Managing Generational Diversity in the Workplace: Implications for the Digital Era University Library Management

Moses C. Nwosu,
holymoses1@yahoo.com
Department of Library and
Information Science,
Akanu Ibiam Federal
Polytechnic Unwana, Afikpo

Chuma O. Nnadozie Ph.D
cnnadozie2000@yahoo.com
Department of Library and
Information Science,
Michael Okpara University of
Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria.

Kingsley N. Igwe
kings4optimism@yahoo.com
Department of Library and
Information Science,
Akanu Ibiam Federal
Polytechnic Unwana, Afikpo

Abstract

For the first time in recorded history, four generations are working side by side in the workplace: the Matures, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. While having a generational mix adds diversity to the workforce, it can also set the stage for potential conflict and complications. Because each of these generations is at a different stage in their life cycles, they have very different needs, values, and attitudes. Organisations, including university libraries, often view generational differences as inevitable, unavoidable, and abstract; but research shows that in the 21st century, organisations that proactively address these issues will be more successful than those that do not. It can also give them competitive advantage by ensuring a transfer of knowledge. Good working relationships between older and younger employees will help make sure that this knowledge is not lost. This paper therefore discusses the four main generations that make up the workforce of the University Library, highlights their individual differences and unique characteristics and suggests ways in which university libraries can motivate and manage these very different age groups in the workplace. The paper concludes that managers of university libraries should leverage the significant shift in societal demographics to build better and more relevant products, create more attractive work environments, and recruit better talent. This would lead directly to customer satisfaction, and then to societal appreciation of the unique position of the university library in current digital era.

Keywords: Generational Diversity, Management, University Library, Workplace, Digital Era.

1.0 Introduction

The workplace has always represented a melting pot of ages and life stages. It is nothing new to find different types of employees in the workplace with conflicting communication styles, opposing values, and

preferred ways of doing business working shoulder to shoulder. The face of diversity today in the workplace is multi-faceted (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). Today's workforce is more diverse than ever, and more complex to manage. Walking into any contemporary work environment, one is likely to find multi-generations working side by side. What is new, however, is that this represents the first time that we have four distinct generations — Veterans (born pre-1946), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), and Generation Y (born post-1980) — in the office simultaneously. This phenomenon cuts across the different sectors and professional groups in the society.

It is therefore not surprising that in recent times, generational workforce in the workplace has become a topical issue among university library professionals and other scholars in Library and Information Science (LIS). With an age gap of about 65-70 years between the oldest and youngest employees in some organisations, there is a broad range of perspectives, needs and attitudes floating around the workplace. Today's workplace therefore is most definitely a multi-generational one – and each generation has its own set of expectations, needs, values and working styles. **A posting in an online database revealed that sociologists, psychologists, and everyday managers have identified important differences between these generations in the way they approach work, work/life balance, employee loyalty, authority, and other important issues (**http://www.multicultural advantage.com/recruit/group/mature/Generat ional-Diversity-in-Workplace.asp).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Definitional Concepts of Generations

Hanna (2009) defines generations as cohorts with similar values and beliefs which affect the way they communicate. A generation, according to Notter & Cagner (2005), is a group of people defined by age boundaries—those who were born during a certain era. For Dupree (2009), a generation is a group of people defined by age boundaries who were born during a certain era and share similar experiences and social dynamics when growing up. They share similar experiences growing up and their values and attitudes, particularly about work-related topics, tend to be similar, based on their shared experiences during their formative years.

The Traditional generation is the oldest generation in the workplace, although most are either retired or preparing to do so. Matures or Veterans are those workers who were born before 1946, and they respond best to managers who respect their experiences and knowledge as well as their place in the organisation's hierarchy. The next generation is referred to as the Baby Boomer, because of the extra seventeen million babies born during that period relative to previous census figures (O'Bannon, 2001). They were born roughly between 1945/6 and 1964, can be motivated with flexible work schedules and opportunities to learn new skills. On the one hand, Generation Xers represent those who were born approximately between 1965 and 1980. The term Generation X spread into popular parlance following the publication of Douglas Coupland's book about a generation of individuals who would come of age at the end of the 20th century. This generation was also called the 'baby bust generation', because of its small size relative to the generation that preceded it, the Baby Boom generation. Often, they prefer managers who allow them work independently, and they tend to place a high value on their personal lives. On the other hand, Millennials are those born after 1980. The lower limit for Millennials may be as low as 1978, while the upper limit may be as high as 2002, depending on the source (Campton & Hodge, 2006). In general, they share many of

the characteristics of Generation Xers. However, they like to have frequent feedback, often work best in teams, and tend to enjoy working with the latest technologies. The workplace being discussed in this paper is the university library.

2.2 Dealing with Diversities in the University Libraries

Dealing with diversity in the university libraries means, in part, understanding and relating effectively with people who have different backgrounds and idiosyncrasies. University library managers know that now, more than ever before, one management style does not fit all the sub-sets and circumstances. Each generation has different characteristics, traits, motivating factors, ambitions and work styles. The success of the university library is becoming increasingly dependent on the ability of the management to deal with differences along these identity lines. There is one particular aspect of diversity, however, that has been getting considerably more attention over the last several years. It is known as generational diversity. Beyond mere life stages, generational differences are based on broad variations in values that developed based on the contrasting environment and social dynamics each generation experienced as they were coming of age and becoming adults. In the workplace, these differences seem to be generating clashes around work/ life balance, employee loyalty, authority and other important issues. While generational diversity in the workforce promotes, as Collier (n.d.) suggests, a broader range of talent, it can often mean conflicting ideas and stereotyping – the Baby Boomers think Generation X needs a stronger work ethic, Gen X sees the Boomers as self-absorbed workaholics – and everyone thinks Generation Y is selfish and self-entitled. Predictions of generational conflict in the workplace are often based on anecdotal information. Organizations must come to the realization that the workforce is becoming increasingly heterogeneous, and they must learn to manage a diverse pool of workers. In addition, organizations remained challenged in managing diversity at the individual and group levels as employees from different generational backgrounds remain uneasy with each other's values.

Workplaces such as university libraries are also finding themselves dealing with upside-down hierarchies in which Millennials and Gen Xers are managing older workers who perhaps because of stagnation or plateauing on one rank or those who may have rejoined the workforce after retiring on contract or beginning a new job or career after a layoff. This type of upside-down hierarchy can cause additional frictions. On the other hand, the blend of generations in the workplace can be a tremendous advantage. Blending Veterans' experiences and knowledge with Millennials' veracity, vitality, optimism and technical/ technological savvy can greatly enhance corporate bottom lines. However, in order to capitalize on these opportunities, management must first of all, learn to be "multilingual," speaking the language of each generation, and finding out what they value, what motivates them and what their strengths and weaknesses are. The collective response to these has been a wave of research investigations. Researchers and experts in generational matters have explored ways and means of helping to educate management about who these generations really are and how they can recruit, retain, manage, fire, reward, and discipline them. An increase in the age and generational diversity in the workplace has prompted the exploration of the ways in which employees co-exist and function. In today's university libraries, the dilemma of generational diversity appears to be centered on:

(a)   Baby Boomers retiring sooner or later,
(b)   Lack of effective intergenerational communication, and,
(c)   Intergenerational contrasting

characteristics and distinctive experiences.

In Nigeria, employment and retention of new and young workforce is problematic when older workers are not retiring or in any hurry to retire. This group of workers as Streeter (2007) opines, hangs on tenaciously to their positions by not yielding an inch in their place in the workforce, and planning to do so for years. In virtually all sectors of the country's workplace, Baby Boomers currently make up the majority of the workforce and this limits openings and promotion opportunities for younger employees. As a result, a situation like this is bound to create discouraging and negative attitudes between generations working together (Dychtwald, Erickson & Morison, 2006).

Ideally, an age-diverse workforce as **Maddell (2015) observes,** would result in improved collaboration, creativity, and decision-making. Yet, this ideal is far from reality in many workplaces. At the crux of the workplace generation gap lies widely divergent communication styles and preferences. One reason for this is differing experiences with technologies. Veterans and Boomers came of age in a world without computers, while Gen Xers got caught in the transition to workplace technology and Gen Y grew up fluent in it. These varying levels of technological savvy create various communication styles and workplace experiences that distinguish each generation. This can lead to negative impacts on workplace etiquette and communication and ultimately lead to conflict - which affects corporate harmony, productivity and profitability. With four generations working together and a present lack of understanding of generational diversity in today's workforce, there is bound to be disharmony within the rank and file. This situation may create dissention and tension and in the workplace.

There is, therefore, no doubt that intergenerational communication misunderstandings affect employee morale, commitment, productivity and staff turn-over. As more generations coexist in the workplace, there is a need for strategies that help them communicate more effectively.

Unquestionably, as DiRomualdo (2006) states, there are real differences, misunderstandings, and tensions among workers born in different eras. According to McNamara (2005), each generation has distinctive experiences and contrasting characteristics that impact on their values in the workplace, and each has complex cultural variations. Recognizing and understanding generational differences can help everyone learn to work together more effectively and transform the workplace from a generation war zone to an age-diverse and productive team. There is not much on current research that discusses strategies for harnessing the strengths, talents and creativity of the intergenerational diversity in the workplace. There is therefore, a need for more research on leveraging generational diversity in order for university libraries to run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. This paper has become imperative to address managing generational diversity in the university library as a pre-emptive measure rather than reactionary approach to the issue.

2.3 Generations in the University Libraries and Their Uniqueness

Perhaps, for the first time in recorded history, organizations and labour markets in the 21st century are comprised of members of four generations. Known as Veterans, Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and Millennials, these generations have distinct characteristics, motivators, and values that influence their role in the workplace. *This situation, according to* Hornbostel, Kumar & Smith (2011) *presents very real challenges – and opportunities - to university libraries and*

how they address issues of talent engagement, leadership development and people (i.e. human resource) management. To have a full understanding of the four generations that share our workplaces of which the university libraries is a part, it is important to discuss each generation and their characteristics.

i. Veterans (born between 1922 - 1945)

Veterans (also referred to as Matures) are people **born approximately between 1922 and 1943** or before 1945. They did not typically go to post-secondary school. Instead, they began working immediately after secondary school or military service with the express intent of finding lucrative positions to support their families. They grew up in tough economic times during the Great Depression and World War II. Veterans tend to value hard work. They are dedicated, not just to doing a good job or making themselves look good, but also to helping the library succeed and getting for customers/users what they need. Salaries and wages from a stable university management, not necessarily personal fulfillment, was the driving force for the Veterans. They came of age in an era in which it was typical for a person to work for a single organization until retirement. Loyalty to their university library is a prime value for Veterans. Their characteristics are listed as follows:

➢ loyal to employers,
➢ respect chain of command
➢ value experience in others and in themselves
➢ believe in the status quo
➢ have respect for authority figures.
➢ believe in the intrinsic value of hard work
➢ have a work ethic that hinges on loyalty,
➢ appreciate dedication,
➢ depend at a 'stick to it' mentality.
➢ are great team players and carry their weight and do not let others down.
➢ They obtain job satisfaction from the

work itself and from doing a job well and do not necessarily need the work to have particular meaning.

ii. Baby Boomers (born between 1946 – 1964)

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964. The Baby Boom generation has also been referred to as the "pig-in-the-python" (Callanan & Greenhaus, 2008). This generation is referred to as the Baby Boom, because of the extra seventeen million babies born during that period relative to previous census figures (O'Bannon, 2001). As the Boomers matured during the late 1970s and 1980s, they became known for prioritizing their careers and experiencing a high degree of stress in their personal lives as a result. They did not experience the same difficulties as their parents. They grew up during a time of great economic growth and prosperity. Their lives were influenced by the civil rights movement, women's liberation, the space program, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. They place a high value on youth, health, personal gratification, and material wealth. Baby Boomers are optimistic and believe their generation changed the world. They grew up during an era of economic prosperity and experienced the tumult of the 1960s at an impressionable age. They are work-driven, love challenge and build stellar careers. Because they have had to contest with each other at every step of their careers, they can be highly competitive. Their children were the first generation of "latch-key kids" who had two parents working outside the home. Boomers tend to value personal connections among coworkers, put a lot of time and effort into their work, and expect their subordinates to do the same. Unlike Veterans, Boomers are not opposed to job-hopping if it serves their interests

The major characteristics of Baby Boomers can be summarized as follows:

✓ committed,
✓ hard working and career-focused – which

has caused them to be tagged as workaholics by Gen X and Gen Y;

✓ work ethic characterised by dedication, loyalty and a willingness to stay in the same job for a long time;

✓ have a lot to offer businesses with their work and life experience, skills and knowledge that many younger people can't offer;

✓ work longer hours – and respect is paramount when managing a Baby Boomer;

✓ *regard 'career' as a linear series of upward moves;*

✓ Seek status and feel success is important;

✓ *largely employer-controlled and d*o not understand job-hopping;

✓ Have already achieved many of their career goals; and

✓ *respond well to traditional methods of career development and to formal career advancement schemes linked to pay.*

iii. Generation X (born between 1960 – 1981)

Gen X is sometimes referred to as the misunderstood generation. They are the product of self-centered, work-driven Baby Boomer parents. They encompass the lucky group of individuals born in the 60s but before the 80s really got underway. They were the first generation of workers to embrace the personal computer and the Internet. They welcome diversity, are motivated by money, believe in balance in their lives, are self-reliant, and value free time and having fun. Raised in an era of two-earner households, many of them got a child's-eye view of work-centric parenting. They represent the pop culture of the 70s and are often referred to as 'latch-key' kids (often left alone at home because both parents were working) – which explains their independent, resourceful and adaptable approach to work. Other noticeable

attributes of the Gen-Xers include:
▪ possess an entrepreneurial spirit, a do-it-yourself attitude;
▪ embrace change in the workplace;
▪ career-oriented but place a strong emphasis on family time and strive for a good work–life balance;
▪ enjoy freedom and autonomy – they work to live rather than live to work;
▪ flexible workplace is a must for a Gen-Xer;
▪ value constructive feedback – which both need to be taken into consideration when managing Gen X;
▪ seen to be in the best position in the job market at the moment as they are set to step up to the plate and fill the leadership roles when the boomers retire;
▪ Highly educated and have the qualifications to go with it;
▪ Brought up in an era of technological and social change;
▪ technologically savvy, open to change and eager to learn new skills;
▪ possess a different work ethic to the boomers;
▪ constantly assessing how their careers are progressing and place a premium on learning opportunities; and
▪ thrives on diversity, challenge, responsibility, honesty and creative input, compared to the boomers' preference for a more rigid, work-centric approach.

iv. Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000)

As the newest generation of workers blazes a trail into university libraries, so has a new lexicon hit newspapers, boardrooms, and dinner tables to characterize the Millennials (also known as Gen Y) and describe their impact on workplace dynamics. There are many labels associated with this generation. Presently, according to Tolbize (2008), they

are identified as Millenials, Nexters, Generation www, the Digital generation, Generation E, Echo Boomers, N-Gens and the Net Generation. On their part, members of the generation have labeled themselves as the Non-Nuclear Family generation, the Nothing-Is-Sacred Generation, the Wannabees, the Feel-Good Generation, Cyberkids, the Do-or-Die Generation, and the Searching-for-an-Identity Generation. Practically born with a mobile phone strapped to their ear and a laptop in their cradle, this generation is totally comfortable with digital technology. Excellent multi-taskers – they have had to juggle school, soccer training, dance class, computer games and other social interests, all whilst sending text messages – they are impatient and require instant gratification as they have always had all the information they need at their fingertips via the Internet. These new employees are seen as "special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured and achieving". Accordingly, Howe & Strauss (2000) - who coined the term "Millennial", in addition described them to be "high maintenance and high risk" and can also be "high output". They want to work in an environment where differences are respected and valued, where people are judged by their contributions and where talent matters. Their characteristics include:

- ❖ Shaped by parental excesses, computers and dramatic technological advances;
- ❖ Comfortable with technology. Shares many of the characteristics of Xers;
- ❖ Value team work and collective action;
- ❖ embrace diversity and are always optimistic;
- ❖ adaptable to change and don't expect to stay in a job too long;
- ❖ seek flexibility and independent and require frequent feedback;
- ❖ desire a more balanced life and want clearly stated goals;
- ❖ multi-taskers and want state-of-the-art

technology;
- ❖ the most highly educated generation;
- ❖ value training and want to be challenged;
- ❖ Expect close and frequent contact with supervisor;
- ❖ demanding and as the most confident generation;
- ❖ Expect to be paid for what they do, not how much time spent;
- ❖ Want to be at top of chain right away; and
- ❖ Like Xers, they are also entrepreneurial, and less process focused.

Each generation brings different needs, behavioural traits, values and perspectives to the workplace. This in turn impacts what they need to be satisfied, loyal, aligned and involved with their organizations – and ultimately, how they can be encouraged to contribute new ideas and to embrace an innovative culture.

3.1 Managerial Challenges of Generational Uniqueness

When it comes to managing cross-generational groups, each new generation has taken its turn as the workplace whipping boy. Veterans criticized Boomers as "anti-establishment," but when Xers entered the workforce, Boomers labeled them "slackers." Now, previous generations point to Gen Y as the problem, labeling them "divas"- who have a sense of entitlement. Nicole Lipkin, author of *Y in the Workplace: Managing the "Me First" Generation* has coined this type of complaining **"gencentrism,"** which she believes is the most negative outcome of a multigenerational workforce. In defense of its group, each generation in turn claims the labels are unfair and inaccurate. The most recent defense comes from Gen Y proponents, including Gen Xer Shannon Kelley, co-author

of *Undecided: How to Ditch the Endless Quest for Perfect and Find the Career — and Life — That's Right for You*. According to Kelley, "what older generations might call entitlement, I would call bewilderment. They are used to getting gold stars just for showing up, and are baffled when a workplace does not hand them out."

3.2 Challenges of a Multigenerational Workforce

A multigenerational workforce is not without its challenges. Each sector or establishment contends with its set of challenges arising from the generational distribution of its workforce. In the University Library, many challenges confront management in getting all four generations to understand the different ways they approach the workload. For instance, it is fashionable for younger workers like Gen Y to walk into the library with ear piece/buds glued to their ears. They care less about dress code for workers in a service industry. Sometimes, they tuck their hands into their side pockets while talking to their supervisors. Management has to deal with these directly since the ear buds, irregular dressing and their mannerism could inflame the veterans or boomers who cannot embrace or even tolerate ear buds to work or engage in multi-tasking. Similarly, another challenge lies in library management finding ways to set collective norms based on values that transcend generations. Each generation has, among others, different contexts with how library meetings will be run, what work schedules will be adhered to, and how decisions will be made. If the university library cannot identify common grounds, frustration among generations is inevitable. Even in recruitment of new workers, an unfair hiring practice is also an area of intergenerational challenge. When in a hiring role, Gen Xers look to those they are comfortable with in age and background. This is a generality, but reflects the common theme that is becoming apparent by out-of-work Boomers. For library managers responding to generational differences and conflicts requires the same skills needed to deal with other diversity issues such as: awareness, communication and ability to manage conflict productively.

Young people, especially Generation X and Y - described by Prensky (2001) as *Digital Natives – may be newcomers to the world of work, but it is their bosses- Veterans and Baby Boomers* also described by Prensky (2001) as *Digital Immigrants, who are new into the digital world, argues Rainie (2006).* In the workplace, it is normal to find Generation *X and Y* today who have high speed Internet access at home, access to all manners of computers, laptops or note books, tablets of their own, a variety of cellular telephones (capable of texting and taking photos and short movies) such as I-Pad, Android, Blackberry, Samsung Galaxy and an I-Pod or other MP3 player. Morgan (2012) posits that these new generation workers by their nature possess a number of common traits that can be tough to manage, especially if management's exposure to this generation is limited. If, for instance, Baby Boomers find themselves supervising *Generation X and Y* in the library workplace, such as a team of web developers or internet marketers, then the common traits prevalent among them that management need to be aware of include:

Generation X and Y exhibit a sense of entitlement and are not used to having to wait for what they want, the digital generation can exhibit what feels like a sense of entitlement that is less common in preceding generations. This can make expectation of library management difficult.

Generation X and Y have trouble accepting authority, especially, from digital immigrants going by the fact that they display superior

capabilities and knowledge in their field of expertise when compared to their managers, many *Generation X and Y* struggle to accept the authority of their managers.

Generation X and Y find any imposed limits or constraints difficult to accept – whether it is working 8-4, highly structured tasks or simply being told 'no', digital natives will often push against any constraints they perceive as unfair.

Generation X and Y are always impatient with managers as they live in the 'here and now' situation and they are used to getting what they want when they want it; fuelled by a digital environment where information is just a click away. These young librarians will struggle to adapt to long term goals and will often have expectations or requests that are commercially unrealistic. This may sound impossible. But how would library managers confront this? Weg and Martin (2011) state that *Generation X and Y* want their library work situations to be like entrepreneurial projects, want *Veterans and Baby Boomers -* mostly their library supervisors - to **hands-off supervision, have access across the library as well as have cross-library collaboration.** So, how can library managers cope with these situations?

With regard to managing the younger workforce, a huge engagement challenge for university libraries lies in missing out on opportunities to nurture future leaders. One of the biggest historical challenges in the technological workplace is effectively motivating and engaging top young talent. Human Resources (HRs) play a huge role in bringing this talent in but engaging and developing it is a responsibility all employees share. Gen Y and Gen X are the current and near term future leaders. Library managers need to invest in efforts to engage these future leaders in a positive way, at the risk of losing them and their influence on their peers. In the library workplace, the other thing

library managers must accept in order to manage *Generation X and Y* is that they do indeed to know more than they do in the digital world, at a tactical level, at least. As a way out, library managers should not try to compete with them in this their innate culture and they should not expect to have all the answers. The key to managing *Generation X and Y* lies in leveraging their very nature. Due to their absorption in digital channels and the instant gratification they receive as a result, they often struggle to comprehend the bigger picture. Instead, they become completely absorbed in the task at hand. This is where the manager adds value to the relationship offering a more overarching, long term structure for the *Generation X and Y* to work within. In conjunction with this, *Generation X and Y* also suffer, as most specialists do, in developing behavioural competencies. This is where *Veterans and Baby Boomers* as managers should focus most of their efforts - on behavioural rather than functional competencies. The *Veterans and Baby Boomers* should define what constitutes 'competence' from their unique, holistic perspective. This will provide the *Generation X and Y* with goals and development opportunities that they may not be able to perceive themselves. This allows the *Veterans and Baby Boomers* as managers to guide the *Generation X and Y* towards being a more rounded team contributor. The table below provides a guide on generational management as follows:

S/N	Generations	Managing the generations for Good Job Performance
1	Veterans	Respect them for their experiences, knowledge, and know-how. Motivate them with extra benefits, like an increase in health insurance. Respect their place in the company's hierarchy and the chain of command. Value politeness and punctuality.
2	Baby Boomers	Motivate them with flexible work schedules and extra time off to care for children and aging parents. Offer them opportunities to learn new skills and add to their personal marketability. Encourage them to work collaboratively and talk problems through with co-workers.
3	Generation X	Offer them opportunities to work independently and multitask. Not requiring them to attend too many meetings. Offer them guidelines for their work rather than mic romanaging them. Recognize that they appreciate candor and delivering any criticism plainly and directly.
4	Millennials	Give them frequent feedback about their work, both positive and negative. Provide them with detailed instructions for tasks. Remember that Millennials tend to value their personal lives more than their jobs and that, unlike Boomers, they have no trouble letting their bosses know this. Taking advantage of how much they value their parents' wisdom and experience by matching them with older, experienced mentors. Make sure they have the opportunity to work with the latest technology.

Source: Adapted from EBSCO Corporate Learning Watch (2013).

4.1 Implications for Management

The next generation of managers, comprising many Millennials, will be more adept at managing in a changing, global, and networked environment. They will do it with a greater emphasis on teamwork; facility for the use of technology, and sensitivity to needs for work/life balance (Heskitt, 2007) Management is aware and as research has demonstrated that happiness directly relates to productivity (Sheahan, 2005); to keep the best employees, managers must keep them happy which means making the employees' work environment fun. According to Hsieh (2010), creating a fun culture for employees boosts productivity and employee retention. Stereotypes and biases about generational characteristics that persist in the workplace as Fraone, Hartmann, & McNally, (2007) opine, sometimes prevent employees from recognizing the valuable contributions other people can offer. As a result, university libraries need to help their staff to learn to work more effectively across generations in

order to dispel many of the generalizations that can interfere with industrial harmony and team productivity.

To address this dilemma, organisations have discovered a new way out. According to Fraone, Hartmann, & McNally (2007), it is called '*generational competence'* - a term that describes the adaptations that organizations must make in order to meet the diverse needs of the four generations in today's workforce (Seitel, 2005). While it is true that Veterans, Boomers, Gen Xers and Millennials bring a variety of priorities and expectations to the workplace, management must recognize what motivates each generation and develop effective communication tools to minimize conflict, progressive human resources and work-life strategies to attract and retain key talent, and management practices to enhance productivity. According to Giancola (2006), "even though the generations are different, it does not necessarily mean they hold divisive values and attitudes that will affect their ability to work well together". Instead, organizations are reaping the benefits of the diversity provided by workers of different generations collaborating effectively and learning from one another.

4.2 Perspectives on Work

Many university library managers feel that their librarians should adapt to the library workplace on their own. As a result, these library administrators fail to consider making the required adjustments to address the needs of younger and older workers. However, librarians do have differences in their work perspectives, values (social responsibility and volunteerism), motivations (compensation, flexibility, intellectual rewards), and working styles. These variations in the disposition of employees can constitute a challenge for library managers to address. Librarians of different generations define success in different ways. For Gen Xers and Millennials,

no longer is moving up the career structure the ultimate goal. These groups of workers may care less about advancement than about work-life balance, and may be less willing to make sacrifices in terms of overtime or overnight travel (Fraone, Hartmann, & McNally, 2007).

4.3 Best Practices for University Library Management

It is important for library leaders and managers to be aware of and understand the different attitudes and expectations of an intergenerational workforce and how to manage them effectively. These managers should equally develop the competence to manage the potential clash points that may arise such as work ethics, managing change, and others. University library managers should avoid micro-managing as a style of leadership. Micromanaging is when a manager or leader assigns the work, tells capable employees exactly how to do it, monitors them excessively, and often takes over when work is not done exactly as the manager wanted. Therefore, instead of micromanaging, managers should act as coach or mentor and "be willing to allow for a coaching approach that creates dialogues rather than monologues" (Gavatorta, 2012). Best practices such as good communication and flexible leadership styles will increase the likelihood of successfully managing a productive workforce and meet the expectations and needs of individuals, as well as those of the entire organization. The following are practical solutions and best practices for creating a friendly intergenerational organization.

1. Accommodate employee differences—This means treating the other employees with the same politeness as they do their customers. The management should strive to identify and accommodate their employees' preferences such as work-life balance, flextime and scheduling options to

accommodate a diverse workforce.

2. Create workplace choices— Library managers should allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, customers being served, and people who do the work. This translates to decreased bureaucracy, casual dress code, shorter chain of command, a relaxed and informal environment, and having fun.

3. Operate from sophisticated management style—Library leaders and managers should be direct but tactful; and effectively articulate the bigger vision, specific goals, and measures. They provide autonomy to do the work and reward performance. Seven key attributes that characterize
their level of flexibility are:
 Their supervisory style is not fixed. Direct reports are managed by individual track record and personal preferences.
 Their leadership style is situationally-varied.
 They depend less on position power and more on personal power.
 They know when and how to make policy exceptions for people.
 They are thoughtful when matching individuals to a team assignment.
 They balance concern for tasks and for people.
 They understand the elements of trust, and work to gain it from their employees (fair, inclusive, good communicators, competent).

4. Respect competence and initiative— Library executives assume the best of their people. They hire carefully to assure a good match between the person and the job.

5. Nourish retention—They are concerned and focused on retention—offering lots of training, one to-one coaching, and re-training opportunities. They encourage regular parallel movement between jobs with broadened assignments.

Knowledge Transfer: As many Veterans and Baby Boomers retire from service or reach retirement age, the issue of knowledge transfer has become critical to libraries. It will be necessary to pass on the "intellectual capital" of experienced workers to those who will be the new leaders. This will require a focus on communication, documentation, and the formation of relationships that will facilitate the transfer of this critical knowledge. Human resources manager Glennis Hanley, from Monash University's Department of Management, believes that Baby Boomers are vital to the workforce today and should be encouraged to stay in the labour game as long as they can. The reason for this, he further states, is that 'businesses need to employ the broad-based business experiences of Baby Boomers to foster and transfer cross-generational knowledge,' Library managers must be in tune with how to work best with their staffs and encourage their teams to listen and to respect each others' experience and skills (Fraone, Hartmann & McNally, 2007).

Flexibility: Baby Boomers may be caring for their aging parents and require flexibility and support in order to maintain productivity at work and work-life effectiveness. Parents of young children and Millennials seeking personal challenges outside of work appreciate flexible work arrangements so that they can meet their life and work commitments. Generation X was the first to demand work-life balance as they became dual-income parents and were determined to be more involved in their children's lives than their often absent fathers. Especially, for the younger generations, time is often more important than money (Fraone, Hartmann, &McNally, 2007).

Mentoring: Pairing less-experienced library staff with more tenured professionals can help multiple generations develop a better

understanding of one another and the unique qualities they bring to the university library. Mentoring and 'reverse-mentoring' programmes also help develop new leaders in the organization and facilitate the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. Mentoring programmes can include: traditional one-on-one mentoring sessions, group mentoring programmes, or discussion panels where presenters provide information to a group of participants (Fraone, Hartmann & McNally, 2007).

Library Values and Culture: University libraries must refine their cultures so that the library values resonate with workers from all generations. Millenials, who value social responsibility and activism, are attracted to values-based libraries. Volunteer opportunities can be one way of showing the library's commitment to others, while also allowing all four generations to work together toward a goal outside of their work responsibilities.

Recruitment and Retention: University libraries need to determine what attracts talent to their workplaces and what needs to be done to retain this talent. Using traditional media, as well as new technology (especially, the social media) such as Monster.com, LinkedIn and MySpace, library managers can broaden their search for new workers. By conducting surveys and focus groups, managers of university libraries can find out what each generation expects and needs in order to stay engaged and productive. Librarians' daily nourishment provides one example. While Veterans were content to bring bag lunches from home, many organizations are now offering gourmet (and sometimes free) on-site food choices to keep workers engaged and energized (Fraone, Hartmann & McNally, 2007).

Recognizing and Appreciating Differences: Acknowledging and accepting differences among the generations' remains one of the most significant approaches in effectively managing the multi-generational workforce in a university library. As the Veteran and Boomer generations are working longer both by personal choice and financial impetus and as organizations become flatter, employees in all generations are interacting more than ever before. Linda Duxbury (2006)., a professor at Carleton University in Canada notes, "Recognizing the diversity that these generations represent and understanding the different career paths and consequent career hurdles faced by each generation will help improve the work atmosphere". Making an active effort to diversify teams can help bring new perspectives and approaches to initiatives. Using multiple modes of communication to effectively reach employees, including memos, e-mails, newsletters and the company intranet honors style differences.

Training and Development Programmes: *M*anagers of university libraries need information on how to effectively supervise and motivate a multi-generational workforce. They also need assistance in developing the strong interpersonal skills required to function effectively in a multigenerational work-station. While all employees should be expected to uphold the same standard of work performance, today's most successful leaders find ways to let every generation be heard (Forman & Carlin, 2005 cited by (Fraone, Hartmann & McNally, 2007). This means that administrators of university libraries need to be in tune with the preferred working styles of the different generations and how they receive and react to feedback, especially with Millennials who react more positively to coaching than traditional constructive criticism. Employees need training on the value of diversity and how to work together

effectively.

Inter-Generational Communication: Communication issues can present considerable obstacles to productive cross-generational relationship. A technology gap often exists between the mature and younger generations. As the older generation grew up with computers as a constant in their lives, Millennials prefer to use email, texting, and Instant Messaging over face-to-face meetings, memos and other more formal communication techniques. Baby Boomers may misinterpret this as disrespectful or avoidant behavior, while the younger generation may simply see it as a way to expedite work and maximize productivity (Fraone, Hartmann, & McNally 2007).

Younger Managers: One of the most dramatic changes that this demographic shift brings with is the increase in younger bosses managing much older workers in university libraries. Traditionally, the more experienced move up in their career structure and manage those with less experience. The societal demographics and rapid increase in the pace of work brought on by technological change has led to a growth in instances of younger librarians managing librarians much older than themselves. Another reason could be located in a deliberate policy shift by some university library managements to bring in younger employees to drive changes and innovation. Such changes in policy, naturally, lead to the recruitment of relatively young librarians with higher academic qualifications. Most of the times, these newly-employed library workers are given offices and responsibilities over and above their older colleagues in the hierarchy of the university library. This type of upside-down hierarchy is a potential cause of additional friction in libraries.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Mainly due to education, research and

technology, societies are changing rapidly into new age cultures of unrestricted communication and instant gratification (Jonsen and Martin, 2011). Administrators and management of university libraries must be mindful of this and strive to change with the times. New democracies are being shaped under these rules and new ways of working, living, socializing and doing business are emerging as a result of time compression. Librarians in university libraries are fully aware of the changes taking place in their workplace, but Generation X and Y have never lived in a world without technology. They are the epitome of the societal changes that have taken place during their lifetimes. Now, we have a reversal of the normal situation, where young people migrate into a workplace manned by seasoned Generations X and Y. Instead, in this digitalized age, 21-year-olds and their peers are showing up as Generations X and Y in the university library world dominated by Baby Boomers – that is, elders who often feel less at ease with new technologies (Rainie, 2006). The university libraries that fully understand and appreciate the power of Generations X and Y will have the competitive edge in the future. To achieve this, managers of university libraries have to use new and often subtle methods and behaviors when dealing with this generation. This does not mean that all that the university libraries have done in the past to attract and retain competent staff is obsolete. However, library managers and their management teams need to galvanize and oil their toolboxes as well as make some changes to their mindsets and work cultures. The Weberian construct of command and control has become anachronistic as a lever for managing these generational types. The future of the university libraries is about collaborating across all kinds of borders, including across generational borders. Focus should be more on behavioural rather than functional competencies to create development

opportunities. There is, therefore, need to invest time in understanding generational differences. The power base, as it were, is beginning to shift from Baby Boomers, and the libraries can learn as much from Generations X and Y as they can learn from Baby Boomers. Of course, Generations X and Y want to learn and collaborate, preferably, all the time. In conclusion, individuals—across all generations—as *Wright (2013) states,* need to feel satisfied, aligned, involved and loyal before they will give their best to their employer. Leaders and administrators in university libraries need to understand the requirements and expectations of each of their employees in order to provide the opportunities that will keep them engaged and inspire innovation. By being aware of generational differences in the university library workplace and adjusting management techniques cross-generationally, library managers can hope to be more successful in achieving the results they desire. Therefore, they will leverage the significant shift in societal demographics to build better and more relevant products, create more attractive work environments, and recruit better talent – leading directly to customer satisfaction, and then to societal appreciation.

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