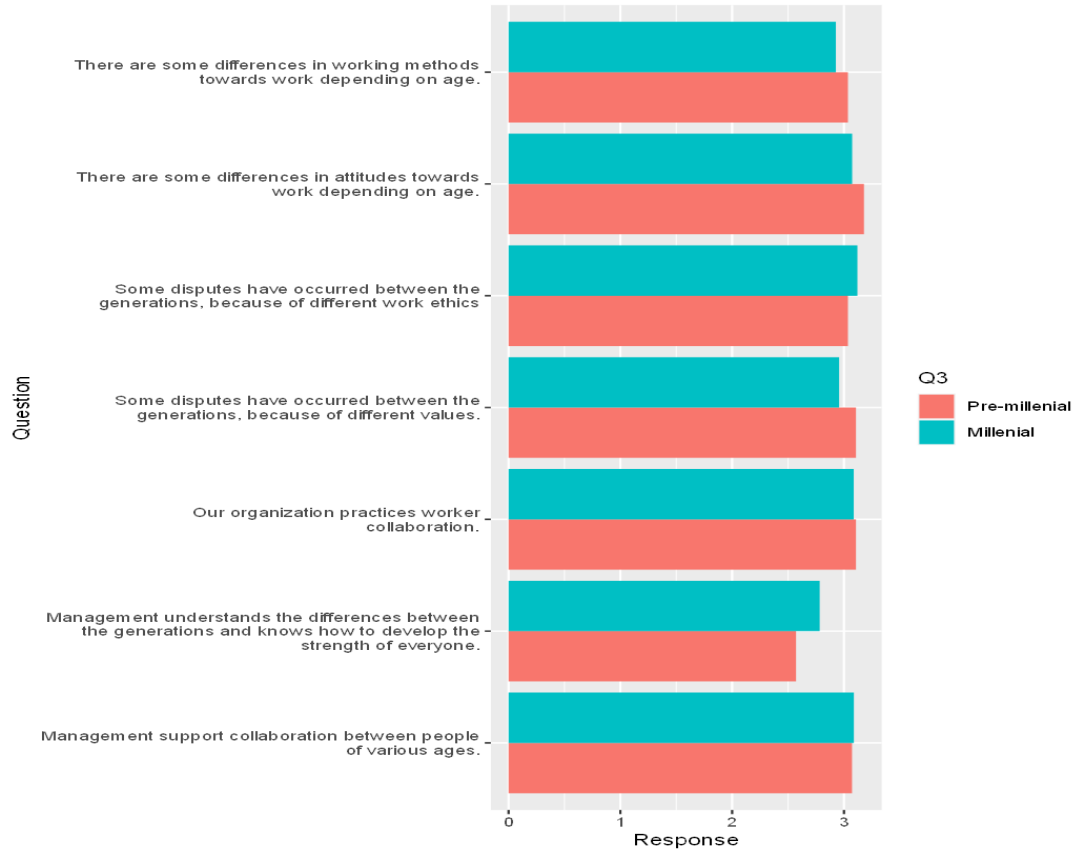


Figure 4- 7: Responses on management issues

Figure 4-7 represents findings as per questions asked regarding management issues.

### Statistical analysis

ANOVA was used to compare two groups or more to establish whether the group means of interval variables differed from one another. This was used for age, values, and ethics. It was tested whether the views on management issues differed among age groups, values, ethics, and generations. The P value was less than 0.1, and the views were the same if the P value was more than 1.

Table 4. 4: Management issues significant levels using Anova

Description	P value
Management	0.741
Q13	0.206
Q14	0.244
Q15	0.231
Q16	0.089
Q17	0.113
Q18	0.062
Q19	0.054

Table 4.4 illustrates the significant level of responses from the two generations in analysing management issues using ANOVA. The results are based on a one-way ANOVA, which was used as the researcher had one independent variable to assess, which was the challenges facing the management of multigenerational feedback, by obtaining views from two different generations in terms of what they perceive as management challenges. The p value is 0.74, which is greater than 0.1. This is an indication that the views on issues facing management are the same among the given generations, which are millennials and premillennial.

The analysis, in conjunction with Figure 4-7 and Table 4.4, identified the following findings:

The first question about differences in working methods between generations received positive feedback from premillennial (85%), who felt that there were differences in working methods between millennials and premillennial. This can be caused by the way each

generational prefers to execute tasks, which is not a major issue, according to Amarche, (2019), each generational prefers certain ways of working, e.g., millennials find themselves productive if they are given the freedom to execute tasks.

The second question was about differences in attitudes towards work based on age. Both generations were strong in their opinions: premillennials at 82% and millennials at 78%. This is visible within the central commercial bank, where each generational based on age has different attitudes towards work. They execute tasks differently, and they take their work and jobs seriously in different ways. Management again needs to find a way to ensure that the team does not perceive such things based on age.

The third question was about assessing the source of dispute within the organisation. Premillennials at 85% believe that ethics is one of the sources, where they perceive millennials as less ethical than them, and this at some point leads to conflict between the two generations. The next source of conflict they believe derives from values; premillennials at 92% think that old generational values and new generational values are not the same when they need to work as a team. This leads to clashes.

The fourth question was about assessing generational collaboration. Both generations agree almost 100% that the central commercial bank practices work collaboration between generations, as they assign old employees to new employees as mentors and coaches. Both generations share the same sentiments in regard to management practice and supporting collaboration within generations.

Last is the issue of management understanding each generation's differences and being able to develop each generation's strengths. Forty-six percent of premillennials believe that the current management has no clue in regard to dealing with different generations and developing their strength. They currently use the blanket approach, which is one size fit all. Sixty-eight percent of millennials strongly agree that management is doing brilliant work regarding this issue.

Because of the disparities in the values, priorities, motivations, and working styles of team members, managing multigenerational teams is the greatest management challenge. Younger generations are prone to shift employment every few years to obtain the variety, breadth of scope, and ability to attempt new things that they value highly. This is reflected

in simple things such as work tenure (Kassing, Piemonte, Goman & Mitchell, 2019). As the literature states it is challenging for managers to manage an age-diverse generation. Similar challenges were identified at the central commercial bank, such as different views on working methods, attitudes toward work, and work ethics.

#### 4.4.4 Conclusion

At the Central Commercial Bank, issues that were highlighted by the literature review in chapter two do exist, as most of them were found during the study.

In this chapter, the biographical data and data related to generational characteristics, atmosphere, and managerial issues were analysed and interpreted. The main findings were as follows:

- Regarding the generational motivators, the feedback indicated a consensus between premillennial and millennials that nonmonetary and monetary recognition motivates them, while millennials were vocal that they mostly prefer monetary recognition.
- Flexibility was the second finding where both generations indicated that getting the freedom to do their work as they wish makes them productive; even though the feedback was mutual, the millennials' feedback strongly supported this notion.
- The third finding was about age discrimination, where both generations agreed that there is nothing much, they can learn from each other, and premillennials were strong in their opinion about this.
- The fourth finding was based on both generations agreeing that management does not understand the differences between the generations and does not know how to develop the strength of everyone.

In the next chapter, recommendations to assist managers of central commercial banks will be discussed.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher will summarise the findings found during the research and come up with recommendations to assist this organisation in effectively managing its multigenerational workforce.

### **5.2 Conclusion of the Objectives and main findings**

The primary objective of this study was to identify challenges facing managers in managing a multigenerational workforce at a commercial bank in the central region. The first secondary objective was to identify the characteristics of each generational in the multigenerational workforce. This objective has been reached in chapter 2. In chapter 2, Literature review, the following was discussed, how to manage the multigenerational workforce. The characteristics of each different generational were discussed, followed by the challenges, benefits, and strategies that will assist managers in effectively managing the kind of workforce. The shifts organisations, leaders, and employees need to work on to ensure that this concept works, and last, the workplace dynamics of managing a multigenerational workforce.

Secondary objectives were assessed as follows.

The characteristics of each generational in the multigenerational workforce, survey was done to assess the characteristics of each generation, feedback was grouped as per pre-millennials and millennials, the questions sets were designed to identify characteristics of the two different generation and to assist managers of the central bank to better manage their age diverse team by understanding how to easily identify each generation and how to respond to them and to get best value out of them.

The challenges facing managers in managing a multigenerational workforce in the commercial retail bank in the central region. The set of questions were also designed to assess the challenges facing managers as managers were also part of the population targeted on the survey to understand what difficulties are they are facing while managing these teams.

The developing of strategies to assist managers in managing a multigenerational workforce at the commercial retail bank in the central region, this objective was assessed by set of questions asked on characteristics, and challenges facing managers, which assisted the researcher after analysing the feedback to develop strategies based on these responses to assist managers of the commercial central bank to better manage their employees.

The feedback of the survey to support the above-mentioned objectives was discussed in chapter four.

The main findings of this chapter were grouped in generational motivators, age discrimination and generational flexibility.

#### 5.2.1.1 Generational Motivators

Both generations indicated that they get motivated by both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. However, millennials' feedback was very high on the extrinsic than the intrinsic, while pre-millennials were more on the intrinsic side.

#### 5.2.2.2 Flexibility

Flexibility, where both generational indicated that getting the freedom to do their work as they wish makes them productive, even though the feedback was mutual, and the millennials' feedback supported this notion.

#### 5.2.2.3 Age Discrimination

Age discrimination, where both generational agreed that there is nothing much they can learn from each other, and pre-millennials were strong in their opinion about this.

Recommended strategies are discussed in the next section under recommendations.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the findings from this research, combined with the researcher's interpretation of the data to recommend possible ways to address issues.

### 5.3.1 Recognition system

The commercial bank must invest more in financial recognition for this generational to ensure that both generations stay motivated. They must use a recognition system that speaks to both generations. They should introduce quarterly incentives that will recognise sales performance. By doing so, the bank will obtain more results from premillennials. This is the majority generational cohort with 76% representation. Without neglecting the needs of premillennials, surveys results indicated that they are happy with nonmonetary recognition, a rewards ceremony will be recommended to ensure that both generations are balanced and motivated.

### 5.3.2 Laissez-fair leadership style

Based on the results around leadership style it is recommended that management must allow some level of flexibility for task completion, as both generations indicated that they are more productive when they are given options to do their tasks, this will ensure that both generations are productive. Micromanagement will demotivate the team.

Where possible, the commercial bank should allow staff to work from home, and they must manage the results and not detect how employees must get to the results if they work within the provided guidelines.

### 5.3.3 Team Management

The commercial bank to ensure teamwork and overcome age discrimination based on the survey results, they must mix their teams regardless of age but competencies and skills. Secondly, they must design a team recognition incentive, where performance will be recognised as team achievement other than individual achievement, which will ensure that all employees are working as a team and not segment themselves based on age groups.

The commercial bank will also need to create mentorship and coaching programs, where old employees mentor new joiners, for skills transfer and on-the-job coaching. In doing so, they will create a strong bond within generations and ensure that each generational values the others.

To bridge the gap in age discrimination as it was evident on the survey results where both generations perceive themselves better than others, the commercial banks must encourage knowledge sharing, and management must facilitate knowledge sharing between generations by creating platforms for cross-generational collaboration, such as intergenerational task forces. This will allow employees to learn from each other's expertise and experiences.

5.3.4 The feedback from the surveys were analysed and interpreted, based on the findings the following strategies are recommended to be employed in assisting management of the central commercial bank.

- To design a training curriculum for their managers, which will upskill them with information on how to manage each generational and how to identify strengths and use them for the benefit of the team and the commercial bank.
- The bank must foster an inclusive culture by creating an environment that values and respects the contributions of all employees from all generations, as each generational currently feels like they contribute better than others.
- To recognise and reward achievements by implementing a performance management system that recognises and rewards employees based on their individual and team performance and collaboration among generations.

#### 5.4 Limitations of the Study

The small sample included in the study may influence the generalisation of the results. It is also possible that if the researcher included all employees, there would have been different results. Or even if the target population was for all nine provinces other than focusing only on the central region.

Additionally, the rating scale was limited to four options, and participants were not given the option to be neutral if they either agreed or disagreed with the question.

Further research must determine the effectiveness and preference of a hybrid working environment vs brick and mortar amongst Pre-millennials and Millennials.

Further research is needed to determine if the results of this study are representative of the rest of the organisation.

#### 5.5 Conclusion

The primary objective of the study was to determine how to manage a multigenerational workforce at a commercial bank in the central region.

The characteristics of each generational were identified, as they are key for managers to understand each generational for them to be able to manage them better.

Challenges facing management were also identified as both generations voice their opinions against the current management, which will give managers a starting point on where to begin in ensuring that they effectively manage all represented generations within the commercial bank.

By implementing the abovementioned recommendation, the organisation will achieve the following benefits.

Generational collaboration will eliminate age discrimination and tension. It will also create harmony and improve employee engagement.

Managers will be upskilled in managing an age-diverse team, which will result in productivity, increased efficiencies, and profitability for the bank.

Staff morale will increase, and teamwork will be encouraged vs. working in silos. It will also ensure employee retention.

Management will effectively manage each generational differently knowing exactly what motivates them, instead of using a blanket approach.

Finally, strategies were recommended on what management and commercial banks are required to do for them to effectively manage their multigenerational workforce strategies, such as training and development, embracing diversity and inclusion, fostering communication and collaboration, and recognising and rewarding achievements.

The researcher compares the feedback with the previous studies done and the findings were similar to mention one study which was done by Nova South-Eastern university.

Management can start by addressing the above findings and implementing strategies and recommendations recommended by the researcher. The commercial bank in the central region will be able to manage its multigenerational bank.

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Managing a multigenerational workforce at  Retail Banking in the Central region

<b>What is your gender? (Please select option by marking with a 'X')</b>	
Female	
Male	
Other and/or prefer not to say	

<b>What is your ethnicity? (Please select option by marking with a 'X')</b>	
African	
Caucasian	
Colored	
Indian/Asian	
Other and/or prefer not to say	

<b>To which generation do you belong? (Please select option by marking with a 'X')</b>	
Traditionalists (born between 1922-1945)	
Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964)	
Generation X (born between 1965-1980)	
Generation Y/Millennials (born between 1981-2000)	
Generation Z (born in 2001)	

<b>What is your Job grade? (Please select option by marking with a 'X')</b>	
BA1	
BA2	
BA3	
BA4	
AVP	
VP	

<b>Where do you see the greatest difference in workplace behaviours in a multi-generational work environment? (Please select option by marking with a 'X')</b>	
--	--

<b>Communication style</b>	
<b>Pace of Work</b>	
<b>Risk tolerance</b>	
<b>Decision Making</b>	
<b>Other, please specify</b>	

<b>How do you feel about the following statements? (Please select option by marking with a 'X')</b>	<b>1 Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Agree</b>	<b>4 Strongly Agree</b>
<b>Organization</b>				
The organization embraces a culture that promotes the inclusion of older workers.				
Workers are encouraged to take risks				
I prefer using emails as a primary communication tool in the workplace.				
I prefer using telephone calls as a primary communication tool.				
I prefer using WhatsApp as a primary communication tool.				
Our organization uses a blanket approach to resolve issues.				
The organization provides young workers with older employees as their mentors?				
<b>Management</b>				
Our organization practices worker collaboration.				
Management support collaboration between people of various ages incomplete				
Management understands the differences between the generations and knows how to develop the strength of everyone				
There are some differences in working methods towards work depending on age.				
There are some differences in attitudes towards work depending on age.				
Some disputes have occurred between the generations, because of different values				
<b>Some disputes have occurred between the generations, because of different work ethics</b>				
<b>Atmosphere/ Age gaps</b>				
The atmosphere encourages open communication				
There is a lot of communication and humor between the young and old				



Dear Mr. Lourens Hills

**RE: Preliminary permission to conduct research at your organization**

I am doing research and would like to request permission to conduct my research at ~~Absa~~ in the Central region.

**DATE**

17 April 2023

**PRELIMINARY TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT\***

Managing a multi-generational workforce at ~~Absa~~ Retail banking in the Central Region

**PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR**

Erasmus Sikhosphi Zulu 2018680682 0716846260

**FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT**

Economic and Management Sciences Faculty  
Business School

**STUDY LEADER'S NAME AND CONTACT**

Dr. Liezel Massyn  
051401 7305

**APPROVAL NEEDED**

This study still needs ethical approval from the General Human Research Ethics (GHREC) committee at the University of the Free State. As part of the application for ethical clearance I need temporary approval from you to conduct the research in your organization. Once the Ethical Clearance certificate has been issued by the GHREC, the formal and final permission document and the data collection instruments will be provided to you for final consideration and approval.

Therefore, in order for me to complete my research, I need your permission to:

	Permission Requested (YES,NO, N/A)	Request Approved (YES, NO)
Collect data from physical channel branch staff in the 5 regions of Absa Central Region.	Yes	Yes





**GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)**

26-Jun-2023

Dear Mr Erasmus Zulu

**Application Approved**

Research Project Title:

Managing a multi-generational workforce at ~~plaza~~ – Retail banking in the Central Region.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2023/0575

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

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# University Editor (CC)

## Certificate of comprehensive English editing

This document certifies that we have edited the manuscript indicated below for English language, grammar, spelling, clarity, and scholarly writing style.

**Manuscript Title:**  
MANAGING A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE AT A COMMERCIAL BANK IN THE  
CENTRAL REGION

**Author:**  
Erasmus Sikhosiphi Zulu

**Date Issued:**  
8 November 2023

The author's subject matter contents and intentions were unaltered during the editing process. Manuscripts with this certification should be grammatically ready for publication; however, the author/s have the final choice to accept or reject our suggestions and changes. If you have any questions regarding the edited document, kindly contact [info@uedit.org](mailto:info@uedit.org) or visit us at <https://uedit.org>

Singed by the editor



in Pretoria

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