

## Understanding Multigenerational Work-Value Conflict Resolution

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*Numerous sources report increased conflict between the four generations currently in the workplace resulting in organizational problems. The conclusion of this study is that age-related life-stage researchers and birth-year-cohort researchers provide significant scholarly evidence that can be used to determine the “why and how” of generational work-value differences’ impact on employee productivity. There is a significant relationship between generational cohorts and conflict created by generational work-value differences. A generational management practices model was developed that provides a scholarly basis for managers to make informed decisions about how they can shape workforce strategies and management practices for a generationally-diverse workplace.*

**KEYWORDS** *Baby Boomer, generation gap, Generation X, Generation Y, generational conflict, generational differences, Millennials, multi-generational, Traditionalists, Veterans*

The popular press, best-selling books, and academic literature have reported on the clash of four generations in the U.S. workforce over the past decade. The prevailing belief is that workforce members of these generations have different preferences in the workplace leading to conflict, and therefore management should treat each generation differently. The goal of this study is to determine if and how work-value differences among these four generations lead to conflict between supervisors and coworkers, and to assess how one may resolve those work-value differences. Resolution of this generational conflict also includes the actions needed to be taken by workplace leaders to address the impact that work-value differences have upon the effectiveness and efficiency of job performance.

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Current research suggests the four generational cohorts in the workplace are generally described as (a) Traditionalists, born between 1922 and 1946, approximately 16 million workers; (b) Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, approximately 76 million workers; (c) Generation X, born between 1964 and 1980, approximately 50 million workers; and (d) Generation Y, born between 1980 and 2000, approximately 80 million workers (Deyoe & Fox, 2012; Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009). Baby Boomers are retiring at a rapid rate, creating a dynamic shift in the U.S. workforce demographics as younger employees assume the jobs formerly held by their elder counterparts and managers. This generational shift is believed to have created a clash of work values leading to conflict within the workplace and is assumed to be based on an employee's membership within a generational cohort.

Work-value conflict can occur due to miscommunication, work-life balance issues, technology-use differences, and other issues among the four generations currently in the workplace (Carver & Candela, 2008). These personnel problems also include teamwork issues and older worker/younger supervisor dyadic relationship difficulties (Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009). Generational work-value conflict also affects the effectiveness of organization-wide plans, products, and ideas (Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, & Brown, 2007).

Given the number of work-value conflict incidents that occur between the four generations in the workforce, managers are concerned with providing the most efficient and effective supervision in a multigenerational workplace. Understanding how to mitigate work-value conflict between the generations is important for managers.

Arsenault (2004) suggested that differing expectations in work-related values could lead to generational conflict in the workplace. Smola and Sutton (2002) defined a *work-related value* as the evaluative standard relating to the "work environment by which individuals discern what is right or wrong and the outcomes they feel they should attain through work" (p. 366). These differences in the perception of right or wrong between the members of various generational cohorts can produce tension in the work environment. Sirias, Karp, and Brotherton (2007) found that "Baby Boomers see Xers as lazy, cynical, and all-but-illiterate whiners. The Xers see Baby Boomers as smug workaholics who play corporate politics and who are out of touch with current economic realities" (p. 752). Hanks and Icenogle (2001) followed a similar line of argument and suggest that intergenerational conflict in the workplace is rooted in differing work ethics and life experiences among the generations.

Management failure to address generational work-value differences has been shown to result in low organizational morale, increased turnover, and reduced profits (Carver & Candela, 2008). A number of researchers report poor communication and other organizational issues that can lead to conflict between generationally-diverse employees (Arsenault, 2004).

Arsenault (2004) contended that organizations will be less competitive globally if they do not capitalize on the strengths generational diversity can bring to the workplace, such as the sharing of perspectives leading to creativity and innovation. Gentry, Deal, Griggs, Mondore, and Cox (2011) found that managers formulate workforce planning practices and human-resource-management strategies based on their beliefs that work values are related to generational differences (p. 40). Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, and Lance (2010) argued that managers need to examine why and how differences between the generations affect competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and other attributes to ensure their recruitment, management strategies, and practices appropriately address the differences and do not lead to unintended consequences, such as exacerbating conflict in the workplace.

Managers are known to make stereotypical assumptions about why members of the four generations behave differently. Based on their observations of conflict between older and younger workers, some managers believe that the values driving these behaviors are based on generational-cohort differences. This is especially true for managers who read in the popular press, practitioner sources, and some academic journals that the generations should be treated differently. The current literature on generational differences in the workplace is mixed with practitioner and academic-level research, with some inconsistencies in results reported including a concern over the actual existence of generational differences (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Managers may be influenced by the literature that supports their assumptions and change their methods of communication or the structure in their work environment to accommodate members of Generation Y. Yet Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg (2010) found that differences between the generations, such as the use of technology, are simply due to personal and individual differences between workers and not generational-cohort membership. Deal et al. argued that no special accommodations should be made for different generations such as training or communication, and employees should be treated as individuals without regard for generational-cohort membership. Although Deal et al. espoused this position, other researchers suggest a completely different stance on the cause of work-value differences and how management should supervise employees from different generational backgrounds.

The research question posed in this examination of workplace generational conflict is: Is there a relationship between generational cohorts and the manifestation of clashing workplace values that create conditions for adaptive management practices?

## METHOD

A careful review of the workplace generational differences literature was conducted to answer the proposed research question and develop a conceptual

model. This study follows evidence-based research guidelines utilizing a systematic literature review. The principles of the systematic review methodology, which has been used in the medical sciences, can help reduce management research bias, increase the legitimacy and authority of the evidence, and aid in increasing the reliability of a workplace leader's decisions (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). Petticrew and Roberts (2006) concluded that a systematic review is valuable in ensuring that all of the evidence related to a question where the answer is uncertain is reviewed. The evidence collected for this study was gathered through searches conducted in more than 100 academic databases and scholarly publishers on the Internet. Key words used included *generation*, *generation gap*, *generational differences*, *generational conflict*, *multigenerational*, *Generation Y*, *Generation X*, *Baby Boomer*, *Traditionalists*, *Veterans*, and *Millennials*. The inclusion criteria for the selection of research articles for this study is based upon the best evidence available from peer reviewed, academic, journals.

### Literature Review Summary of Best Practices

Upon review of the literature associated with workplace generational conflict, two major theories were found: (a) Generational work-value differences are based upon birth-year-cohort membership and (b) generational work-value differences are due to age-related life-stage values development. Twenge et al. (2010) and other academic researchers concluded that generational work-value differences can be explained by birth-year cohort theory (p. 4). Deal et al. (2010) concluded that age-related stage of life is the cause of any differences that are seen between the generations. There are a small number of researchers who support a combined perspective of the two theories. A closer examination of the theoretical basis of workplace generational conflict will follow in the theoretical framework section.

Birth-year-cohort theorists conclude that generationally driven work-value differences cause generational work-value conflict. Numerous large-sample empirical studies from peer-reviewed reputable journals, including seven time-lag and longitudinal studies conducted over the past decade (Table 1), support this position. This empirical evidence supports the contention that work-value differences that lead to conflict are present among the four generations and the work-value differences are explained by the birth-year-cohort theory. Twenge et al. (2010) used a time-lag research design to analyze the work-values differences between 16,507 Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y workers. Survey information from 1976 Baby Boomers, 1991 Generation X, and 2006 Generation Y was compared for each of these generations at the same time in their life stage. This procedure successfully isolated generational-cohort differences from age-related life stage differences (Twenge et al., 2010). Twenge et al. found that Generation Y workers value leisure time significantly more than Baby Boomers and Gener-

**TABLE 1** Significant Empirical Studies Supporting Birth-Year-Cohort Theory

Empirical study	Method Type	Sample size	Principal finding
Smola & Sutton (2002)	Time-lag	335	Work-value differences are driven by generational-cohort membership.
Arsenault (2004)	Cross-sectional mixed method	790	Members of generational cohorts do not change their values with age.
Griffin (2004)	Time-lag	1,606	Confirmed Mannheim's social location of generational identity formation.
Sirias, Karp, & Brotherton (2007)	Cross-sectional survey	434	Significant work-value differences between Baby Boomer and Generation X employees resulting in conflict when working together.
D'Amato & Herzfeldt (2008)	Cross-sectional survey	1,666	Generational cohorts who share similar values, opinions, and life experiences develop work-related values that are very different from other cohorts.
Wilson, Squires, Widger, Cranley, & Tourangeau (2008)	Cross-sectional survey	6,600	Generation X and the Baby Boomers have significantly different values when it comes to public recognition and career goals.
Twenge & Campbell (2008)	Longitudinal	1.4 Mil	Significant differences psychologically and technologically in Generation Y employees compared to other generations.
Meriac, Woehr, & Banister (2010)	Longitudinal	1,860	Significant work ethic differences between Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boomer employees.
Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance (2010)	Time-lag	16,507	Significant work-value differences exist between the current generations in the workplace.
Benson & Brown (2011)	Cross-sectional survey	3,335	Baby Boomers differ from Generation X as they are more satisfied with their jobs and experience less of an inclination to leave their position.
Bristow, Amyx, Castleberry, & Cochran (2011)	Time-lag	961	Significant work-value differences exist between the current generations in the workplace.
Cogin (2012)	Time-lag	407	Significant differences between all four generations relating to work values.

ation X workers do, and that Generation X views work less significantly than the Baby Boomers. These work-value differences can lead to conflict between the generations (Arsenault, 2004). Another significant time-lag study listed in Table 1 is the 2002 empirically-based Smola and Sutton (2002) examination of generational work values. Smola and Sutton found that the formation of work values are more a result of generational experiences than age-related life stages and that each generational cohort develops a unique common value system molded by distinctive lifetime experiences that often lead to conflict between the generations. Smola and Sutton replicated Cherrington's study from 1974 (Cherrington, Conde, & England, 1979) and sampled 335 participants by means of a 176-item questionnaire.

Given this empirically-based evidence, and to corroborate the notion of "why and how" to make "informed decisions" regarding management practices in relation to conflict between generationally-diverse employees, the primary factors of communication, education/training, and leadership were found to contribute to generationally based conflict in the workplace. Best practices were gleaned and synthesized from the following generationally driven work-value-conflict themes found in the literature.

#### COMMUNICATION

Communication is an important aspect of managing employees. The interaction between leaders and followers is a critical process in any organization. Just as important is the communication between individual employees and employees who work in groups. With four generations of employees in the workforce, there are instances when workers from diverse generational backgrounds are called upon to work side-by-side or function as contributing members of a group. Researchers emphasize the importance of communication between generations to maintain or improve information flow in the organization. Communication from leader to subordinate, organizational leader to all employees, and employee to employee is a very important concept put forth by a number of authors (Lavoie-Tremblay et al., 2010). The analysis from the systematic literature review regarding the communication factors that were found to contribute to and also mitigate generationally based conflict in the workplace resulted in 14 important findings (Table 2). The generationally based best management practices regarding communication to mitigate generational work-value conflict derived from Table 2 include:

- Provide all generations with a clear organizational vision
- Provide increased performance feedback to Generation Y employees
- Use cross-generational team problem solving for all generations that promotes shared work values
- Use social media and mobile devices to communicate with Generation Y employees

**TABLE 2** Communication Generationally Driven Work-Value Conflict Theme Findings

Finding number	Communication findings
1	Communicating a clear and compelling vision is required to align all of the various age groups to the company goal and mission (Russette, Scully, & Preziosi, 2008).
2	Management should consider the characteristics of the various generations when providing communication to a multigenerational workforce (Russette et al., 2008).
3	Generation Y employees desire more input in organizational matters and want increased feedback and communication from management than other generations (Gallicano, Curtin, & Matthews, 2012).
4	Effective generationally based communication skills including problem solving, teamwork, and adaptability are the most important aspect of managerial success (Hartman & McCambridge, 2011).
5	The most apparent difference between Generation Y and other generations in the workplace is their reliance on technology (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).
6	The younger generations are more technologically savvy and can communicate more effectively via information technology such as mobile devices and social media (Busch, Venkitachalam, & Richards, 2008).
7	Generation Y can experience conflict with other generations who are unwilling to embrace communication through technology (Carver & Candela, 2008).
8	Younger generations are more inclined to use the Internet and alternative forms of gathering information than do older generations (Coleman & McCombs, 2007).
9	Generation Y employees typically are more effective at multitasking, responding to visual stimulation, and filtering information and less effective at face-to-face communication than other generations (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).
10	Generation Y employees typically are effective at multitasking and fast-paced information gathering but need to improve upon the validity and accuracy of what they obtain (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).
11	Cross-generational work teams can foster team building between generations and increase effective team contributions for the organization, thus improving workplace communication (Sirias et al., 2007).
12	Mentoring programs, including reverse mentoring of older employees by younger employees, are essential for an age-diverse workforce and a key element found in cross-generational collaborative success (Russette et al., 2008).
13	Once shared work values between generationally-diverse work team members are established, then team performance will increase and group conflict is significantly reduced (Hobman & Bordia, 2006).
14	Employers should consider a knowledge-management program to retain knowledge from retiring Baby Boomers and retain Generation Y employees (Hokanson, Sosa-Fey, & Vinaja, 2011).

- Utilize Generation Y and X employees for internet-based information collection
- Use Generation Y employees for multitasking projects
- Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Traditionalists are more effective with projects requiring face-to-face tasks
- Provide mentoring, including reverse mentoring, to all generations
- Implement a knowledge-management (retention) system for all generations including the current Baby Boomer retirees.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

The educational-and-training theme analysis produced findings from the literature that explored learning-style concerns, training opportunities for younger generations, and the important aspect of how managers can utilize education to mitigate conflict between generationally-diverse employees. There are seven important findings from the systematic literature review regarding the education/training factor that were found to contribute to and also mitigate generationally based conflict in the workplace (Table 3).

The education/training generationally based best management practices to mitigate generational work-value conflict derived from Table 3 include:

- Provide managers with generational diversity training emphasizing listening and questioning skills so they understand the differences between the generations
- Provide generational diversity workshops promoting shared work values to members of all the generations
- Provide Generation Y employees with technologically based learning including immediate feedback
- Assess basic education levels of Generation Y employees as needed for organizational objectives and provide education as needed.

**TABLE 3** Education/Training Generationally Driven Work-Value Conflict Theme Findings

Finding number	Education/training findings
1	Leaders are more effective if they understand the differences between the various generations (Arsenault, 2004).
2	Educating managers to avoid judgment of others based on generational perceptions through enhanced listening and questioning skills can circumvent potential generational conflicts (Arsenault, 2004).
3	Generational educational workshop interventions of employees of all ages can aid in mitigating intergenerational conflict (Hanks & Icenogle, 2001).
4	The learning styles of the various generations may require instructors to provide multiple media such as virtual and traditional classrooms (Anthony, 2006).
5	Career development training for Generation X and Y managers will increase job satisfaction and retention (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008).
6	The Generation Y employee learning style can be different than prior generations due to the technological aspects engrained in Generation Y development including a focus on digital literacy, immediate feedback, and a technologically based teaching strategy (Balda & Mora, 2011).
7	Some Generation Y employees may require additional training and education when entering the workforce as Generation Y has a considerably lower level of knowledge regarding reading, math, history, and civics upon high school graduation than previous generations (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010).



## LEADERSHIP

The analysis of the leadership theme generated findings from the literature that explored leadership style based upon generational characteristics, a unique leadership phenomenon involving age-reversed supervision, and the important aspect of how managers can apply generationally specific leadership best practices to mitigate conflict between generationally-diverse employees. There are 16 important findings from the systematic literature review regarding the leadership factors that contribute to and also mitigate generationally based conflict in the workplace (Table 4).

The leadership generationally based best management practices to mitigate generational work-value conflict derived from Table 4 include:

- Managers who understand generational work-value differences and implement generationally sensitive policies can expect increased employee productivity
- Generation Y employees typically respond to leadership that is supportive of corporate social responsibility and team orientation
- Generation X employees typically respond to more supportive supervision allowing flexibility and autonomy
- Baby Boomer employees typically respond to leadership that allows individualism and self-expression
- Traditionalist employees typically respond to leaders who delegate and provide structure
- Generation Y managers should provide autonomous and supportive supervision to Baby Boomer employees
- Generation Y employees typically require clear direction, timely feedback, structure, technology, and company goals and objectives
- Generation X employees typically seek a work–life balance
- Generation X and Y employees typically seek flexible work hours
- Baby Boomer employees are typically more satisfied with existing recognition programs, whereas Generation X and Y employees seek more recognition programs for their work achievements.

## Theoretical Framework

The systematic literature review revealed several themes related to generational work-value differences and the effect these phenomena have upon managers of the members of these generations. The analysis of empirical and other relevant research on workplace-value conflict among members of different generations leads to the identification of three major themes: communication, education/training, and leadership. The theoretical foundation of work-value differences is the result of two relevant theories, birth-year-cohort theory and age-related life-stage theory, that offer an explanation of the themes that emerged as important in managing generationally-diverse

**TABLE 4** Leadership Generationally Driven Work-Value Conflict Theme Findings

Finding number	Leadership findings
1	Leaders of a multigenerational workforce should learn to recognize the differences in characteristics of the various generations and develop a plan to use those differences to strengthen the organization through contributions by the workers (Twenge & Campbell, 2008).
2	A leadership style that is broad and flexible is more effective with a generationally-diverse workforce: (a) Traditionalists—structured with delegation, (b) Baby Boomers—individualistic with self-expression, (c) Generation X—excitement with change-agent possibilities, and (d) Generation Y—team oriented with corporate social responsibility overtones (Arsenault, 2004).
3	Managers who recognize each employee's generational perspective and allow an employee to perform duties within that manner will see an increase in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee well-being, and productivity (Carver & Candela, 2008).
4	An emergent (formed within the group) leadership style has been found to be effective in cross-generational team environments (Andert, 2011).
5	Generation X workers typically perceive less support from management than Baby Boomer workers (Frag, Tullai-McGuinness, & Anthony, 2009).
6	The attitudes, values, and beliefs of each generation affect how those workers view leadership (Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, & Brown, 2007).
7	Baby Boomer workers have a lowered expectation of leadership capabilities from Generation Y supervisors than Generation Y workers expect from Generation Y supervisors. The importance of this effect on management practice relates to the concern over the impact of organizational productivity given the potential that Baby Boomer workers lowered expectations of their Generation Y supervisors can contribute to lower Generation Y supervisor performance outcomes (Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009).
8	A generationally-based mentoring program designed to spread institutional knowledge, career progression, adoption of policies, management styles, and visibility to all employees can cultivate contributions from the most talented employees from all four generations (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).
9	Generation Y employees will perform more effectively and with reduced conflict if provided with a nurturing, dynamic, and challenging workplace that includes open work spaces, state-of-the-art technology, and flexibility (Ferri-Reed, 2010).
10	Generation Y employees value feedback, structure, company goals, and authoritative and clear direction (Twenge & Campbell, 2008).
11	Generation Y workers may be in favor of structure and company goals but may also want to pick and choose the types of tasks and how those tasks are completed; otherwise this may create conflict within the company (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).
12	Baby Boomer managers share more workplace commonalities with Generation Y workers than with Generation X managers including Baby Boomer mentoring for Generation Y employees (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).
13	Generation X employees are less loyal to the company and seek leaders who are concerned with their work-life balance, flexibility of work hours, and provide autonomous working conditions (Carver & Candela, 2008).
14	Baby Boomers are significantly more satisfied with recognition, opportunities, and responsibilities in their jobs than Generation X and Y (Wilson et al., 2008).
15	To improve job satisfaction in Generation X and Y, organizations can offer flexible scheduling, expansion of recognition programs, increased career development opportunities, and more decision-making autonomy (Wilson et al., 2008).
16	Baby Boomers can become less loyal to the organization if they perceive their "social employment contract" has been violated (Brody & Rubin, 2011).

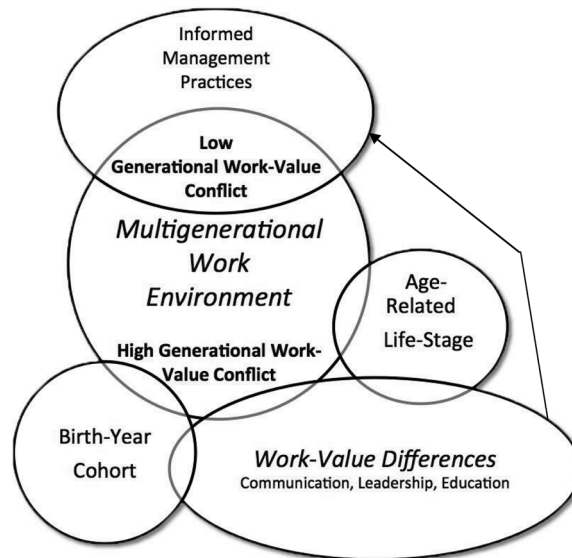
workforce members. Therefore, if the goal of this study is to assist workplace leaders in understanding generational work-value differences that may lead to conflict, or other workplace issues, then managers should be able to make informed decisions about how they shape workforce strategies and management practices for a generationally-diverse workplace environment.

### Discussion of the Conceptual Framework Elements

Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the conceptual framework. The supportive themes derived from generationally-based work-values research are basic tenets of management including communication, education/training, and leadership. These themes are an integral element of the framework as they aid in explaining how conflict between the generations manifests in the multigenerational work environment.

#### MULTIGENERATIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Managers in today's U.S. workplace are supervising four generations of employees who researchers have found often experience high levels of inter-generational work-values conflict (Arsenault, 2004). Depending on the size and demographic composition of a manager's workforce, it may be necessary for the manager to implement systems and procedures that are appropriately designed to meet the needs of four generations of employees and also align with the goals and objectives of the organization.



**FIGURE 1** Conceptual framework of management understanding of work-value differences in a generationally-diverse work environment.

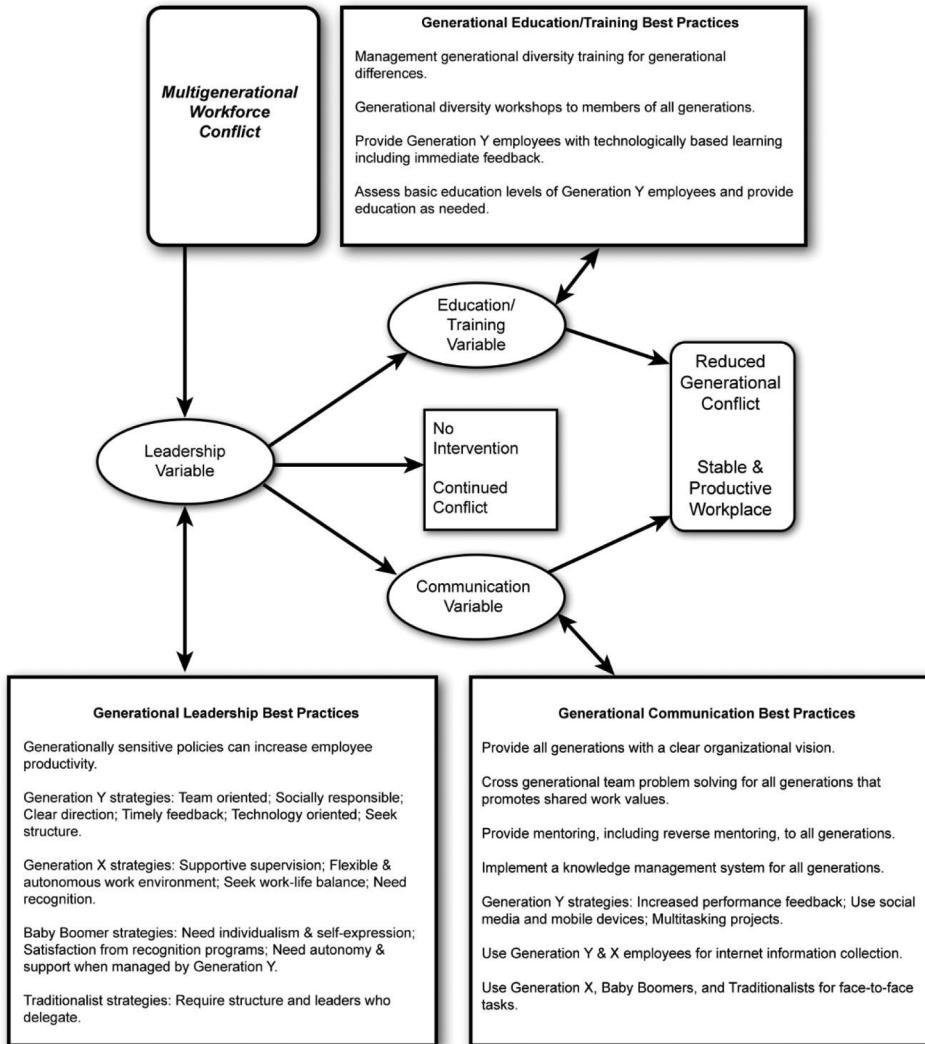
*Informed management practice.* Researchers have found that managers who are aware of the work-value differences between the generations can reduce the conflict between the generations by introducing policies and procedures specifically designed to promote shared work values between the generations (Jehn, Chadwick, & Thatcher, 1997). The arrow in Figure 1 leading from work-value differences to informed management practice represents the manager who understands the value in applying the management practices found in the systematic literature review of generational work-value differences. Managers can manipulate the variables of communication, education/training, and leadership that have been found to mitigate work-value conflict and promote shared work values between generationally-diverse employees.

## RESULTS

Based upon the results of the systematic literature review a generational management practices model (GMPM) was developed (Figure 2). The GMPM is designed to provide managers with a roadmap to understand work-value differences in employee behaviors and enable managers to make informed decisions about how to shape workforce strategies and management practices for a generationally-diverse workplace.

The GMPM assumes a workplace manager accepts the notion of generational work-value differences. The supporting evidence from this study's findings points to a substantial body of research supporting generational differences resulting from birth-year-cohort theory (Cogin, 2012). The manager should recognize and understand these differences to develop methods to supervise employees from various generations.

The variable of leadership was found to be the major factor from the findings regarding the successful operation of a multigenerational workforce. The leader of a generationally-diverse workforce must have the skills and abilities to comprehend the relevance and the importance of implementing communication and educational elements in the workplace. Managers in the U.S. workplace need to be able to supervise a multigenerational workforce in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Managers should understand what generational differences are and if these differences affect the workplace. The GMPM provides context for the leader to achieve understanding of the multigenerational workforce experiencing conflict. Generationally-specific best-practice strategies for the leader to implement the communication and education variables to foster a stable and productive workplace are also provided. Managers who fail to recognize and implement the communication and education variables through generationally based leadership best-practice strategies will continue to experience generational conflict in their workplace.



**FIGURE 2** Generational management practices model (GMPM) for understanding critical variables in a generationally-diverse work environment.

The variable of communication between the four generations in the current workforce requires generationally specific methods to ensure the leader’s message remains on point (Russette, Scully, & Preziosi, 2008). As Figure 2 illustrates, communication from the leader is a major factor in achieving a productive work environment. Excellent communication from the leader and between the generations can mitigate conflict and major problems related to generational issues (Peck, Kendrick, & Brian, 2011). The GMPM provides the path for the knowledgeable and skillful manager to manipulate the

communication variable with recommendations drawn from the findings in this study in pursuit of a reduction in generational conflict.

The variable of education/training is a critically important tool for management to use in mitigating generational conflict. The evidence and findings from this study support the notion that workplace leaders are more effective if they understand work-value differences between the generations. As Figure 2 illustrates, a generationally based education/training intervention, as directed by the leader, is a major factor in reducing generational conflict and leads to a more productive work environment. Educated managers and employees tend to avoid judgment of others based on generational perceptions through exercising enhanced listening and questioning skills, thus avoiding potential generational conflicts (Arsenault, 2004).

### Alternative Perspectives

Numerous perspectives, or lenses, have examined generational differences in the workplace. The primary concern with much of the research is the evidence provided in support of the claims made. A number of articles from the practitioner literature and a few academic articles suggest generational differences in the workplace is a corporate culture issue and is simply part of the assimilation and socialization in the workplace (Ferri-Reed, 2010; Joshi, Dencker, & Franz, 2011). Practitioners, such as Glass (2007), and a few academic researchers, including Arsenault (2004), saw this topic as a diversity issue that should be addressed through the lens of human resources management. Generational work-value differences is also seen by some researchers, such as Griffin (2008), as essentially a change-management issue that should be addressed through transitioning processes and people.

## CONCLUSION

The research question asked in this study was “Is there a relationship between generational cohorts and the manifestation of clashing workplace values that create conditions for adaptive management practices?” After analyzing the scholarly research evidence from the systematic literature review, the findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between generational cohorts and conflict created by generational work-value differences. Birth-year-cohort theory research has produced seven time-lag or longitudinal studies over the past decade that were able to compare generational-cohort members at the same age in different time periods and found significant work-value differences in each study. The age-related life-stage theorists have produced a reasonable body of empirical cross-sectional studies to support their position; however, the systematic literature review conducted in this study

did not find any time-lag or longitudinal research on this subject conducted since the year 2000. A minor finding was that some recent research suggests using a combined theory approach to address generational differences conflict. The conclusion of this study is that age-related life-stage researchers and birth-year-cohort researchers provide significant scholarly evidence that can be used to determine the “why and how” of the impact of generational work-value differences on employee productivity including the resolution of intergenerational workplace conflict.

The purpose of this study was to examine why and how generational differences in the workplace impact the effectiveness and efficiencies of job performance. The functional objective was to identify management practices for effectively supervising a multigenerational workforce. The scope was limited to an examination of the U.S. workforce. The effectiveness and efficiencies of job performance in a multigenerational workplace were analyzed through the “why and how” approach with the intention of making “informed decisions” regarding management practices in relation to conflict between generationally-diverse employees. The generationally driven work-value conflict themes are the primary factors of communication, education/training, and leadership that contribute to, and aid in mitigating, generationally based conflict in the workplace. The GMPM model was developed to provide managers with a roadmap to understand work-value differences in employee behaviors and enable managers to make informed decisions about how to shape workforce strategies and management practices for a generationally-diverse workplace.

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